

“proficiency” was dropped from the title, the 2nd edition does advocate a “proficiency-oriented approach,” but it has broadened the concept. Equating proficiency with general communicative competence, it now sees in the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines (Kramsch, 1987) only one possible organizational framework for teaching second and foreign languages in institutional settings. This shift enables the second edition to build on the strengths of the first and to distance itself from old feuds.

The newly written chapters 1 and 2, “On Knowing a Language” and “On Learning a Language” offer a substantial theoretical framework taken from current SLA research (especially Ellis and McLaughlin). Chapters 3 and 4 now include a history of the controversial reception of the ACTFL Guidelines, a discussion of common misconceptions surrounding the concept of proficiency, and a section on content-based instruction. The next four chapters, providing both a theoretical rationale and a host of concrete descriptions for teaching the four skills and cultural understanding, have basically remained the same. Unchanged are chapter 9 on testing and chapter 10 on lesson planning instructions. A new workbook provides a valuable addition.

The book has much profited from its revisions. Less strident in its claims, it offers teachers a good sampling of relevant linguistic and cognitive research and a well-balanced sense of the debates going on in the field. If I am left with an uneasy feeling, it is not because Omaggio doesn't do a good job, but because the job itself is daunting.

At a time when intra- and interlearner variation, crosscultural differences in schema construction, genre differences across various discourse communities, and varying sociolinguistic norms across subcultures seriously put into question unitary notions like “the learner,” “the native speaker norm,” and “the target culture,” it seems almost inappropriate to try to match, as Omaggio does, current SLA research and a comprehensive curricular methodology. Not that SLA research has nothing to tell the language teacher, but it should be supplemented by research in education, in sociology, and in literary and cultural studies (chapter 8 on teaching cultural understanding singularly lacks a theoretical base in cultural anthropology and sociology). Otherwise, the SLA researcher's concern for “the affective as well as the cognitive needs of students and their different personalities, preferences, and learning styles” (p. 85) risks being translated into the teacher's institutional concern for “adapting a given sample activity format to a particular level of proficiency” on the ACTFL scale (p. 199). How can teachers, faced with multicultural classrooms, conflicting educational goals, and multiple subcultures within national cultures truly implement current SLA theory that encourages them to “acknowledge individual differences” and “avoid cultural stereotypes”? SLA research suggests how learners learn. To know what and how to teach, teachers may want to examine the links between SLA and other theories that are equally relevant to teaching language in context.

REFERENCE

Kramsch, C. (1987). The proficiency movement: Second language acquisition perspectives. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 9, 355–362.

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ERRATUM

I would like to apologize to Robin Scarcella and Rebecca Oxford for an erroneous statement I made in my review of their book, *The Tapestry of Language Learning*. In the review I accused

the authors of not referencing Vygotsky's seminal work, *Thought and Language*. Upon rereading the review, I suddenly realized that the authors do indeed cite the first volume of Vygotsky's collected works which includes his *Thought and Language*.

REFERENCES

- Lantolf, J. P. (1994). [Review of *The tapestry of language learning: The individual in the communicative classroom*]. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 16, 106–108.
- Vygotsky, L. (1986). *Thought and language*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

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