Review of "The Cambridge guide to pedagogy and practice in second language teaching"

Title	The Cambridge Guide to Pedagogy and Practice in Second Language Teaching
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There has been an abundance of books on theories and pedagogies of second language teaching on the market, but "The Cambridge Guide to Pedagogy and Practice in Second Language Teaching," edited by prominent researchers Burns and Richards, distinguishes itself from others in an important respect; it successfully meshes current theories and pedagogies of second language teaching for practitioners with respect to 30 essential topics. What has been lacking in the field is that there have been very few reference books for second language practitioners which introduce the best practices/up-to-date language teaching constructs that are supported by current theories of second language acquisition (SLA). Available books, unfortunately, either put a heavy emphasis on pedagogies or on theories. Thus, a balanced book on pedagogies and theories geared for second language practitioners such as this one was in dire need.

The book consists of 30 chapters (each ranges from 8–10 pages). Each independent chapter is written by a respected researcher in his/her own field and deals with an imperative topic for second language teaching (e.g. learner-centered teaching, motivation, speaking instruction, and technology in the classroom, to name a few). These 30 chapters are thematically grouped into five sections which are entitled "Rethinking our understanding of teaching," "Learner diversity and classroom learning," "Pedagogical approaches and practices," "Components of the curriculum," and "Media and materials." Each chapter is relatively short and concise, and is devoid of unnecessary technical terms, which makes the reading accessible for non-researchers. Also, it follows a standardized format with the subsections, "Introduction," "Background," "Key issues," "Conclusion," Key readings," and "References," throughout the book. Each author successfully informs the reader about a particular topic within a framework of historical background as well as evolved theories in the "Background" subsection, and ties it to the current issues in the "Key issues" subsection, which is beneficial for classroom practitioners for what they do in their everyday classes. Hence, the reader can familiarize himself/herself with the necessary theoretical background knowledge of the given topics, and will be informed as to the best practices/language teaching constructs that are supported by current theories. In order to complement limited space in each chapter, authors invite interested readers for further reading in the "Key readings" subsection.

Instead of summarizing each chapter, I will briefly introduce one chapter from each of the five sections, which I personally think will be of interest to the majority of the readership. In the "Re-

thinking our understanding of teaching" section, there are five chapters: (1) English as an international language; (2) Reflective pedagogy; (3) Learner-centered teaching; (4) Class-centered teaching: A framework for classroom decision making; and (5) Competence and performance in language teaching. One of the editors, Jack C. Richards, introduces eight dimensions of teacher knowledge and skill that seem to be at the core of expert language teacher competence and performance in Chapter 5. The first competence and skill that expert language teachers have is the target language proficiency which enables them "to provide good language models, to maintain use of the target language in the classroom, to give correct feedback on learner language, and to provide input at an appropriate level of difficulty" (p. 47). He emphasizes, however, that teachers do not have to be native-speakers of the target language. Second, good language teachers possess both disciplinary knowledge (i.e. the body of knowledge that is essential to gaining membership of the language teaching profession such as what one learns in language teacher education) and pedagogical content knowledge (i.e. the body of knowledge that provides a basis for language teaching). Third, effective teaching skills are obviously essential for good language teachers. Fourth, understanding of contextual knowledge and appropriately adjusting to contextual constraints is another competence of skill of good language teachers. Fifth, good language teachers need to know what it means to be a language teacher (i.e. the language teacher identity). Sixth, since the goal of teaching is to facilitate student learning, conducting effective learner-focused teaching is pivotal. Seventh, pedagogical reasoning skills, which I personally think is the most important of all for effective teaching, are listed. Among them are the skills to (1) analyze potential lesson content, (2) identify specific linguistic goals, (3) anticipate any problems that might occur and ways of resolving them, and (4) make appropriate decisions about time, sequencing, and grouping arrangements. These pedagogical reasoning skills are sine qua none to transform "the subject matter of instruction into forms that are pedagogically powerful and that are appropriate to the level and ability of the students" (p. 51). Lastly, good language teachers reflect on teaching experiences in order to better understand the nature of language teaching and learning, which the author calls "theorizing of practice." These eight competences and skills discussed in Chapter 5 cannot be undermined in any teaching field.

In the second section of the book, "Learner diversity and classroom learning," eight chapters are included: (6) Managing the classroom; (7) Learner strategies; (8) Motivation; (9) Teaching mixed level classes; (10) Teaching large classes; (11) Teaching young learners; (12) Teaching teenagers; and (13) Teaching adults. One of the conundrums in many language teaching contexts is when one has to teach a mixed level of students, which is the topic Jill Bell treats in Chapter 9. The author introduces what has been found in research on needs-analysis and individual differences in the field of SLA. Then, she specifically discusses three topics regarding teaching mixed level classes: assessment; designing the curriculum; and basic principles of organization in the classroom. She advocates that in order to assess a mixed level of students, teachers first need to know their background as well as their language proficiency. Sometimes commercially-made assessment tools may not be suitable for particular group of mixed level students; in that case, teachers should create suitable assessment tools to evaluate multiple levels of language proficiency. In terms of curriculum and teaching, the author suggests theme-based curricula for heterogeneous groups of students. Some of the basic principles to conduct successful lessons in mixed level classes are to focus on fluency in heterogeneous groups (e.g. a whole class) and on accuracy in smaller homogeneous groups, to utilize self-access materials for individual work but implement whole class activities at the beginning and ending of each lesson for maintaining class cohesion, and to introduce activities in which everyone can contribute to the same finished product by doing different tasks of varying complexities.

In the third section, "Pedagogical approaches and practices," there are seven chapters: (14) Task-based language education; (15) Text-based teaching; (16) Content-based instruction and content and language integrated learning; (17) Outcomes-based language teaching; (18) Teaching English for academic purposes; (19) Teaching English for specific purposes; and (20) Literacy-based language teaching. Of these, Chapter 16, "Content-based instruction and content and language integrated learning," deserves special attention, because "[e]ach decade since the 1980's has

seen dramatic growth in CBI [content-based instruction] in second and foreign language contexts globally" and "[m]ore than 200 types of CLIL [content and language integrated learning] programs have been identified" (p. 149). The author, JoAnn Crandall, first introduces various definitions and models of CBI/CLIL and then discusses the rationale for CBI/CLIL. With respect to the rationale for CBI/CLIL in second/foreign language teaching, CBI/CLIL are supported by SLA theoretical constructs such as comprehensible input and comprehensible output that are encouraged in CBI/CLIL classrooms. Also, these classrooms provide contexts for teaching learning strategies and critical thinking skills across a number of content areas. Research findings on these rationales are especially abundant passim immersion education literature. Based on hitherto research findings, the author discusses five features of effective CBI/CLIL instruction: (a) focus on meaningful, relevant content; (b) focus on language development; (c) use of relevant and appropriate authentic and adapted texts and tests; (d) participation in engaging tasks that promote learning of content and language; and (e) development of learning strategies and academic skills. Usefully, the author also discusses four challenges to the effective implementation of CBI/CLIL and their potential solutions: (a) roles and responsibilities of language and content teachers; (b) professional development; (c) curriculum and materials; and (d) institutional support. This chapter is highly recommended for prospective teachers and administrators who are planning to teach second/foreign languages by using CBI/CLIL curricula.

In the penultimate section, "Components of the curriculum," there are also seven chapters: (21) Speaking instruction; (22) Listening instruction; (23) Reading instruction; (24) Writing instruction; (25) Vocabulary instruction; (26) Pronunciation instruction; and (27) Grammar instruction. This section is perhaps of the most interest to the majority of language teachers who are concerned with specific language skill/proficiency development. This section also utilizes SLA theories to support the authors' recommended practices. In vocabulary instruction (Chapter 25), for instance, Anne O'Keeffe discusses how vocabulary learning has been historically reflected differently in various SLA theories such as behaviorist, cognitive, and interactionist. The author also claims that a core vocabulary set of about 2,000 English words account for about 83% of spoken and written texts based on language corpora. What many language practitioners are concerned with is how best to accelerate vocabulary learning retention. Regarding this ubiquitous question, the author suggests two approaches: increasing contextual encounters (create more contexts especially for less frequent words) and working on extended meaning (i.e. teach learners and make them aware how words are organized and connected by meaning and by structure). Practical examples for these approaches are also introduced in the chapter.

In the last section entitled "Media and materials," there are three chapters: (28) Materials development; (29) Technology in the classroom; and (30) Online and blended instruction. With the rapid advancement of technology, it has become a vital tool for language teaching in most developed countries. In Chapter 29, Mike Levy introduces how technology can be utilized effectively in each language skill and proficiency lesson, namely listening, writing, reading, speaking, grammar, and pronunciation. Also, he introduces at least one software application for each skill/proficiency lesson and how to use it to develop the skill/proficiency. This chapter is beneficial and practical for those who are not familiar with what technologies are available for language teaching purposes and how to use them in their classrooms.

Although space limitations preclude an in-depth discussion of all the other chapters, they are just as worthy of attention as, if not more than, the ones mentioned above. Overall, the strongest points of this book can be summarized as follows; each chapter (1) deals with essential content for language practitioners, (2) is short (ranges from 8-10 pages) and discusses the content in a concise manner, (3) is devoid of technical terminology to make the reading accessible, and, most importantly, (4) meshes the current language teaching/learning theories and pedagogies successfully by respected authors.

There are, however, two small concerns (no book is perfect). Several editing errors are found throughout the book such as spelling and punctuation errors, repetitions of the same phrase in the same sentence, and so forth. Another concern is the title of the book, which gives the reader an impression that the book is written for any language teacher (e.g. Spanish/French/Chinese lan-

guage teachers). However, as is clear by the first chapter of the book, many of the chapters assume the readership consists of English language teachers. In defence of the book, however, some chapters apply to other language teachers as well.

All in all, I highly recommend this book for all language teachers. This book is a valuable resource to have in every teacher's room at school. By consulting chapters of a specific interest, one can confirm, disconfirm, understand, and gain new knowledge of what s/he should do in language classrooms. It serves as an essential resource for professional development.