

---

**Byrnes, Heidi, Heather D. Weger-Guntharp, and Heather Sprang, eds. *Educating for Advanced Foreign Language Capacities: Constructs, Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment.***

**Washington, D.C.: Georgetown UP, 2006. ISBN: 978-1-58901-118-2. Pp. 218.**

*Educating for Advanced Foreign Language Capacities: Constructs, Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment* represents an important contribution to the research agenda on advanced language learning. Part I of this volume addresses “Cognitive Approaches to Advanced Language Learning,” Part II examines “Descriptive and Instructional Considerations in Advanced Learning,” and Part III explores “The Role of Assessment in Advanced Learning.”

In Chapter I, Byrnes provides an introduction to the research on advanced language performance and the advanced language learner, as well as an overview of the content of the eleven chapters that follow.

Part I (Chapters 2-6) explores cognitive approaches to advanced language learning. In Chapter 2, Langacker addresses the conceptual basis of grammatical structure. The author argues that language is all about meaning — residing both in conceptualization and mental construction. He then discusses how cognition and language, as well as social and cultural realities, interact to shape our perceptions. In Chapter 3, Von Stutterheim and Carroll investigate whether or not advanced language learners access language-specific features such as selection, organization, and expression in producing a coherent text such as a narrative, a description, or a series of directives. The authors demonstrate that advanced language speakers tend to draw on first language principles in the process of producing a coherent text in the target language. Carroll and Lambert also discuss research on text structure in Chapter 4. The authors compare the extent to which advanced language learners use the principles of information structure of their target language, in contrast to their native language, in producing extended discourse. Findings suggest that even advanced second language speakers continue to use the knowledge of information organization and information structure of their native language in producing second language discourse. In Chapter 5, Behrens describes research suggesting that certain features of advanced second language production and translation into the first language share the same language-specific constraints on conceptualization. Strauss demonstrates the benefits of adopting a cognitive grammar framework for directing learners' attention to the form, meaning, and use of difficult-to-acquire linguistic structures in Chapter 6.

Part II (Chapters 7-10) examines the effect of instruction on advanced language performance. In Chapter 7, Pavlenko addresses the dearth of studies on what constitutes second language narrative competence, as well as the teaching of narrative abilities in second language programs. The author outlines three components of second language narrative competence — narrative structure, elaboration and evaluation, and cohesion — which are difficult for language learners to acquire. She then provides the reader with strategies for teaching narration. Paribakht and Wesche examine the factors that contribute to success or failure at lexical inferencing in Chapter 8. The authors discuss the role of explicit instruction in directing learners' conscious attention to the development of lexical inferencing strategies. In Chapter 9, Rinner and Weigert address the relationship between curriculum and advanced language learning. The authors state that one of the major obstacles to program articulation is that instructors base their course design and materials selection on the erroneous premise that language development is complete after the beginning language sequence. Rinner and Weigert then describe a program that integrates content and language acquisition through genre-based pedagogies. In both "Culture of Soccer" and "German Business Culture," one genre, the newspaper interview, provides the framework for incorporating both cognitive and linguistic features that relate to the development of advanced language learning. Abbuhl examines the effect of instruction and feedback on the development of advanced-level legal discourse in Chapter 10. The author demonstrates that second language students benefit from instruc-

tion that directs their attention to the linguistic and “pragmalinguistic” features of a persuasive legal argument.

Part III (Chapters 11-12) examines the role of assessment in advanced language learning. In Chapter 11, Norris describes the two most important areas of assessment within the advanced foreign language education agenda: assessment as a measurement tool in research on language learning and assessment of learners as a key feature in language programs. He concludes with a discussion of how to enhance assessment practices in order to better understand and foster advanced language learning. Shohamy addresses the need to rethink or redefine assessment procedures for advanced language proficiency (ALP) in Chapter 12. She discusses the considerable criticism of rating scales such as the ACTFL OPI. Given the important connections among teaching, research, and assessment, the author states that language testers must work together to develop appropriate assessment methods for new and emerging definitions of ALP.

The studies in this well-written volume highlight the most important theoretical and practical issues in advanced language learning. The volume challenges the second language researcher and practitioner to rethink his or her understanding of advanced language performance as well as his or her approach to advanced language learning and teaching. *Educating for Advanced Foreign Language Capacities: Constructs, Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment* will therefore be an important and valuable resource for all those involved in second language education.

Todd Hernández  
Assistant Professor of Spanish  
Marquette University  
Milwaukee, WI

### **Publisher's Response**

Georgetown University Press thanks Dr. Hernandez for his positive and informative review of *Educating for Advanced Foreign Language Capacities*. Like Dr. Hernandez, we believe this book to be a significant and indispensable collection for those active in the field of advanced second language acquisition, whether specialist or generalist. By bringing together important research, theory, and educational practice, the volume serves as the perfect reference tool on the subject. Furthermore, as Dr. Hernandez suggests, *Educating for Advanced Foreign Language Capacities* is sure to challenge previously held convictions regarding the role and nature of advanced foreign language education, making this volume truly groundbreaking.

Jacqueline Beilhart, Publicist  
Georgetown University Press  
3240 Prospect St, NW  
Washington, DC 20007  
Phone: 202/687-9298  
Fax: 202/625-0239  
jb594@georgetown.edu