

A Practical Guide to Second Language Teaching and Learning

An essential resource for individuals entering the field of second language (L2) teaching and learning, this book provides a complete set of instructional materials written in accessible language. Providing enough material to use for an entire semester, the book offers exciting activities for the L2 classroom, outlining the theories and research that support them and showing how to connect theory with practice.

Key Features

- Extensive and up-to-date content presented in a clear, engaging, and accessible manner.
- Pre- and post-reading activities to help students connect the topics to their own lives.
- Pedagogical guidelines with practical suggestions.
- Summaries of empirical studies in nontechnical, jargon-free language.
- End-of-chapter assignments which reinforce students' learning and relate directly to the content.
- Conclusion with a compelling chapter on the research–practice dialogue.

Shawn Loewen is Professor in Applied Linguistics at Michigan State University, USA. His research interests include Instructed Second Language Acquisition, classroom interaction, and mobile-assisted language learning. His publications include two coauthored books, and the second edition of *Introduction to Instructed Second Language Acquisition* appeared in 2020. He is Associate Editor of *The Modern Language Journal*. He has taught undergraduate introduction to second language learning and teaching courses since 2003 at both the University of Auckland and Michigan State University.

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“The authors have succeeded in producing a book that is comprehensive, insightful, and engaging, and one that will be a primary resource for teacher educators, language teaching researchers, and student teachers. The reader-friendly organization of each chapter, with pre-reading activities, summaries of key theory and research, and post-reading follow-up tasks, will provide both novice and experienced teachers with an extensive understanding of the disciplinary and pedagogical knowledge that is essential for today’s language teaching professionals.”

Jack C. Richards, Sydney University, Australia

“Any practical guide to language learning and teaching needs to address the interface between theory and practice. Loewen and Sato draw on their own practical experience as researchers, teacher educators, and language learners to compile a comprehensive account of all the key issues in instructed language learning. This highly accessible text is an invaluable resource for students and teacher-educators alike.”

Roderick Ellis, University of Auckland, New Zealand

“I wish I’d had this book years ago. Its bite-sized, yet thorough, presentations and accompanying activities throughout make it a teaching and learning joy. It covers everything a good SLA and ISLA course should be about ... and then some. And it does all this in a way that makes practitioners’ lives easy and students’ learning enjoyable.”

Graeme Porte, University of Granada, Spain

“Teachers can rejoice. Students entering the field will delight in this engagingly written and accessible book. It manages to be comprehensive, appropriately informed by scholarship, and practical without ever becoming dull. In a word, it’s impressive.”

John Macalister, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

“With its blend of theoretical foundations and practical applications, this textbook is an essential resource for anyone delving into second language acquisition research. Clear, engaging, and comprehensive, it equips instructors with useful materials. Authored by leading scholars, this all-encompassing guide not only enriches but also invigorates the learning experience with the fascinating field of second language acquisition.”

Yuichi Suzuki, Kanagawa University, Japan

“The book is an impressive achievement for its comprehensive coverage of critical topics in language teaching. It is an essential text for language teacher education programs and a great resource for language teacher educators who look for pedagogical ideas to inspire language teachers. The book is a must-read practical guide for language teachers.”

Xuesong (Andy) Gao, University of New South Wales, Australia

“This book is a wonderfully comprehensive overview of the field of language instruction. The focus on foundational knowledge in the most relevant linguistic disciplines, as well as the numerous exercises, make this volume particularly suited for use in higher-level undergraduate instruction. I look forward to using this volume to train emerging language teachers and researchers.”

Conor Snoek, University of Lethbridge, Canada

“Loewen and Sato provide a comprehensive, clearly written volume covering the fundamentals of second language teaching and learning. In addition to excellent coverage of the field, the inclusion of ‘recaps’ throughout the chapter and end-of-chapter activities make this a complete package to support trainee teachers and researchers, whether used in coursework or through independent reading.”

Rita Elaine Silver, National Institute of Education, Singapore

“Grounded in the authors’ impressively updated knowledge of research developments and disciplinary debates in the field, coupled with their attested engagement in building bridges between research and practice, this book will become an essential resource for newcomers to the field of L2 learning and teaching. In addition to the well-grounded and meticulously designed instructional materials, the book contributes a convincing articulation of the synergetic forces that may result from collaborative dialogues between researchers and practitioners.”

Rosa Maria Manchon, University of Murcia, Spain

“Loewen and Sato have authored a clear and accessible text that provides a comprehensive overview of SLA as a study area. Focusing on the practical issues relevant to the L2 classroom, the book presents content in a friendly manner, stressing the role of research in understanding SLA. I am looking forward to using this book and its additional online components with my own students.”

Pawel Szudarski, University of Nottingham, UK

“In this informative, accessible, and user-friendly textbook, Loewen and Sato expertly weave research and practice to provide readers with a strong theoretical foundation in all aspects of the field, along with a wide range of pedagogical strategies. I would not hesitate to use this thorough and well-organized book, with its many useful features, in my undergraduate SLA class.”

Martin Boyne, Trent University, Canada

“This is an excellent textbook for introductory courses on second language learning and instruction. It covers key topics clearly and provides summaries of seminal research without overwhelming readers. The inclusion of pre-reading discussion questions, post-reading activities, supplementary resources, practical guidelines, and class assignments will undoubtedly foster active student involvement and a stronger connection between research and practical application.”

Michael Leeser, Florida State University, USA

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A Practical Guide to Second Language Teaching and Learning

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Spartan Strong: Dedicated to the memories of
Arielle Anderson, Brian Fraser, Alexandria Verner,
and all the survivors of February 13, 2023.

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PREFACE

Our purpose in writing this book is to provide not only useful information for second language (L2) researchers and teachers but also a complete package for instructors that they can use for an academic semester without the need for additional readings and class activities. We envision this book to be an easily understandable introduction to the field of Instructed Second Language Acquisition (ISLA) and other related fields. The book is aimed at advanced undergraduate or beginning graduate students who are interested in both the theoretical and practical aspects of teaching and learning an L2. Thus, it's perfect as a textbook for an undergraduate or beginning graduate course related to L2 learning and teaching (e.g., TESOL, Applied Linguistics, Second Language Acquisition, Pedagogical Grammar, and Educational Linguistics). The goal is for the book to be applicable to the everyday world of L2 teaching, but it's also underpinned by theory and research. The book assumes that students will have had some basic exposure to L2 teaching and learning, either through learning an L2 themselves, taking an introduction to linguistics course, or teaching an L2. The book starts with rather theory-heavy chapters, but the remaining chapters are more practical, so we hope that readers won't give up at the beginning of the book! We've included multiple pre-reading and post-reading activities for each chapter so that the instructor can pick and choose the most appropriate and effective one(s) depending on the course objectives as well as personal interest. We've also created formal assignments for each chapter. Again, the instructor might choose only a few of these for their course evaluation.

The idea for this book came from Shawn teaching an introduction to L2 learning course for 13 years at Michigan State University and for three years prior to that at the University of Auckland. During that time, he relied on several popular textbooks, but he wasn't completely satisfied with any single one. Thus, his strategy was to require multiple textbooks, supplemented with some additional readings; however, during his courses, he continually wished that he had a single textbook that would provide all the material he needed for an entire semester. In the end, he decided to write his ideal textbook for the class, and the goal of the current book is to be substantial enough to use for a 12- to 14-week semester

without the need for additional teaching materials. He also decided that such a large task would be greatly enhanced by the addition of his friend and colleague Masatoshi, and so the project began.

In addition to Shawn's desire to have an all-inclusive textbook, he wanted to have a book that was practical for students. During his time teaching both undergraduate- and graduate-level classes, he found that many students weren't all that interested in second language acquisition (SLA) theories. Rather, they were interested in what to do in the L2 classroom. Because he wasn't teaching a teaching methods course, Shawn didn't want to focus primarily on teaching methods; instead, he added SLA theory and research in the context of practical issues related to the L2 classroom. He also tried to relate ISLA concepts as much as possible to students' own experiences of studying and learning an L2. He found that even in the USA, almost all his students had studied an L2 at some point in their lives; thus, they were able to think about issues such as their own struggles in learning grammar or vocabulary, or their own motivation and anxiety. By building on their own experiences, he hoped to illustrate in an experiential way the theoretical concepts that were discussed in class.

To complement Shawn's experiences of teaching courses on L2 teaching and learning, the book is strengthened by Masatoshi's experiences as an ISLA scholar, a foreign language learner, an L2 teacher, and an L2 teacher trainer. He learned English as an L2 in Japan with very traditional grammar-translation methods. Just like many other foreign language learners, he needed to devise his own ways of developing L2 skills that are useful for real-world communication. As an L2 teacher, he struggled to find alternative, better ways of teaching. Even years after becoming an L2 researcher and L2 teacher trainer, he witnessed the same traditional teaching on the other side of the globe in Chile. In 12 years of teaching SLA to pre-service and in-service teachers at undergraduate and graduate levels, he found that the primary challenge in teaching foreign language teachers was that they tended to believe that the way in which they learned the L2 was the best way to teach the L2, when in fact they weren't typical foreign language learners. Instead, L2 teachers were often talented and motivated L2 learners who decided to become L2 teachers. Masatoshi thought that this unique academic and educational setting that can be found in many foreign language contexts – L2 teachers are L2 learners of the language at the same time – calls for teaching materials that raise students' awareness of the fact that L2 learning and L2 teaching are different things. To help these teachers, Masatoshi was always on the lookout for a textbook that explained L2 research in a friendly manner with effective activities and assignments, so that his students could become more effective and efficient L2 teachers. Sometimes, he felt that doctoral students who didn't have a background in applied linguistics or psychology had the same need. Also, although his research interests include the relationship between research and practice, he always struggled with finding ways in which he could communicate with teachers more directly and widely. In this sense, this book project gave him a great opportunity to serve as a bridge between research and practice.

Based on our experiences, we hope that this book will indeed be a practical guide to L2 teaching and learning, one that's underpinned by ISLA theories and research. We also hope that this book can be a one-stop shop for any introductory courses related to L2 learning and teaching. To that end, we've incorporated the following features into each chapter.

- Extensive content: We've tried to include enough material so that the instructor can spend a week on each chapter. We've also structured the chapters so that there is introductory material about the topic, followed by a discussion of the implications for L2 teaching.
- Pedagogical guidance: We offer specific ideas for L2 instruction related to the topic of each chapter.
- Pre-reading activities: These discussion questions and activities are designed to help students start thinking about each chapter and how it might relate to their own lives.
- Post-reading activities: These activities are designed to help students consolidate, synthesize, and extend the knowledge they've developed in each chapter.
- Recap sections: These bulleted lists help students focus on the most important information in each chapter.
- Key terms: This glossary aims to help students identify and understand the important concepts in each chapter. All key terms are in bold type when introduced so that students can refer to the glossary when they encounter a key term. The key term definitions are quotes from academic scholars.
- Empirical evidence: Synopses of research studies, written in accessible language, provide empirical support for the various topics. In our own teaching, we've found that students often have difficulty reading research articles from peer-reviewed journals. Therefore, these descriptions are meant to be bite-sized and easily digestible, while still stressing the important role that research plays in our understanding of ISLA.
- Class assignments: All chapters (except Chapters 1 and 2) have a suggested assignment that the instructor can give their students as part of the course curriculum. These are not meant to be questions for class discussion, but rather assignments that might take students two to four weeks to complete. Instructors can choose one or two assignments for formal assessment (e.g., a mid-term paper) based on their preferences.

The accompanying online resources site at www.cambridge.org/loewensato contains lecture slides, model answers for the activities and assignments, and audio files for Chapters 7 and 8.

In summary, we tried to write the textbook we wish we'd had for our courses. We hope we've achieved something useful for you and your students, and we look forward to using this book alongside you in our own classes.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We'd like to thank the many students who've been in our classes over the years and motivated us to describe and explain second language teaching and learning in better and clearer ways. Many of these students made invaluable comments on draft chapters, for which we're appreciative. We're also grateful to our colleagues who expressed a need for this book and encouraged us to write it. We'd like to thank the staff of Cambridge University Press, including Rebecca Taylor, who enthusiastically agreed to commission this book, Ilaria Tassistro and Emma Collison, who helped edit the initial drafts, and Rachel Norridge who meticulously and efficiently guided the production process. Our gratitude also goes to two of the many excellent Michigan State University students who helped us in this endeavor. Kiyotaka Suga was indispensable in helping us find good figures, compile empirical studies, and consolidate key term definitions. Matt Coss was also instrumental in finalizing the details of the textbook. Last but not least, we'd like to thank all second language learners around the world who keep inspiring our research and all the second language teachers who make instructed second language learning happen.