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*Vivian Cook, David Singleton*

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**Vivian Cook, David Singleton : Key Topics in Second Language Acquisition (MM Textbooks)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Key Topics in Second Language Acquisition (MM Textbooks):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A valuable introduction for language teachersBy Alan BroomheadSimilar in approach to Brown and Larson-Hall's Second Language Acquisition Myths, Key Topics in Second Language Acquisition offers brief and accessible chapters that can serve as an introduction for those new to the field, or as a review and update for practitioners, especially second language teachers. The topics are framed as questions, such as "Is there a best age for learning a second language?" and "How important is grammar in acquiring

and using a second language?" and the authors' informal, conversational style, which thankfully avoids the unwieldy literature reviews found in Brown and Larson-Hall's book, is an effective way of tackling the questions for the general reader. Readers should be aware as they get into the first chapter, "How do different languages connect in our minds?" that this topic is Vivian Cook's favorite but is not especially a mainstream topic in SLA. Without naming it, Cook espouses his notion of multicompetence, which represents languages existing together in the mind on a continuum, not as separate entities. The bilingual, in Cook's view, is not simply two monolinguals in one mind, but 'a different kind of person,' in whom the second language can influence the first, and for whom both (or all) languages are active in the mind even in the context of a supposedly monolingual (such as English-only) classroom. Cook's idea has been embraced by some in the field (such as Diane Larsen-Freeman - who herself is not in the mainstream) but is not a mainstay of second language acquisition studies in general, and is technically not an 'acquisition' topic at all. Nonetheless, I think it is very welcome in a book that is likely to be read by teachers. In fact, a great strength of this book is that it tackles topics that may not be found in overviews of SLA, but which are of interest to teachers. Much of SLA has focused on the acquisition of specific forms, measured by learners' oral output, so it is refreshing to find a chapter devoted to second language writing that includes directionality, letter-sound correspondence, and the connection between pronunciation and writing. The chapter on attitude and motivation updates the classic conceptions (integrative vs. instrumental; extrinsic vs. intrinsic) with a more variable, dynamic notion of motivation, and introduces Dornyei's idea of present self vs. ideal self as a way of thinking about motivation. Best of all in my view, the authors take SLA researchers to task (in the politest way possible) for failing to link their work to that of the people trying to impart language knowledge and skills to learners in classrooms (otherwise known as teachers). Based on my experience, most teachers ignore or are alienated by the majority of SLA research, which fails to address their concerns. And, according to the authors, teaching methodology has not drawn from SLA research in the past, nor does it do so today: "As for the debt of the communicative approach to SLA research...to look for such a debt is to court disappointment" (p. 120). Their argument continues, "before SLA research can aspire to contribute usefully and meaningfully to the development of language teaching methodology, it will need to embed itself with much more will and enthusiasm in the everyday realities of the language classroom" (p. 122). What the SLA researchers of university departments will make of this, I don't know, but I find it extremely refreshing and unexpected in an introductory book like this. The message for new teachers is: don't be awed by the esoteric, 'pure' research studies of those in the academy; seek out what is relevant. For such a slim book, there is a really sound underlying philosophy here, and I recommend it to language teachers in training and anyone new to the field.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Very good book  
By Stephanie Hefner I had to read this for my major, but I was engaged throughout the book and I learned a lot of very useful information.  
0 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A great read...  
By Nick Baker This was a great collection of written works that outline key topics that current teachers or future language students want to know or wish to find out the current perspectives of the modern outlook of second language acquisition (SLA). As a current university student, this text has reinforced my awareness of SLA and provide new insights that will be valuable in future research and teaching practices in the field. Another great text of a long line of books in this collection that have helped me be a much more wiser student of Second language learning.

This textbook offers an introductory overview of eight hotly-debated topics in second language acquisition research. It offers a glimpse of how SLA researchers have tried to answer common questions about second language acquisition rather than being a comprehensive introduction to SLA research. Each chapter comprises an introductory discussion of the issues involved and suggestions for further reading and study. The reader is asked to consider the issues based on their own experiences, thus allowing them to compare their own intuitions and experiences with established research findings and gain an understanding of methodology. The topics are treated independently so that they can be read in any order that interests the reader. The topics in question are: how different languages connect in the mind; whether there is a best age for learning a second language; the importance of grammar in acquiring and using a second language; how the words of a second language are acquired; how people learn to write in a second language; how attitude and motivation help in learning a second language; the usefulness of second language acquisition research for language teaching; the goals of language teaching.

This excellent volume offers a clear and engaging description of central topics in second language acquisition research, and highlights the connection between research findings, formal and informal learning contexts, and teaching practices. I have no doubt that this volume will soon become an invaluable resource for teachers and students alike. (Gessica De Angelis, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland) This book provides a welcome, very readable introduction to second language learning, angled at university students as well as those with a general interest in the subject. It is also very teacher-friendly. Readers will not only be suitably informed but will also find plenty to intrigue them about language and its acquisition. (Mike Sharwood-Smith, Academy of Social Sciences, Warsaw, Poland) Vibrant, prescient, honest, enjoyable such is the view of SLA that Cook and Singleton have crafted in this unmatched book! The palette of 8 topics covers yet transcends the box of traditional SLA and the wealth of interactive illustrations fully

situates adult language acquisition in present-day realities. A must-own SLA title. (Lourdes Ortega, Georgetown University, USA)Cook and Singleton's book succinctly addresses many pressing questions asked by both novices and experts in the field of SLA and could be a useful tool in an introductory SLA course. (Robert Cote, The University of Arizona, USA LINGUIST List 25.5116 (2014))This book constitutes a prime example of a well-written introduction to the undoubtedly highly complex, interdisciplinary and multifaceted domain of second language acquisition research, being at the same time accessible, readable and simply engaging. (Mirosaw Pawlak, Adam Mickiewicz University, Kalisz, Poland Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching, SLLT 4 (4). 2014. 719-723)About the AuthorVivian Cook is Emeritus Professor, Newcastle University, UK. He has been researching in the fields of second language acquisition and writing systems for over 45 years and was founding President of the European Second Language Association (EUROSLA).David Singleton is Professor, University of Pannonia, Hungary and Fellow Emeritus, Trinity College, Dublin, Ireland. He has published widely on second language acquisition, multilingualism and lexicology and is the series editor for the SLA series published by Multilingual Matters.