



## Papers in Honor of David Eskey

**I**t was a genuine honor to be asked to edit this collection of papers in celebration of my dear friend, David Eskey. Before turning to the papers, I offer a few words in his memory.

David's sudden, unexpected death of a heart attack on October 19, 2002, brought great sadness to his many students, colleagues, and, of course, most especially to his family and close friends.

Bill Grabe's summary of David's professional life attests to the wide range of both his experiences and interests:

Dave was a serious and committed scholar, influencing our profession in areas of reading, literacy, curriculum and methodology, and language program administration. His wide breadth of inquiry and interests were reflected in his academic training and his travels. He received an MA in English from Columbia University and an MA in Linguistics and a PhD in English literature from the University of Pittsburgh. He developed his practicing credentials by teaching EFL and training teachers in Iraq, Lebanon, and Thailand in the 1960s and early 1970s. In 1976, he accepted an academic position at USC where, for 27 years, he dedicated himself to the University and his profession.<sup>1</sup>

Yet as Grabe notes, this list—however impressive—doesn't really capture the "essential" David known to his grieving students, colleagues, and friends. Students found in David an excellent teacher and a supportive, caring mentor. His many colleagues from around the world recognized David as one of the foremost thinkers (and writers—he took great pride in his lucid, engaging prose!) on second language literacy, on language policy, and the practical application of reading research to pedagogy.

And those of us lucky to be numbered among his friends (a group that came to include colleagues and many former students) remember David for his wonderful sense of humor, his great personal charm, and his legendary ability as a raconteur. The papers collected here are offered in celebration of this "essential" David Eskey.

Four of the six papers that follow (those by Anderson; Birch; Levine, Bejarano, Carrell, & Vered; and Pritchard) were to be part of a CATESOL '03 reading colloquium David was organizing at the time of his death. In con-

ceiving the colloquium—"New Directions in Second Language Reading"—David hoped to focus on the exciting directions being pursued in L2 reading research, especially investigations of reading strategies and bottom-up reading processing, and to explore what he recognized as the important connections among seemingly disparate research agendas. He was to have served as the "gray eminence" at the colloquium, overseeing introductions and time schedules and providing general good cheer—a role that he could always be counted on to fill with grace and aplomb.

With his death, the purpose of the planned colloquium necessarily changed; Patricia Carrell and I agreed to cochair the session, which, while still focusing on the theme David had envisioned, now also became a celebration of his life and work. I have many times consoled myself with the thought that David would have smiled on hearing the tributes offered in his memory at the colloquium. I know he would have been pleased with the papers presented in his honor.

When the editors of *The CATESOL Journal* suggested that these papers be published as a themed section on reading, the authors unanimously welcomed this opportunity to again honor the memory of David Eskey. Because of our close personal and professional connections to David, the editors also invited Lía Kamhi-Stein and me to contribute to the themed collection; like the other contributors, we are honored to have our work included.

While editing the papers that follow, I identified a number of recurring themes in addition to those highlighted at the CATESOL Reading Colloquium in David's honor (reading strategies and bottom-up reading processing): the sociocultural dimensions of L2 reading and writing; the interaction of psycho- and sociological processes in L2 literacy; and the potential application of second language reading research to pedagogy.

Neil Anderson's paper "Metacognitive Reading Strategy Awareness of ESL and EFL Learners" compares subjects' reading-strategy use in first- and second-language and across different instructional environments, with special emphasis on the readers' awareness of those strategies. Like most of the other authors, Anderson suggests ways his findings might be useful to classroom teachers.

Second language reading strategies are also the central focus of Robert Pritchard in "Strategic Reading for English Learners: Principles and Practices." In this far-reaching discussion, Pritchard first synthesizes research on the development of strategic readers; he then provides suggestions for delivering strategic instruction; and finally he provides actual examples of classroom activities.

While Anderson and Pritchard explore what are often referred to as "top-down" strategies, Barbara Birch focuses on "low-level strategies" for reading in English and in Spanish in her paper, "Teaching Spanish Readers to Read in English." Her evidence suggests that significant differences in processing may seriously impede the transition between literacy in Spanish and literacy in English. Birch offers a wealth of linguistic and psycholinguistic information to teachers of Spanish-literate ESL/EFL students hoping to assist students' transition to English literacy.

The study reported on by Levine, Bejarano, Carrell, and Vered, "Comparing Dictionary Definitions and Glosses in Hypertext Foreign Language Reading: Facilitating Foreign Language Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary Acquisition," investigates the impact on L2 reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition of hypertext referencing of computer texts. Neither short-term vocabulary retention nor overall reading comprehension were significantly improved through the use of hypertext glosses or through access to a hypertext dictionary (as opposed to through access to a paper dictionary). The researchers note, however, that students were more likely to use the on-line, rather than the paper, dictionary. Follow-up interviews reveal that readers had clear preference for and made more frequent use of particular strategies.

In "The Internet and Second Language Reading and Writing as Sociolinguistic and Psycholinguistic Processes," Lía Kamhi-Stein observes L2 literacy instructors must both motivate students to read and write (the socio-cultural dimension of L2 literacy) and help them to develop the needed strategic skills to successfully do so (the appropriate psycholinguistic competence). She argues that the Internet provides teachers the opportunity to address students' sociocultural and psycholinguistic needs. Like the other authors in this collection, Kamhi-Stein offers a thoughtful discussion of classroom implications.

The final paper, "Literacy as Sociocultural Practice: Comparing Chinese and Korean Readers," is the product of a longstanding collaboration between David Eskey and myself. The work is based on the central idea that literacy can be best understood in a sociocultural context, that is, as instances of social and cultural practice. The paper considers the impact of literacy practices and attitudes of two groups of subjects—Chinese and Korean—on success in reading in a second language. Among other conclusions, we suggest that L2 reading success may be related to certain first language attitudes and behaviors. In the spirit of the other papers collected here and in keeping with David Eskey's concern for wedding research with practice, the paper concludes with pedagogical implications arising from our work.

### **Guest Editor**

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### **Endnote**

<sup>1</sup> 2003, March/April/May, *TESOL Matters*, 13(2), p. 7.

