Book Reviews

Language in Mind: An Introduction to Psycholinguistics. By Julie Sedivy. Sunderland, MA: Sinauer Associates, Inc.; 2014. 558 p. US $113.95 (Hardcover). ISBN: 978-0878935987.

This brightly colored textbook is designed to be accessible to students with no prior exposure to linguistics or psycholinguistics. As an example of this consideration for first-timers, the author not only defines bolded terms in the glossary at the back of the book, but also includes wide margins where she defines bolded terms like “lexical entrainment” and “Whorf hypothesis.” The text begins with the rationale for the scientific study of language, moves to language acquisition (both at the species and individual levels), delves into microlinguistic language processing, and ends with a discussion of the social function of language. Several oft-cited staples of linguistic instruction (Grice’s maxims, the McGurk effect, garden path sentences, poverty of the stimulus argument, and the infamous Phineas Gage) are present, as well they should be.

So what new features does this book offer? First, it offers a companion website with activities that can be used in the classroom or as study aids, additional readings, and flashcards divided by book chapter. This website also allows for the inclusion of videos to supplement the discussion of gesture and sign language. Second, this text strategically uses color to segment potentially difficult syntactic concepts for the novice reader, as with all antecedents and pronouns in a sentence colored red to visually represent co-reference. Furthermore, the author often provides the actual linguistic and visual stimuli from the studies she cites. The reader is more likely to comprehend the tasks when given the actual four items from which the participants could choose, for example. Perhaps one of the most compelling benefits of this text, particularly considering the intended audience of non-majors and hobbyists, is the inclusion of the purple Language at Large boxes throughout the text. These engaging tidbits offer an expert’s view on the types of linguistic discussions you are apt to have at a party when someone discovers you study language, with juicy titles like “McLanguage and the perils of branding by prefix,” “A psycholinguist walks into a bar…,” and “George W. Bush: A modern-day Reverend Spooner?” These will spark good conversation at that wine and cheese party you have planned for Saturday night.

This text is an invitation into the world of psycholinguistics for those who want to get their feet wet without diving all the way in. Overall, this text is recommended for those less familiar with the psycholinguistic literature.

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Essentials of Clinical Examination Handbook. Seventh Edition. By Justin Hall, Katrina Piggott, Miliana Vojvodic, and Kirill Zaslavsky, editors. New York: Thieme; 2013. 640 p. US $39.99 (Paperback). ISBN: 978-1604069112.

The benefits of a readily accessible clinical reference become immediately apparent to every medical student tasked with conducting pre-dawn patient rounds. Written and edited by faculty and students at the University of Toronto, the Essentials of Clinical Examination Handbook aims to provide health care professionals with a portable yet comprehensive guide to symptom-based patient
interviewing, focused physical examination, and diagnostic assessment. At a weighty 640 pages, it is unlikely to find its way into many white coat pockets — an unfortunate fact given the clarity and utility of much of the information within.

The first and largest section of the book comprises 17 chapters intended to direct history taking and physical examination across all organ systems, including specific advice for pediatric and geriatric patients, and is a clear highlight of the text. The majority of the chapters employ a similar format. Relevant anatomy is briefly introduced through illustrations, followed by frequent chief complaints for a given system. The reader is then guided through a symptom-focused exam, describing information that should be elicited from the patient during the medical history and proper technique of pertinent physical exam maneuvers. The clinical examination is presented in a clear, logical manner that will mirror the flow of a successful doctor-patient interview. Each chapter concludes with a discussion of potential follow-up tests and imaging and their applicability to a number of common clinical presentations. Interspersed throughout the text are “clinical pearls,” asides that range from must-not-miss constellations of symptoms to appropriate timelines for disease screening to simple admonitions (“Make sure fingernails are trimmed!” p. 126).

Less successful are the 10 “Essentials” chapters, which provide additional insights into clinical specialties, including endocrinology, emergency medicine, infectious disease, and oncology, as well as more general topics such as pharmacology, fluid repletion, and imaging modalities. Certain chapters (Essentials of Dermatology, notably) are useful guides to common symptoms that would not be out of place among earlier chapters, though the hand-drawn depictions of rashes will do little to inspire confidence in one’s ability to identify them on a patient. Too often, however, the information in these chapters is presented in a dense, table-based manner akin to study guides for USMLE Step 1, making it nearly impossible to integrate into a successful patient interaction.

Finally, the three appendices to the text cover the basics of evidence-based practice and clinical epidemiology, frequently used drugs for a variety of clinical scenarios, and common laboratory values, respectively. Of these, the tables of lab results prove the most useful, providing normal ranges, critically elevated, or decreased levels, and notes on their significance in an easy to browse format.

While its lack of depth may render Essentials of Clinical Examination less useful in a specialty practice, medical, nursing, and physician assistant students should find the practical history and physical exam guidance invaluable. As an introductory reference to primary-care patient encounters, the book is highly recommended.

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Immunology: An Illustrated Outline. Fifth Edition. By David Male. New York: Garland Science, Taylor & Francis Group; 2014. 147 p. US $31.40 (Paperback). ISBN: 978-0815345015.

Although this book states that it was written with three functions in mind, it is actually a concise reference of basic immunology for a broad audience, including those currently reading immunology and those who have not previously studied immunology. The inclusion of both contents pages and an index of terms broaden its accessibility to a non-specialist audience and make it a convenient read for the specialist, thus making it incredibly clear and easy to navigate. The five topics are arranged logically and cover a comprehensive introduction to the basics of immunology, clinical immunology, and immunological techniques. The illustrations complement and further clarify the succinct text nicely; importantly, both color schematics and micrographs are included, which are very insightful. Furthermore, the inside cover contains a glossary of icons used throughout the book. This continuity really helps unify and simplify the information provided. This book is very successful at pro-