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Book Reviews: Monographic Musings

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from the Reference Desk

by Tom Gilson (Associate Editor, Against the Grain, and Head of Reference Emeritus, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC 29401) <gilson@cofc.edu>


The study of language development is a highly interdisciplinary field that draws from disciplines ranging from neuroscience and psychology to education, linguistics, speech and hearing studies, and genetics. A look at the Reader’s Guide with its broad subject categories reinforces this observation in addition to providing a sense of the coverage. Individual articles address specific concepts and theories, research models and methods, cognitive and biological issues, social and family impacts, disabilities and disorders, and special populations including nonhuman primates.

Besides the Reader’s Guide, finding aids include numerous “see also” references and a thorough general index. Each entry is signed and has its own bibliography of further readings. Value-added features include a resource list of books and articles, journals, associations, and Websites; a glossary; a chronology; and an appendix of world literacy statistics.

The Encyclopedia of Language Development is an informed and scholarly work that employs fact-filled descriptions and explanations of the topics covered. Given that ongoing research is essential to the discipline, there are numerous references to relevant sources and scholarship throughout. Although there are some illustrations, this volume is text dense. While the informed and interested lay reader will find the Encyclopedia helpful, it is obviously intended for students, faculty, continued on page 51