Isaacs, T. (2012). Review of [Teaching and learning second language listening: Metacognition in action] by L. Vandergrift & C. M. Goh. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, *68*(3), 349–351.

Second language (L2) listening has long been regarded as an integral part of communicative competence. Yet teachers often struggle to systematically target this skill, with in-class activities often restricted to *testing* rather than *teaching* listening. For example, the emphasis in instruction is often on eliciting learners' responses to comprehension questions, with proportion of correctly answered responses generally constituting the only evidence of listening development over time (i.e., emphasis on the "product" rather than the "process" of listening). Although teachers often suggest that students listen to aural input in the target language outside of the classroom (e.g., through exposure to nonprint media, listening to songs, or finding conversational partners), such suggestions are rarely accompanied by the requisite mechanisms to help students monitor their own learning.

Vandergrift and Goh's (2012) depiction of these and other approaches and challenges in teaching listening through the presentation of pedagogical scenarios and learner accounts is likely to resonate with an audience of L2 practitioners who may recognize their own practices or experiences as teachers or learners in the descriptions. A major strength of the book lies in the integration of up-to-date listening research and theory with pedagogy. This is accomplished by concretizing abstract concepts through illustrative, often empirically-derived examples and through the provision of formative assessment tools and activities to gauge learner perceptions or foster their self-awareness. The major innovation of this work compared to previously published book-length contributions on listening is the strong emphasis on the metacognitive dimension, including ways of spearheading learner awareness, self-regulation, and engagement in their own learning. Thus, this comprehensive, research-based text is likely to be relevant to applied linguists with wide-ranging knowledge about the processes underlying L2 listening and how

these interface with pedagogical practice. The book could be useful as a foundational text for a graduate-level course on L2 pedagogy and curriculum or more generally as reference material for researchers or practitioners interested in different facets of teaching, learning, and assessing listening.

The book, which begins by inviting reader reflections on 10 commonly held assumptions about teaching and learning L2 listening (prologue) and concludes by revisiting these assumptions (epilogue), is organized into three main parts. Part 1, which is comprised of four chapters, begins by presenting a description of current challenges and instructional gaps in teaching L2 listening. Although the term "metacognition" is defined as early as the third page of the introductory chapter, the authors underscore that it has not been given due attention in any of the approaches to teaching listening that have dominated instruction over the past five decades. While the authors espouse the learner-oriented approach, which centers on enabling learner strategy use, they argue that it does not go far enough. In their view, a metacognitive approach, which centers on fostering learner engagement in self-regulation and self-direction, is the essential missing ingredient. Thus, Part 1 gives the reader a background on foundational aspects of L2 listening before the authors go into detail about their proposed metacognitive framework for listening instruction in Part 2. The remainder of Part 1 provides an accessible overview of the cognitive processes underlying listening comprehension, knowledge sources, task demands, and the cognitive and affective factors that influence learners' success in processing aural input and that could result in individual differences in performance outcomes.

Part 2, which comprises six chapters and constitutes nearly 50% of the main text, is arguably the crux of the book. Having established that a metacognitive dimension is necessary to supplement and buttress the learner-oriented instructional approach, Vandergrift and Goh unveil their metacognitive framework for activating listeners' processing of aural input as skilled listeners, modeling ways in which a metacognitive approach can be implemented in practice. Content coverage includes the theoretical

underpinnings of metacognition and complementary research findings, the presentation of a metacognitive pedagogical sequence, which has received empirical backing in a variety of learning contexts, and discussions and activities on helping learners manage affective factors, develop word segmentation skills, and on ways that teachers can scaffold and systematically target L2 listening development and embed a metacognitive approach within task-based listening instruction.

Part 3, which consists of two final chapters, centers on technological applications for listening instruction (e.g., in multimedia settings) and assessment-specific issues and principles, including the usefulness of formative assessment for helping learners engage in self-monitoring. Although the metacognitive framework is arguably relegated to the background in these chapters, which focus mostly on covering a broad content range, these chapters highlight the implications of and potential for using a metacognitive approach in different instructional contexts, with the effect of making this volume more comprehensive. Overall, Vandergrift and Goh's book is an invaluable resource for L2 teachers and researchers who seek to understand the processes underlying L2 listening and how they feed into methods for enhancing instructional effectiveness and, ultimately, for optimizing learners' L2 listening experiences.

Talia Isaacs, *University of Bristol*