Daniele Baldassari e Manuela Brizzi. *Centro! Attività per stranieri sulla grammatica e il lessico. 1.* Roma: Edilingua, 2014. Pp. 214. ISBN: 9789606930997. € 16.50. (Paperback + CD).

Anna Moni e Mariangela Rapacciuolo. *Scriviamo insieme! 1. Attività per lo sviluppo dell'abilità di scrittura.* Roma: Edilingua, 2014. Pp. 78. ISBN: 9788898433124. € 12.90. (Paperback).

Centro! Attività per stranieri sulla grammatica e il lessico offers a collection of Italian grammar activities geared towards non-native students of Italian at the beginner level (A1–A2). The workbook lends itself to accompany in-class instruction, functioning as “un quaderno operativo,” allowing students to apply what they have learned in class in a practical way. The authors, Daniele Baldassari and Manuela Brizzi, have designed the book to work as a didactic tool for “Classi ad Abilità Differenziate” (CAD), incorporating knowledge of multiple glottodidactic techniques, taking into account that classrooms are composed of individual students at different levels of comprehension, with different cognitive styles and speeds of learning. As a result, the book acts as an instrument for the instructor to use within a complex learning environment, aiding him/her to identify the learning style of each student.

Centro! Attività per stranieri sulla grammatica e il lessico approaches didactic techniques and activities as two distinct elements that are both required in language instruction and absorption. The book addresses the necessity of three technique-types that facilitate students’ ability to absorb the grammar concepts covered, and effectively presents activities that develop each technique: 1) Controlled technique—involves unambiguous solutions through a systematic and codified use of grammar. Includes activities such as matching, selection, substitution, transcription, focused reading, analytic listening, etc. 2) Guided technique—allows for more flexible solutions, aiding in the development of linguistic and communicative skills. Includes activities that involve integration, interpretation, transformation, active reading and listening, mediation, etc.

3) Liberal learning technique—wherein students apply linguistic and communicative skills that they already possess. Includes activities that involve composition, exposition, authentic reading and relaxed listening.

By delineating these techniques, the book offers instructors with helpful guidelines as they prepare their pedagogical strategies.

Centro! Attività per stranieri sulla grammatica e il lessico is divided into ten units, each tackling multiple grammar concepts through the use of rich colour images and cultural references, serving to engage students inside and outside of the classroom. The concepts presented in each unit are organized both logically and strategically, working through the grammar concepts cumulatively. For example, Unità 1, “Classificare le parole,” is an effective introduction to Italian for a beginner student. The nouns introduced are organized into logical categories such as daily use, school, transportation, animals, parts of the body, professions, family, etc. As another example, Unità 4, “Parlare di oggi,” introduces regular verbs, followed by the present progressive, reflexive verbs in the present, and the use of the present tense to express future actions. This is an interesting mode of creating cognitive links in the mind of the student regarding the different ways to use present forms in Italian.

Each activity is identified for its level of difficulty, as well as for the types of skills that it aims to develop and employ, allowing the instructor to respond to the way in which each student learns, and to assign activities that will further develop a skill, or focus on an area requiring more attention. The book is accompanied by an audio CD of audio exercises from each unit, transcriptions of which can be found at the end of all the units. In addition to the CD and transcriptions, an answer key for the written exercises is available on the publisher’s website, all of which are excellent resources for self-study.

Centro! Attività per stranieri sulla grammatica e il lessico ultimately provides instructors with a workbook that they can use in parallel with and/or in conjunction with their in-class lessons. The book’s CD-conscious design recognizes that the levels of second-language acquisition are “mai perfettamente omogenei né omogeneizzabili,” and consequently presents activities that suit multiple didactic and learning techniques. The identification of each exercise for the type of skill it aims to improve, along with the engaging presentation of the material, offer both the instructor and the student with an organized, practical and stimulating approach to Italian grammar.

Scriviamo insieme! offers students of Italian a series of exercises aimed at developing their writing skills. While many Italian language workbooks for beginners tend to focus on grammar-based exercises, this book concentrates on helping students express their ideas in a language that is not their own. The exercises presented are designed to work well in a guided writing context, as well as for writing freeform.

Through these exercises, the goal is to equip students with the skills required to organize their ideas in Italian, and gradually develop techniques that they may benefit from at the intermediate and advanced levels. The exercises are intended to improve writing production, beginning at the word-level, then at the phrase-level, and later at the paragraph level. There are exercises that allow for punctuation and orthography practice.

The book is composed of twelve units, and is devised to adhere to the objectives of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The exercises included call on students to write in both formal and informal contexts. These include exercises on how to make a list, fill out a form, write an SMS, email and postcard, how to write in a chat room or blog, how to write descriptions of family members and other individuals, and how to tell a story in both present and past. Such exercises allow for a practical application of Italian writing skills, aiding students in the improvement of their overall comprehension, lexical and morphological accuracy, as well as their ability to organize their thoughts and ideas under both guided and freeform instruction methods.

Scriviamo insieme! is designed to allow the instructor to use these activities as part of his/her course, in a way which will not interfere with students' linguistic development, and will instead enhance it. The book is suitable for both youth and adult students at the A1–A2 level who wish to improve their written production abilities and eventually earn a linguistic certification.

LEILA ANNA OUJI
University of Toronto

Simonetta Rossi. *Scuola 2.0: Come insegnare a scrivere testi. Indicazioni per la scuola secondaria di primo grado e per il biennio*. Roma: Aracne, 2014. Pp. 196. ISBN: 9788854871960. € 12.

Il validissimo testo di Simonetta Rossi, docente in corsi di formazione per insegnanti e collaboratrice dell'Indire (Istituto Nazionale di Documentazione, Innovazione e Ricerca Educativa), s'inserisce tra i manuali pensati principalmente per gli insegnanti di qualsiasi disciplina della scuola secondaria di primo grado (d'ora in poi scuola media) e per quelli del biennio della scuola secondaria di secondo grado o scuola superiore (d'ora in poi biennio), ormai diventato obbligatorio.