



# education review

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**Boreen, Jean & Niday, Donna with Johnson, Mary K. (2003)  
*Mentoring Across Boundaries: Helping Beginning Teachers  
Succeed in Challenging Situations.* Portland, Maine: Stenhouse  
Publishers.**

This insightful offering includes both first-hand accounts from the authors' experiences with mentoring, as well as numerous examples obtained from observations and interviews with practicing teachers in the field. The book lends itself well not only to those in mentoring relationships, but is pertinent information for administrators and those at the University level involved with the placement of student teachers. The authors' previous publication regarding mentoring is extended in their current book.

The true strength of this book is its many thoughtful insights on a variety of teaching and mentoring situations. For those charged with mentoring, the variety of experiences detailed is valuable. Likewise administrators who must match mentors with new and beginning teachers will benefit from the myriad case examples of positive and negative mentoring situations. With the current levels of teacher attrition it is more critical than ever that new and beginning professionals be inducted effectively into the profession, and even into new teaching situations with the utmost care. The detailed information along with pertinent examples for each case presented help the reader to clearly understand the importance of these relationships as well as giving vital insights as to how these relationships can best be established.

The areas covered by this book are an integral part of its strength. Many of the cases presented for consideration have, to a large degree, been absent from previous literature on the subject. Gender, rural and urban differences, mentoring teachers new to the building, self-mentoring, and technology assisted mentoring are only a few of the areas covered by the book. Each chapter presents relevant case examples, and where appropriate, links conclusions to educational theory. A variety of teaching fields and levels of teaching, elementary and secondary, are included to make the book an effective example for those at all levels of K-12 education. The end of the book also presents an outstanding section offering Internet sources of information for both mentors and beginning teachers.

Though the authors give excellent and immediately useful information for a wide selection of those interested in mentoring, they do miss a prime opportunity to include lateral entry teachers. These "provisionally licensed" teachers and those involved in alternative

certification routes and on-the-job-training present a unique set of challenges to induction and success in the teaching field, and need to be addressed. These teachers bring a unique set of needs to the teaching situation and, as many of them have little or no pedagogical training as they enter the field (with content training through a previous degree), their needs differ from beginning teachers with traditional license and student-teaching experience. In the current educational climate, these lateral entry teachers have a specific and likely different set of needs than do traditionally trained teachers. The exclusion of this group is the one weakness in an otherwise excellent offering.

With the teachers leaving the classroom at high rates within their first five years on the job, it becomes more critical that great care be given to mentoring relationships. New and beginning teachers need great amounts of support from the most effective mentors that administrators can access. Though one important segment of teachers is neglected, all others involved in this process can only find this book to be insightful, practical, and beneficial to those on all sides of the mentoring process.

Pages: 213    Price: \$18.50    ISBN: 1-57110-377-5

**Reviewed by Amy E. White, Assistant Professor, University of North Carolina, Charlotte. Research interests include new teacher retention and lateral entry teachers.**

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### **Bracke, John M. & Tye, Karen B. (2003) *Teaching the Bible in the Church*. St. Louis: Chalice Press.**

Year after year the Bible stands at the top of book sales statistics. While it is clearly a bestseller, the study of these scriptures is not a bestselling activity even among people in the church. Ours is a culture that is increasingly biblically illiterate, “The evidence seems clear to us —biblical illiteracy pervades our churches” (p.2), note authors Bracke and Tye. Yet, it is the Bible, the story of God’s redemptive work in the Old and New Testament, that serves as the cornerstone for the life of faith, both for the individual and the larger Christian community. Bracke and Tye see a need to improve how the Bible is taught in the church. *Teaching the Bible in the Church* seeks to educate laypersons and church leaders alike on Bible study using insights from theology and education.

Central to this text is the understanding that Bible study is not just an informational pursuit. Studying the Bible, for the Christian, is more than learning knowledge: it is an encounter with God that leads to life transformation. In their text, Bracke and Tye hope to impart knowledge that will equip teachers to more effectively lead people to experience Bible study that involves, “..an encounter with the mystery we call God” (p. 4). Bracke and Tye form a unique collaborative: Bracke is a Professor of Biblical Studies; Tye is a Professor of Christian

Education; both teach at Eden Theological Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. They believe there is a need to infuse Biblical teaching with educational learning theory, cultural awareness and insights from Biblical scholarship.

After outlining these ideas in the Introduction, Bracke and Tye tackle each area in-depth in the book's five chapters. The book begins with a focus on the educational aspects, exploring the need to consider educational theory in biblical instruction. In chapter one, Bracke and Tye present the findings of recent educational research, including learning styles, multiple intelligences and memory ability. Chapter two examines important factors in instruction: content knowledge, teaching methods and instructor perceptions of themselves and their students.

Chapters 3 tackles the issue of cultural understanding as it relates to Bible study. According to Bracke and Tye, readers of the scriptures must understand the cultural influences of Bible times as well as understand the cultural perceptions they bring to the biblical text. Each impacts how passages are understood. Chapter 4 explores the four main approaches to interpreting scriptures: literal, textual, literary and personal, explaining how each impacts Bible study. Each chapter ends with a helpful summary that reviews the teachings of the chapter, highlighting important ideas.

As its title implies, Chapter 5, "Teaching the Bible: Putting it All Together," ties the concepts of the text together. The authors present a case study of a Bible study where the principals outlined in the book are put into practice. A Bible study outline at the conclusion helps readers see how the principals presented in this text are put into practice.

*Teaching the Bible in the Church* is a valuable resource for those in the church. It combines the best in educational learning theory with scholarly theological research, helping church leaders in teaching the church's most important resource, the Bible. Recommended for Christian educators, pastors and seminary students.

Pages: **166**   Price: **\$19.99**   ISBN: **0-8272-3643-3**

**Reviewed by Stephanie Davis, Spring Arbor University**

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**Cecil, Nancy Lee & Gipe, Joan P. (2003) *Literacy in the Intermediate Grades: Best Practices for a Comprehensive Program*. Scottsdale, AZ: Holcomb Hathaway Publishers.**

Directed at pre-service and practicing teachers, this textbook focuses on helping teachers help all children in their classes to "make sense of printed text"(p.xv). The authors define a comprehensive program as one that looks at reading and writing skills as part of a whole--a set of

communication processes necessary for all learning. In the Preface, the authors describe a variety of special features to be found in this textbook. These ten features range from the inclusion of classroom activities, sample questions for discussion, suggestions for field trips and projects, as well as separate chapters on literacy and the family and on what the authors call, orchestration, basically a description of classroom management in an inner city school in Oakland, CA.

Each of the chapters is structured in a fairly standard textbook format. Each chapter begins with a set of "Focus Questions" and provides a sidebar, "In the Classroom," near the beginning of each chapter, which describes an actual classroom in which a teacher is engaged in a relevant aspect of teaching literacy. Chapter text is followed by a summary, questions for discussion, suggestions for projects and a one-to two-page list of references. Some chapters have a section on aspects of instruction that pose challenges to the new teacher along with recommendations for ways to deal with these challenges.

The chapters are:

- A Comprehensive Literacy Program for the Intermediate Grades
- Assessment of Progress in Literacy
- Word Study and Fluency
- Vocabulary Instruction
- Reading Comprehension
- Fostering Oral Language in the Classroom
- Reading and Writing Connections
- Literacy in the Content Areas: Learning from Informational Text
- Differentiating Instruction for Students with Special Needs
- Fostering Literacy Beyond the Classroom
- Connecting Parents, Teachers and Children
- Literacy in the Intermediate Grades: Orchestrating a Comprehensive Program

The textbook concludes with a three-page list of references to children's literature; a two-page annotated list of "Literacy Websites" that provides very little information about the sites and includes some outdated URL's (p. 361); a brief list of commercial tests; a variety of informal assessment tools; the Fry Readability Graph; a glossary and an index.

The authors are both affiliated with California State University, Sacramento, where Dr. Cecil is a Professor of Education and Dr. Gipe is a Lecturer in Education. The second edition of Dr. Cecil's *Striking A Balance: Best Practices for Early Literacy* was recently published by Holcomb Hathaway. Both authors have lengthy, significant lists of previous publications in the field of literacy, and so are well qualified to write such a textbook. Is another textbook needed on literacy in grades three through six? It is difficult to see any particular aspect of this textbook that would make it stand out. The topics covered are appropriate; the text is clear and readable, with some illustrations, but

each chapter has so many subheadings and graphically separated components that it is difficult to find one's way through. Those looking for a new literacy textbook would do well to keep looking.

Pages: 422 Price: \$35.95 ISBN: 1-890871-46-X

Reviewed by Carla Hendrix, Plattsburgh State University of New York

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**King-Shaver, Barbara & Hunter, Alyce (2003)  
*Differentiated Instruction in the English Classroom:  
Content, Process, Product, and Assessment.* Portsmouth,  
NH: Heinemann.**

Given the time constraints most teachers face during the school year, there isn't a lot of time in the day left for leisurely reading professional books. Appreciating this fact, Barbara King-Shaver and Alyce Hunter cut "right to the chase" as they define differentiated instruction and why it is worth considering for use in a middle school or secondary English classroom. Once this is accomplished, the authors devote the rest of this practical guide to how to set up a program that uses this approach.

An alternative to heterogeneous classes, differentiated instruction offers multiple ways of learning, taking into account the individual abilities of each student. The authors explain, "It asks a teacher to recognize differences and then plan and deliver accordingly, which requires extensive content knowledge as well as a vast repertoire of instructional strategies ready to match each and every student's different needs" (p. 2). Therein lies the problem and the reason why many teachers may shy away from this mode of instruction. Not only must the individual possess content knowledge and a bag of strategies for delivering it, but he must also possess the ability to diagnose students as well to ascertain each youngster's needs, interests and learning style.

For those who buy into the idea of differentiated instruction, King-Shaver and Hunter provide some concrete advice for redesigning the curriculum to make the program a reality. They try to answer all the questions that might be coursing through a teacher's mind:

- How can an English teacher differentiate for over 100 students a day?
- How does this affect preparation for the high-stakes testing that has to be addressed?
- How does one teacher keep track of so many students doing so many different things?

These are the practical concerns that must be and are addressed.

The "nuts and bolts" aspect of the book clearly and concisely offers a wide range of samples, from student surveys that will help assess interests and skill levels, to prereading worksheets and differentiated learning contracts and plans. The authors also offer examples of how to use folders in a skills-based English class, design writing and research projects, and create literature circles. Aware of the fact that honors and basic skills students are more often than not mixed together in the same classroom, King-Shaver and Hunter show how both sets of students' needs can be met.

Group discussion and essay rubrics, specific writing assignments, research project instructions, and even a model of how to maintain class records illustrate the authors' practical approach. Theory is fine but the "how to" aspects of any instructional program are what really interest teachers. There are enough ideas crammed into *Differentiated Instruction in the English Classroom* that every educator, no matter his or her level of experience, will come away with something usable. What more can you ask of a book like this?

Pages: 136 Price: \$17.00 ISBN: 0-325-00577-X

**Reviewed by Robert F. Walch, Retired educator, Monterey, California**

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**Levine, Mel (2003) *The Myth of Laziness*. New York: Simon & Schuster.**

Ambition, productivity, artifacts-- these are the catchwords of the day. Parents, teachers, school counselors, and psychologists spend vast amounts of time and energy trying to determine how to motivate a child to produce and how to evaluate the results of productivity itself. But what happens when a child doesn't produce? *The Myth of Laziness* explains why some children and adults don't produce, causing some of us to reconsider our ideas of laziness.

Dr. Mel Levine, who has authored books such as *A Mind at a Time: America's Top Learning Expert Shows how Every Child Can Succeed* and *Keeping A Head In School: A Student's Book about Learning Abilities and Learning Disorders*, attempts to debunk the myth of the lazy child. Levine, well known as a pediatrician specializing in children's learning says, "They are not lazy, they have output failure" (p.1). He explains how output failure is related to neurological, muscular, or psychological problems. Levine relates eight case studies of students and adults whose productivity suffers because of factors such as "neurodevelopmental dysfunctions" or "mental-energy-control problems." Levine explains how these somewhat daunting afflictions of brain and body connections reveal themselves in measures of human output.

Everyone knows a child like Russell--slightly overweight, uncoordinated, unpopular; Russell required so much effort to form letters that it was laborious. Ginny, smart and talented, was unpredictable. Ginny had trouble "mobilizing and maintaining a steady flow of mental energy" (p. 61) so she didn't accomplish much. Teachers and parents saw both Russell and Ginny as lazy when it was the brain's connection to the body that affected the productivity, or output, of these individuals.

The most unusual case Levine reports is Roberta, a student who earned A's and B's in school. Roberta could recall factual information and scored well on various tests in school, yet she could not generate ideas of her own. In Levine's words, she was having problems with the "ideational component of output" (p. 114). Roberta had problems forming her own ideas and personal views on the readings and could not analyze or apply them to the larger world that she inhabited. Levine suggested that her parents and teachers direct her toward careers that required much memorization and routine but little creativity. It's interesting to note that Levine admits he never met Roberta, but had only encountered her predicament via her teachers sharing their concerns with him. It's difficult not to be cynical about Levine's decision to intervene without meeting the student, but we've all had a Roberta in our classroom. His inclusion of Roberta (and all the students she represents) in the book stimulates much thought.

Levine explains many medical terms in layman's language, making the book accessible to any reader. For instance, finger agnosia: "Finger agnosia is seen in kids who have trouble keeping track of where their pen or pencil is during writing" (p. 28). As the reader moves through the book, he will become familiar with terms such as "praxis," "dyspraxia, proprioceptive-kinesthetic feedback," "static and dynamic performance," and "ideation." The definitions are well worded and helpful to readers without a medical background.

The *Myth of Laziness* concludes with suggestions for parents, teachers, and others who live, work, or relate to those who suffer from output failure. While it's difficult to agree with many of his interpretations or suggestions, there is much food for thought in these pages. Though Levine does not offer simple, fail-safe prescriptions, he does hook readers' interests, making it more likely we will never again think of the word "lazy" in quite the same way. Will the book change our teaching practices? Probably not.

Pages: 270 Price: \$20.00(hardcover) \$13.00(paper) ISBN: 0-7432-1367-X(hardcover) 0743213688(paper)

**Reviewed by N. Kim Doan, Graduate Student, University of Virginia**

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**McCarthy, Martha M., Cambron-McCabe, Nelda H. & Thomas, Stephen B. (2003) *Legal Rights of Teachers and Students*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.**

Despite practicing law for fourteen years prior to my entry into teaching high school, I was often not prepared to provide quick and effective counsel to my fellow teachers and administrators. I had a difficult time explaining the legal framework, context, or principles so that they could be readily understood and applied. This book is an invaluable, useful, practical book that should be at ready reference for teachers and administrators. It could serve as an excellent text for undergraduate teacher training in legal matters. The authors are leaders in the field of education and the law and are cognizant of the need for practical guidance for practitioners. This book is a revised and condensed edition of *Public School Law* by the same authors (5th ed., 2004).

The American system of government and laws is complex. Despite the required government classes, people often have little understanding of the fundamental aspects of our system. The initial chapter lays a solid foundation by describing the major sources of education law. Each major section has a very concise statement within a shaded box that serves to prepare one for the text that follows. The figure in this initial chapter on civil procedure provides a nice visual of the way lawsuits are handled. The margins and spacing are adequate for those who like to make notes in the text of the book. The use of bold text to emphasize key points aids the practical use of this book.

The above attractive features continue throughout the book. Added to these features are the Points to Ponder at the end of each later chapter. These are essentially a short statement of facts and typically ask how the court should rule, would rule, or how schools could or should respond. They are concise but get to the very heart of important matters that people in schools face daily. They often contain citations to cases or statutes so that further exploration is encouraged and often they provide different perspectives in unsettled areas of law.

The book progresses through eleven chapters that deal with the great breadth of the law and education intersection. The coverage is comprehensive and up-to-date. Four of the chapters deal with the rights and responsibilities of teachers as employees. Four of the chapters deal with student issues: expression, classification, disabilities, and discipline. Chapter four examines important emerging instructional issues of censorship, copyright, testing, and privacy. No educational law book could be complete without chapters on torts (civil wrongs) and church-state relations and the chapters in this book are clear and comprehensive. The general principles of the last chapter provide a wonderful summary and a way to emphasize important aspects often unknown or overlooked by education practitioners.

The book would be worth the purchase price if all it included were the tables, flow charts, and decision trees. They are exceptional quick decision guides for practitioners. For example, the various laws dealing with student disabilities can be confusing. Table 7.1 provides a nice chart on which laws apply to which type of institution. Figure 5.1 is a decision tree dealing with assessing student expression protections and regulations.

*Legal Rights of Teachers and Students* should be readily available to educational practitioners who must navigate an increasingly legalized context of education practice.

#### Reference

Cambron-McCabe, N.H., McCarthy, M.M., & Thomas, S.B. (2004). *Public school law: Teacher's and student's rights* (5th ed.). Boston: Pearson.

Pages: 322 Price: \$48.33 ISBN: 0-205-35449-1

**Reviewed by Michael W. Simpson.** Michael has practiced law, taught in inner city schools and summer Upward Bound programs, prison college programs, and in community college. He is currently completing a M.Ed. in adult and higher education at the University of Oklahoma where he works as a research assistant. Michael will continue his studies next fall at another university in policy studies and law.

**Newman, Sarah (2004) *Stepping Out: Using Games and Activities to Help Your Child with Special Needs*. London: Jessica Kingsley.**

*Stepping Out*, subtitled *Using Games and Activities to Help Your Child with Special Needs*, was written by a parent of a child with special needs for other parents and caregivers of children with special needs. The age range is 3 to 11. As a parent of a daughter with severe special needs, I was interested in reading the book. I was not disappointed. *Stepping Out* is full of practical advice, fun games and creative activities. Even though the book is written for the parent of a child with special needs, it would be useful for any parent.

The premise of the book is that children with special needs require additional help, stimulation and encouragement to develop skills. To provide such support it is useful, as Newman notes, "to have an understanding of their development"(p.12). The book has been written to present a brief overview of the progression of child development so as to enable the parent or caregiver to "see the stage at which the child is at and where he or she is heading"(p.12).

*Stepping Out* begins with a chapter on everyday living with a child

with special needs. Any person so involved will relate readily to the discussion as it is accurate and reflects the joy and frustrations encountered. This is followed by a chapter on how to create a play environment for such a child. Additional chapters detail child development in six areas: cognitive, language, physical, sensory, social and emotional. A further chapter cites practical advice on behavior management, sleep and toilet training. These nine chapters are comprehensive and informative. The three remaining chapters are not particularly useful for parents living outside the United Kingdom. These chapters, outlining school selection, financial and practical support, are specific to the U.K. Even the Resources chapter identifies voluntary organizations and equipment suppliers found only in the United Kingdom.

An appealing feature of the book is the use of simple, black and white illustrations modelled for the book by children with special needs. Although basic in scope and style the many illustrations complement Newman's words. They also place the ideas into a warm and supporting environment.

*Stepping Out* is not meant to be read in one go. Rather, the reader is encouraged "to dip into whichever chapter you need at the time" (p.13). The book is written without a great deal of educational jargon. Theory is kept to a minimum. Academic theories of cognitive development, are confined, for example, to three pages. This minimal treatment is most suitable as the target population - the parent- is likely to be more interested in the practical than the theoretical. The emphasis on useful games and stimulating activities is more to their liking. These aspects are covered exhaustively. They are presented within a social constructivist perspective. The games and environments suggested lead the child to learn through social interaction in which the parent or caregiver supports the child in developing his or her knowledge and skills. The focus is on the child playing actively and engaging with different toys and materials to enable her or him to experiment and explore in a concrete way.

Overall, *Stepping Out* is extremely useful for a parent of a child with special needs. Newman, drawing on her own experiences, offers valuable advice on catering to the needs of the child with special needs. In addition, she offers a positive outlook on coping with the stress of caring for such a child.

Pages: 367    Price: \$19.95    ISBN: 1-84310-110-6

**Reviewed by Ian Crawford, Professor, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, Canada. A former Dean of the Faculty of Education, he maintains an interest in both special and science education.**

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**Robb, Laura (2003) *Teaching Reading in Social Studies, Science, and Math: Practical Ways to Weave Comprehension Strategies into Your Content Area Teaching.* New York: Scholastic.**

“Practical ways to weave comprehension strategies into your content area teaching” (the description on the front cover) truly describes the approach used by Laura Robb in her textbook. The text is easy to read, includes photos, authentic student work, and sample lesson plans. Framework of the text follows a natural progression from before learning, during learning, to after learning lessons and strategies.

This text would be extremely useful for methods courses in an elementary education teacher-training program, as well as graduate coursework for K-8 teachers. The book provides content area teachers more “tools” for intervention with their at risk students who may be experiencing low reading and writing achievement.

Meaningful experiences are key in this holistic model of reading and writing development. Approaches often include inquiry and all strategies are designed to be hands-on for the learners. According to Robb, the teacher should focus on refining student skills. Particularly, the method described is aimed at assisting students with strategies necessary for success with the varied reading materials they will encounter in their content area studies. Notably, the strategies utilized in the book go far beyond “decoding” text to ensure teachers are prepared to reach every student.

I would highly recommend this book.

Pages: 384    Price: \$27.95    ISBN: 0-439-17669-7

**Reviewed by Cindy Coffman, Arizona State University**



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