education review // reseñas educativas

a multi-lingual journal of book reviews

editors: gene v glass gustavo e. fischman melissa cast-brede

reseñas educativas (Spanish)
resenhas educativas (Portuguese)

Brief reviews for April 2006

Bay-Williams, Jennifer & Martinie, Sherri (2004). *Math and Literature: Grades 6-8.* Sausalito, CA: Math Solutions.

Math and Literature: Grades 6-8 is part of a series organized by grade bands (others being grades K-1, 2-3, and 4-6) to incorporate literature in the teaching and learning of mathematics. The importance of literature and mathematics is described well by McShea, Vogel, & Yarnevich (2005): “connecting mathematics to literature is an inventive way to capture students’ interests, since examples from literature can be used to teach important mathematical concepts in an exciting and innovative manner” (p. 408). Bay-Williams (2005) adds that literature provides a rich context to learn mathematics for deeper understanding.

Making connections is so important that the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) has identified Connections as one of 10 standards for school mathematics. The NCTM’s *Principles and Standards for School Mathematics* (2000) has influenced curriculum policy and textbook writing in North America. In fact, numerous articles pertaining to literature and mathematics have appeared in the NCTM journals, *Teaching Children Mathematics* and *Mathematics Teaching in the Middle School,* with an entire issue devoted to that topic (April 2005 issue of *Mathematics Teaching in the Middle Schoo*l).

Bay-Williams & Martinie have written a practical and easy-to-read resource for busy “teachers in the trenches”. Mathematics has not traditionally been associated with literature and teachers may have learned the subject discipline as drills and memorization, seeking to acquire isolated skills and procedures. What teachers need, I think, are specific instances of literature written for children and young adults (e.g., nonfiction, fiction, poetry), reproducible worksheets, and student exemplars. Further, references cited need to be readily available at major bookstores and libraries. This resource successfully does all that I have just described!

Thirty pieces of literature are referenced. A “Contents Chart” appears at the beginning of the book, listing the title and author of the children’s or young adult book, type of literature (nonfiction, fiction, poem), and which of the 5 strands or content areas of mathematics are addressed (number, geometry, patterns/algebra, measurement, data analysis/probability). There are a total of 14 lessons, each consisting of approximately 8 pages, organized as:

- synopsis of title and author of literature, summary of content of the literature piece, and mathematical content addressed
- materials needed
- how to introduce the investigation to the class
- class vignette of students working through the mathematics, follow-up problem, class discussion
- student work samples

The remaining 16 references to literature are each 2 pages, without student exemplars and class vignettes.

I believe that Bay-Williams & Martinie’s resource is suitable for grades 6-9 teachers. As a high school mathematics teacher, I enthusiastically identified 6 pieces of literature that I can easily use this semester with my grade 9 applied class:

- *Eighteen Flavours,* poem by Shel Silverstein, to write an equation for the height of *n* scoops of ice cream;
- *Greedy Triangle,* children's fiction by Marilyn Burns, to develop a formula to find the total degrees of the interior angles of a polygon;
- *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone,* young adult fiction by J. K. Rowling, to determine the measures of central tendency (mean, mode, median) of Hagrid's height and shoulder span. Students also create a scatterplot to explore the relationship between height and shoulder span;
- *The Tell-Tale Heart*, young adult fiction by Edgar Allan Poe, to construct a graph of volume versus time of a heart beat;
- *The Village of Round and Square Houses,* children's nonfiction by Ann Grifalconi, to determine which of two houses has more surface area;
- *Wilma Unlimited,* children's nonfiction by Kathleen Krull, to compare the rates of walking, hopping, and running.

I am thrilled to highly recommend this resource to grades 6-9 mathematics teachers. The resource is affordably priced and provides much needed assistance for teachers such as myself who need support to connect literature and mathematics. I often hear the phrase "all teachers are teachers of literacy". This resource is one giant step to promote literacy in mathematics.

References

Bay-Williams, J. (2005). Poetry in motion: Using Shel Silverstein's works to engage students in mathematics. *Mathematics Teaching in the Middle School, 10*(8), 386-393.

McShea, B., Vogel, J., & Yarnevich, M. (2005). Harry Potter and the magic of mathematics. *Mathematics Teaching in the Middle School, 10*(8), 408-414.

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. (2000). *Principles and standards for school mathematics.* Reston, VA: NCTM.

Pages: **169** Price: **$18.50** ISBN: **: 0-941355-63-2**

Reviewed by Louis Lim, a PhD student in mathematics education at York University in Toronto, Canada. Louis has taught high school mathematics for the past decade, and is the 2005 recipient of the Ontario Association for Mathematics Education's "Exceptional and Creative Teaching in Secondary Mathematics".

Carden, Kathleen A. & Godley-Sugrue, Mary (2005). *Grade 2 Writing Curriculum: Week-by-Week Lessons.* New York: Scholastic.

Stepping Stones to Writing

Kathleen Carden and Mary Godley-Sugrue's *Grade 2 Writing Curriculum* primarily aims at improving the writing skills of young learners. As the introduction suggests, the writing of the book is driven by the authors' concern vis-à-vis the quality of writing of the current generation of learners (leading subsequently to low grades in school). In this attempt they approach the subject through task-based language pedagogy and the book in a nutshell is an account of two professional task designers' preparation of language tasks in a Grade 2 classroom.

The book is structured into ten chapters with the first chapter lucidly describing the pattern of subsequent chapters. As each chapter unfolds, we find them sequentially linked as 'Lessons of the Month' covering a whole academic year. Concomitantly, they are further broken down into daily routines and one lesson graduates into another demanding increasing level of application of cognitive complexity of the students. For instance, the second graders start by making small, simple paragraphs on familiar topics like 'My classmate,' 'My birthday,' 'Taking care of my pet,' and so on, going on to write paragraphs and essays on 'How to earn good grades,' and 'Getting ready for a party.' By the end of the year they are ready to compose poems on themselves.

Again, each lesson is provided with outcome matrices of desired skill acquisition. The writing skill matrix includes simple sentence construction, grammatical comprehension, peer editing, dialogue incorporation and so on. Moreover, self-assessment has been duly considered as an important part of each lesson.

Clearly, the book addresses teachers, instructors, resource persons and enthusiastic parents. Each section

is complete in its objective to help in planning and executing the lessons. The lesson plans are so exhaustive that often they appear to be guiding prescriptions for users to the extent that they may finally result in breeding a new group of instructors totally dependent on this manual at the cost of developing their own innovative teaching styles. This may not be intentional. But the possibility of this happening could have been avoided had the authors provided detailed explanations to the tips and pointers appearing in the book with detailed explanations along with only brief examples of lesson plans. This would have left room for the readers to use the lesson plans as stepping-stones to exercise their own creative expression and formulate innovative methods of approaching a task. Alternatively, the lessons are so complete, that the content could be reissued as a workbook aimed directly at the student making a significant contribution to the pedagogy of the self-study of language.

The introductory chapter clearly mentions the incidence of low test scores and poor performance of students in different parts of the USA as catalyzing the writing of this book. Test scores and poor peformance in respect to marks or grades in formal examinations must not be the purpose for writing a language book. I feel language skill should be developed for communication, expression, reading comprehension and many other interactive behaviors among people. Even when language is being taught in a classroom the test score should not be the only reason to teach it. When a book concerns the teaching of an International language like English and it is published by a worldwide publisher like Scholastic, then why should the concern be limited only to learners in different parts of the USA? Hundreds of thousands of teachers and students across the world can benefit from the ideas presented in the book and it would be unfortunate if this potential remained untapped.

The lesson plans address classes of fifteen to twenty students, when in fact, English is taught in many Asian and African countries where mosts classrooms average sixty students. The issue that arises then is; can one implement the lesson plans in such classrooms with such a large number of students? I believe the answer is no, not without modification. If used as the book suggests, all the lesson plans involve all the students in activities to be shared by the teacher personally, which is difficult in a populated classroom taking place in a small space. Also, the programme for chatting with a partner would create a great noise in a small classroom with sixty children. The learners would not be capable of sharing their ideas as it would inevitably clash with the conversations of others sitting closeby. Thus the whole purpose of sharing and learning would be spoiled. If the lessons were more open, for example to suggest that students can write some points or lines for the partner and exchange it as letters, that may provide them the scope for sharing and save the class from unnessesary noise.

Again, the lesson plans primarily deal with multiple ideas of discussions, conversations, interrogations and so, on all of which are meant for brainstorming, engaging the children in cognitive activities. Searching the writer's brain, however, may not always start with essentially mental activities, especially when we are dealing with second graders. One can also start a writing class with games involving physical activities, which would be more exciting and effective. For example the topic"My best birthday" can start with the celebration of a child's birthday in class, organized by his or her classmates in which quite naturally the entire class participates and the writing lesson can follow. Again, for the lesson on a thank you letter the young learners can enjoy a game in which one partner has to do something and the other has to say "Thank you." In this instance, the game experience can be linked to the thank you letter-writing task. Also, the book primarily uses paragraph, essay, letter and story writing in the writing curriculum – conventional tools for writing lessons. One can try more interesting alternative writing basics like writing diaries, reports and dialogues to achieve the similar results.

Having said that, I would as a teacher, reader and professional task designer look forward to many such books from the authors and publisher because they would, as this book has, provide me the opportunity to learn from years of intensive experience in task-based language teaching pedagogy. The book is a very good attempt to cater to the needs of the day, only I expected something more to be added to this kind of a book in respect of new internatioal realities.

Pages: **160** Price: **$19.99 US; $26.99 CDN** ISBN: **0-439-52983-2**

Reviewed by Manjir Ghosh a Professional Task Designer, Teacher's Trainer, Curriculum Developer and Resource Person for Children's Activities. She is associated with Salt Lake, School, Kolkata, India as a High School Teacher in Political Science and Sociology.

Chandler-Olcott, Kelly & Hinchman, Kathleen A. (2005). *Tutoring Adolescent Literacy Learners: A Guide for Volunteers.* New York: Guilford Press.

This short book promises a guide that "will provide you with a detailed sense of what you may encounter ... leaving plenty of space for you to make your own choices about how to proceed" (p.1). Using their extensive pragmatic experience to complement their theoretical knowledge, the authors deliver this and more! Their experience includes teaching and program administration in public middle and high school and as university professors of literacy, reading, and language.

At its simplest level the book is written for tutors - those taking part in a university service learning course or volunteers in a school or community-based service program. It is divided into three parts: (1) Getting Started - designed to provide contextual and theoretical background for literacy learning and tutoring, (2) Tutoring - a practical and thorough guide to planning, supporting, and promoting student literacy, and, (3) Follow-up and Reflection - analyzing problems and reflecting/revising the experience.

It is important to look at this book's strength in its primary role for literacy learning, but I believe that it offers significant assistance for tutors and teachers across disciplines and age groups. Each section provides an individual segment that is valuable for one who is going to teach/tutor. Together they form a complete, comprehensive guide for tutors, providing a great deal of information for literacy work with adolescents.

The educational context is described as the foundation for the book and the tutors' tasks. Chandler-Olcott and Hinchman explain the evidence justifying students' critical need for literacy to live and succeed, as well as providing the information to understand the complex nature of adolescents and adolescence. It is readable and largely free of jargon, only including jargon as a vocabulary to bring the volunteer into communication with the educator. The "guide" provides a context based in the nature of the student (adolescent), the tutor's own context (adolescence) and their task (literacy learning). It is a good review for the professional as well as a foundational base for the novice.

There is a pragmatic emphasis on learning that takes place by watching and talking. The guide presents activities that point out what the successful learner does to accomplish a task: "...strategies or processes used by proficient readers first, followed by those used by proficient writers. This separation ... for convenience sake, because, in reality, reading and writing are interrelated processes" (p. 17). The authors apply research and theory to learning situations personalized to the needs of the student, and emphasize the benefit of literacy learning across the curriculum. This added aspect of personalizing the strategy and activity includes a series of options for the tutor: teacher modeling, guided practice, independent practice, and applications in "real" situations.

The guide helps the tutor to "fit" into the student's academic context as part of the learner's team. Explaining formats (one-on-one, small group, etc.) and techniques to produce positive relationships, and coordination with the larger academic experience, they make the case for and provide information to help the tutor gain knowledge and understanding about the student. The authors also provide suggested assessments regarding the tasks of reading and writing that are the shared goals and objectives.

This background information is followed by a core section that provides a readable action guide for the tutor. A "how-to" prepare and teach in the tutoring sessions provides topics and ideas for the tutor. There is planning with sample structure and strategies included within a lesson. The tutor is shown organizational and record-keeping tools as well as the theoretical reasoning for the good practices described. The guide also explains choice of materials and the value of certain types of materials in dealing with specific literacy issues and, in particular, comprehension.

As emphasized throughout, Chandler-Olcott and Hinchman view reading and writing as integral issues for instruction. Another pragmatic and theory-based description is provided for the tutor to analyze and connect the reading tutorial with the writing needs of the student. They discuss the process and the flexibility to adjust to the individual demands of specific students and settings. They propose that the heart of literacy development is found in comprehension and communicating in writing (p. 109). As such word study and fluency are primary tasks in literacy learning - word recognition, vocabulary development, spelling, and fluency.

The guide concludes with a section that promotes and describes reflection and revision by the tutor/teacher. These are critical activities for educational planning and literacy teaching success. It offers tutors/teachers a means to understand their own tasks and the needs of their student(s) through reflective tasks and assessments. The tutor will find *Tutoring Adolescent Learners* really is a *Guide for Volunteers,* but it also works for others.

For the school this guide offers a multitude of uses. It is certainly a valuable tool for tutors who will work individually and in small groups with adolescent literacy learners. It is also adaptable for other tutoring and teaching uses. The descriptions that link learning theory and practical teaching-learning activities are solid stand-alone lessons for tutors (and teachers) in more than literacy- based learning. In my school we tutor as a

part of the academic program, but we also use tutors as an important part of an evening study program. This *Guide for Volunteers* will be adapted to provide information, strategies, and methodology for all our tutors. It deserves a place in schools of all types and sizes as a practical and informative source for teachers, administrators, and tutors.

Pages: **176** Price: **$25.00** ISBN: **1-59385-129-4**

Reviewed by James J. Harrington, Ph.D. Principal, Nativity Preparatory School, Boston. Mr. Harrington is a forty-year practitioner as a teacher and administrator. Currently he is the Principal of an inner city middle school in Boston's Jamaica Plain neighborhood.

Culham, Ruth (2004). *Using Picture Books to Teach Writing With the Traits: An Annotated Bibliography of More Than 200 Titles With Teacher-Tested Lessons.* New York: Scholastic.

"I just can¹t think of anything to write about."
"I¹m not good at writing."
"Writing is too hard."
"I don¹t have anything more to say."
"I already edited it."
"Do I have to write more? I don¹t think I can."

Sound familiar? If you're a teacher of writing, I am sure you have heard these and many other excuses from your students about their own writing. Writing is difficult and teachers often find it challenging to know what to do to help those students who find writing to be a chore take the wonderful stories they have in their minds and put them down on paper.

Borne out of the frustration from reading her students' "dismal" writing, Ruth Culham, author of the *6+1 Traits of Writing* series, got the idea for compiling this book after she perused her own son's books on the bookshelf and began to see the type of writing she wanted her own students to produce in those picture books. Taking several of the books to school the next day, Culham shared these stories with her students, who initially thought them to be "baby" books. They began to discover the use of the traits of good writing Culham had been trying to teach her students "hidden" in these wonderfully descriptive texts.

Armed with the idea that picture books could be an excellent tool to teach the traits of good writing, Culham began to view picture books through a different lens. They weren't just children's books anymore; they were "a highly visual way to engage students in reading and writing" (p. 5) that "serve as marvelous models for our student writers‹no matter what their age is" (p. 5).

What Culham has put together is yet another wonderfully practical book for teachers to use with their students in the classroom. *Using Picture Books to Teach Writing with the Traits* is a thoughtful compilation of lesson plan ideas and an annotated bibliography of over 200 titles that can guide teachers to help their students become better writers.

Written in a conversational tone, Culham's book is structured with the ease of her other *6+1 Traits* books. She gives a brief introduction, detailing her use of picture books to teach the Traits, a brief description of the book, and some background information about the Traits. She then gives a wonderful example of a lesson from a picture book she has used with teacher educators that challenges them to think about those students who "fall through the cracks." Each chapter is outlined in the same way. There are seven chapters, one for each of the *6+1 Traits.* Each chapter contains a definition of the Trait, a "Feature Focus Lesson Based On" a particular picture book, several pages of an annotated bibliography of picture books that are good resources for teaching the particular Trait, and ending with several lesson ideas for using some of the picture books with the featured Trait.

As a former elementary teacher and future elementary principal, this book excites me! It is a tool that every teacher, whether teaching *6+1 Traits* or not, should not be without. It is simply a wonderful resource for teaching good writing to elementary age children. A word of advice for primary teachers, it is geared toward 3rd grade and up. It can, of course, be adapted to the primary grades, but my bet is that Culham will be coming out with a primary grades version soon.

Pages: **144** Price: **$19.99 US; $26.99 CDN** ISBN: **0-439-55687-2**

Reviewed by Brian Herndon, Ph.D. candidate at the University of Missouri, Columbia in Educational

Leadership and Policy Analysis. Brian is also a former Kindergarten and Third Grade teacher. He received his Ed.S. in Educational Administration from the University of Missouri, Columbia, his M.A. in Elementary Education at the University of Colorado at Boulder, and his B.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies at the University of Missouri, Columbia.

Daley, Allyson (2005). *Partner Reading: A Way to Help All Readers Grow. Grades 1-3.* New York: Scholastic.

Let's Read Together

In the genre of books on teaching strategies, Allyson Daley's book is perhaps best classified as a manual. In general, the advantage of having an exhaustive manual on any topic is that "it is there for anyone who wants to use it." The disadvantage is that it is impossible to absorb or internalize the treasures that it offers in one read (which, unfortunately, a reviewer has to do – ALWAYS!). One can only glean the essence. Moments that truly facilitate reaping advantages of such manuals are those when one is planning similar sessions in real-life or when one gets stuck while applying or implementing them. This is also true of Daley's book, one of the several of its kind in Scholastic's "Teaching Strategies" series. You know that the book is of use only when you have used it hands-on.

Daley targets the book toward "fellow primary-grade teachers," and asserts that in this book she attempts at reshaping traditional partner reading practices. Also, she "details the important management and instructional strategies for helping students become successful reading partners-and grow individually as readers" (p.5). Divided into seven chapters, the book begins with definition of the concept and place of partner reading in a "daily literacy model," going on to details of preparing students for the exercise, methods of inculcating in students the structure and expectations from partnerships (two chapters), a special focus on 'Reading Center' partner reading model (two chapters) and finally methods of assessment of the work of reading partnerships.

In the larger context, Daley employs partner reading from her learning on providing the conditions in a classroom that generate literacy. Influenced by Cambourne's (1988) work on literacy outlining stages students need to go through when becoming literate, Daley believes on learning from her experience that,

> …in order to best provide my students with an environment for literacy learning as outlined by Cambourne, it is essential to implement a daily literacy model into the classroom. The day-to-day structure of the balanced approach includes time to read and write to students (read alouds, morning message), read and write with students (guided reading, shared reading and interactive reading), and have students read and write on their own and in small groups (independent reading, partner reading, writing workshop) (p.5).

She also admits her initial apprehensions about partner reading, in the form she had been initially familiar with and consequently employing in the classroom. Only, after she practiced the same hands on (like one has to do to make REAL use of this book) did she confront bottlenecks which drove her to introduce structural changes in the implementation format (for instance, she realized that pairing should be done only after careful consideration of individual reading capabilities, which should ideally be at par; also, that all pairs need NOT read the same text because levels vary greatly within a single grade; engaging in mutual book talks instead of independently writing responses to scripted questions provide a much better scope for internalizing and comprehending the text).

Stylistically, the method of quoting children verbatim and presenting a concept through real or imaginary dialogues that might have taken place in the class is common, but quite excellent. It makes comprehension easy and brings the adult reader to the level of understanding of that of children. In fact, it also teaches an adult to learn from children the art of simplifying issues and easy communication on ostensibly complicated concepts.

Text boxes showing scanned copies of Daley's and children's handwritten comments and responses provide a real-life feel and help validate the applicability of the mini-lessons strewn all over the book. Out of the numerous and extremely helpful mini-lessons, the lesson on "Using sticky notes to prepare for book talks"(p. 63) and the two chapters on Reading Centers, are particularly innovative and valuable.

Also, while Daley structures the phases in the Reading Partnership exercise through Chapter 3 ("Launching Partnerships"), from Chapter 4 onwards, she leaves the options open for teachers to adopt the mini lessons to suit their needs and timings for application (earlier or later in the school year). This flexibility is perhaps one of the greatest merits of the book – the lessons are not binding upon the teacher referring to it, rather they are open to boundless interpretations and innovations.

Overall, the blurbs that appear on the back cover of the book are truly reflective of what we find inside – pages and pages of methodical documentation of a process that creates some of the best possible routes to learning to read and grow as a literate reader, with a friend. Moreover, educators and practitioners, familiar with the concept of partnership reading will also realize while reading the book that going beyond the customary model of pairing students to read a book, Daley actually uses partner reading as a base to nourish and hone the cognitive and creative abilities of students, build their oral language skills and most importantly create a much needed space for sharing and developing emotional bonding – a rare one in a globalizing society that endorses competitiveness and one-up-ism and inculcates similar values in children.

With regard to applicability of the methods promoted, there is some bad news and some good news. The bad news is that although partner reading is a powerful tool that can be applied for teaching across cultures and languages, the availability of numerous leveled books, especially, for primary-level grades, which this method requires, may pose a problem when applying this method to other languages. Also, to be truly successful, this method requires a class to be small (ideal strength of twenty students). This is almost an impossibility in most Asian countries where the average class strength varies between forty and fifty-five. Also, unfortunately, the poor school infrastructure (for instance, lack of space for children to sit, store and keep books) in impoverished regions of South Asia where a sizeable proportion of the world's children live (and can largely benefit from this literacy module) would emerge as a deterrent to the applicability of partner reading.

The good news is that, although this book is labeled as presenting a teaching strategy for Grades 1-3, the module can be actually adopted for adult literacy classes, language teaching classes, seminar classes in graduate or MBA schools and intervention programs in the development sector where beneficiary participation is crucial. It would help therefore, if translated versions (in select languages) of the book were available and distributed beyond the borders of North America, Europe or Australia.

References

Cambourne, B. (1988) *The whole story: Natural learning and the acquisition of literacy in the classroom.* Auckland, N.Z.: Ashton Scholastic.

Pages: **128** Price: **$17.99** ISBN: **0-439-51888-1**

Reviewed by Arna Seal, Adjunct Faculty and Coordinator, Center for Social Sustainability, ICFAI Business School, Kolkata, India; Social and Educational Research and Training Consultant. Dr. Seal's areas of interest include: Social Development, Teaching and Education Pedagogy

---

D'Amato, Rik Carl; Fletcher-Janzen, Elaine, & Reynolds, Cecil R., Editors. (2005). *Handbook of School Neuropsychology.* Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Handbook of School Neuropsychology is a comprehensive resource that can be used by both graduate students in school psychology and professionals in the field. The book was written in the hope that neuropsychological research could be used to improve educational practice (p. x). The editors have tapped the expertise of sixty-three contributors. The majority of the contributors are from academia, but experts from school districts and treatment centers are also included.

The strength of this book is in its comprehensive coverage. The book is divided into five content sections: foundations of school neuropsychological practice, development, structure, and functioning of the brain, neuropsychological assessment for intervention, understanding and serving learners with diseases and disorders or from special populations, and neuropsychological interventions in the schools. Following the content sections are five appendices and an index. The appendices contain samples of relevant documents (e.g. a neuropsychological IEP) a list of neuropsychology organizations and web sites. The appendix web sites contain a very good section called Helpful Web Sites. The index contains subject terms but not authors. An author index would have been useful.

The introductory chapters take us through the history of neuropsychology and its development as a subspecialty. Beginning with the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1975) through the changes brought by the Individuals with Disabilities Act (1997), inclusion of children with neurological deficits into public education has been driven by legal mandate. Hynd and Reynolds (p. 3-14) argue that the time has come to set professional standards for the subspecialty of neuropsychology within school psychology.

Neuropsychology has a strong biological basis and the second section of *Handbook of School Neuropsychology* includes chapters detailing normal development and abnormal development. Cecil and

French (pp. 86- 120) have the difficult task of discussing the integration of the biology of the brain and the construct of psychological intelligence. The current chapter is very similar to one by the same authors in *Handbook of Forensic Neuropsychology* (2003). The authors begin with a history of the study of cerebral dominance and end with a defense of *g* (general intelligence) in neuropsychological models of intelligence. This uneven chapter illustrates that advances in neuropsychology present difficulties for theories of general psychological intelligence. Brinkman, Decker, and Dean (pp 305-307) in Chapter 13 have a short discussion entitled Conceptualization of Intelligence that does a good job of covering the issues surrounding theories of psychological intelligence.

The role of school psychologists has been affected not only by changes in law but also by changes in the health care system. Fletcher- Janzen (pp. 172) explains that reductions in funding for inpatient and outpatient care by insurance companies have forced school psychologists to treat children who were historically treated in professional settings. The third section of the handbook therefore covers a wide range of topics on the role of assessment for neuropsychologists. Information on neurological examinations (Chapter 7) and the new advances in neuroimaging (Chapter 14) illustrate the need for school neuropsychologists to read and understand reports from neurologists. A practical chapter on writing assessment reports (Chapter 9) is included, as well as chapters on evaluating battery assessments (Chapters 10-12). Readers will find especially useful Davis and D'Amato's (pp. 264-286) discussion of the NEPSY and Dean-Woodcock battery assessments in terms of evidence-based intervention.

The largest section of the book (Chapters 15-28) deals with the role of school neuropsychologists in the public school system. McIntosh and Decker (pp 365-382) discuss the specific effects of federal legislation on the practice of school neuropsychologists, ranging from the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (1974) that grants parents the right to view educational records, to No Child Left Behind (2001) that requires states to demonstrate academic proficiency of all children in reading and math. The treatments of special populations ranging from attention deficit to brain injury to fetal alcohol syndrome are discussed in individual chapters. Readers interested in the interaction of educational policy and neuropsychology should read Chapter 28. Hess and Rhodes (615-637) discuss the inclusion of demographic information, including ethnicity and language spoken at home, as factors in neuropsychological assessment and intervention. Readers interested in this subject also should read Peters, Fox, Weber, and Llorente (2005). This aspect of neuropsychology is especially important since four million students were labeled as Limited English Proficiency for the 2002-2003 school year (NCES, 2005).

The last content section of the handbook covers neuropsychological interventions in the school. This section contains chapters that should be read by classroom teachers as well as school psychologists. Joseph's (pp. 738-757) discussion on literacy interventions is useful for reading specialists interested in evidence-based interventions. Joseph reviews the research evidences for commercial programs as well as teaching techniques that can be used in the classroom (e.g. semantic mapping). Lerew (pp 758-776) effectively uses a case study to illustrate a mathematics intervention. All school psychologists should read Chapter 37, which discusses the issues and limitations of integrating neuropsychological services into school settings. Traughber and D'Amato (827-853) do an excellent job of explaining the difference between theoretically driven connections and evidence- research.

I highly recommend this book for neuropsychologists and school psychologists who need to keep up with advances in neuropsychology. Classroom teachers will find individual chapters useful.

References

Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, Pub. L. no. 94-142, 20 USC 51401

Reynolds, C.R. and French, C.L. (2003). The neuropsychological basis of intelligence revisited: Some false starts and a clinical model. In Arthur Horton and Lawrence Hartlage (Eds). *Handbook of forensic neuropsychology.* New York: Springer. Pp 35-94.

Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1997, Pub. L. no. 105-71. Accessed February 23, 2006 from http://ww w.cec.sped.org/law_res/doc/law/downloads/Idea97.pdf

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, Pub. L. no. 107-110. Accessed February 21, 2004 from http://www. ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/index.html.

National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education. (2005). Public elementary and secondary students, staff, schools, and school Districts: School year 2002-03. Accessed February 24, 2006 from http://n ces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2005314.

Peters, S.A., Fox, J.L., Weber, D.A., and Llorente, A.M. Applied and theoretical contributions of

neuropsychology to assessment in multicultural school psychology. In C.L. Frisby and C.R. Reynolds (Eds) *Comprehensive handbook of multicultural school psychology.* Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.

Pages: **962** Price: **$95.00** ISBN: **04714655X**

Reviewed by Cynthia Crosser, a Social Science and Humanities Reference Librarian/Education and Psychology Bibliographer at the University of Maine. In addition to her M.S. in Library Studies from Florida State University, she has an M.A. in Linguistics from the University of Florida with a specialization in language acquisition and an extensive background in developmental psychology.

Duncan, Marilyn (2005). *The Kindergarten Book: A Guide to Literacy Instruction.* Katonah, NY: Richard C. Owen Publishers.

A comprehensive compilation of the research on early literacy would be impossibly large. That said, Marilyn Duncan does an excellent job of synthesizing the essential literacy research in *The Kindergarten Book: A Guide to Literacy Instruction.* None of the theory or research here is new. Instead, Duncan supplements foundational pedagogical theory with case studies and practical advice. This means that *The Kindergarten Book* will be most useful to those who teach, or are about to teach, kindergarten.

On the other hand, anyone with an interest in five-year-olds and how they learn to read and write can learn from *The Kindergarten Book.* Although she has extensive experience as a teacher developer, consultant, and editor, Duncan regards herself primarily as a kindergarten teacher. Her prose style is friendly and straightforward. She does not assume her readers have a background in education or prior knowledge of teaching techniques.

The book begins with an introduction to Duncan's classroom. It is seven months into the school year and the children are settled into their routines. Every day these kids enter the classroom and choose for themselves which literacy activities they will participate in first. They list, on a special chart supplemented with pictures, in which order they will read or write, listen to a book on tape, practice their spelling or handwriting, tell stories, do word work, or investigate something. They then embark on these activities independently while Duncan circulates and performs informal assessments. When the independent work is finished, she gathers the children together in order to model story writing for them. This day in the life of her classroom (in which the children are perfectly behaved and largely autonomous) that Duncan narrates sounds a bit unrealistic to the jaded reader. At the same time, her classroom sounds like a lovely place where children would *want* to learn. The kind of classroom all teachers should aim to create.

As she takes us through her classroom, Duncan lays out the components of literacy. She describes what the kids need to be able to do and how best to teach listening, reading, speaking, presenting, and writing skills. It is especially important to note that the instruction is differentiated for each child. This is a difficult, but not impossible task, and Duncan does an admirable job of illustrating how it is possible to stay on top of what each child knows and what he/she needs to learn next. In addition to the activity centers and whole- group instruction, the kids work in small reading groups and often receive one-on-one instruction. With high expectations of her students and much practice in their day-to-day routines, Duncan is able to manage her class without material rewards or behavior management techniques. A section on organizing the learning spaces illustrates how to arrange the classroom to meet every need and mood.

Duncan's is a child-centered approach that incorporates many of the ideas and theories of Lev Vygotsky (1978). For example, the activity center with tools such as magnifying glasses and tweezers that encourages investigation provides an authentic reason for utilizing literacy skills. The children ask questions and form hypotheses—what does the classroom's pet lizard like to eat?—and then investigate the answer with books and models. The answers they discover can be recorded and their experiments labeled. In this way, the children acquire new vocabulary, apply their literacy knowledge to content areas, practice their presentation skills, and more. As Duncan notes, kindergarten is not just preparation for life to a five-year-old, *it is real life* (p.129). Another example of the influence of Vygotsky's work on the kind of constructivist classroom found here is in the social nature of the work. Vygostsky argued that learning is the process of taking information from the more experienced other and transforming it into internalized knowledge. This is accomplished through student talk and teacher modeling and scaffolding. Literacy is learning through immersion rather than memorization.

This immersion philosophy, in which the students are encouraged to think of literacy activities as the norm (as, indeed, they are for adults), means that phonics is not taught in isolation. Neither is it ignored, however. Duncan defines phonics as the relationship between letters and the sounds of spoken language and makes a

point of explaining that her students *do* need direct and systematic phonics instruction. This instruction happens naturally, as needed, in the context of spelling instruction or small group mini-lessons when there is a common stumbling block.

Finally, *The Kindergarten Book* ends with a rumination on the importance of early childhood education in laying the foundation for all of our future learning. Duncan calls it "a sad irony" that we value higher education more seriously than that of our youngest children. Good kindergarten teachers are one of our most valuable resources; this book aims to help those teachers become even better at what they do.

References

Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of psychological processes.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Pages: **242** Price: **$27.95** ISBN: **1-57274704-8**

Reviewed by Marcy Zipke, PhD candidate at The Graduate Center, CUNY. Marcy's specialization is literacy processes and instruction. Her research is on the contribution of metalinguistic awareness to reading comprehension. She has worked as an adjunct instructor of literacy and social studies courses as well as a substitute teacher at the preK-5 level.

Franco, Betsy (2005). *Conversations with a Poet: Inviting Poetry into K-12 Classrooms.* Katonah, NY: Richard C. Owen Publishers.

Poetry, as an art form, is oftentimes relegated to the month of April, which is National Poetry Month. In *Conversations with a Poet: Inviting Poetry into K-12 Classrooms*, Betsy Franco builds a strong case for employing poetry all year long. As a writer and a teacher of writing, I agree with Franco's assertion that writing, including poetry-writing, appear to be daunting tasks especially for teachers who identify themselves as non-writers and/or non-poets. For me, poetry seems to be much more intimidating than writing in general. However, Franco de-constructs poetry and makes it accessible and enjoyable. Even I plan on using her poetry exercises to improve my own writing and understanding. From the beginning, she notes her objective: "…to share what I've learned about reading, writing and teaching poetry because I have found that knowledge is power" (p. viii). In this book, she provides teachers with the tools needed to teach poetry.

This text is divided into two sections: Section I is an overview of poetry from a poet's perspective and Section II offers sixteen poetic forms which can be used for instruction. The first section addresses the basics of writing poetry. She illustrates the purposeful and deliberate nature of capitalization, punctuation, line breaks, white spaces, etc. Even though Franco stresses the careful nature of poetry- writing, she still makes it seem easy and natural. The second section unpacks the poetic forms. She provides historical background, characteristics, everyday parallels, rationale, samples, demonstration procedures ("think-throughs"), and a bibliography of more examples. I especially liked the "think-throughs" as they read like real conversations. She describes her thinking during the process of writing poetry, outlining the actual work involved in writing. I also liked the everyday parallels as they emphasized connections to students' lives, showing how poetry is a part of our daily existence and experience. Franco's mantra seems to be: Poetry is everywhere and it is easy.

The book is well-written, easy to read and easy to implement. It is very practitioner-oriented in that she writes with the teacher in mind. Franco offers advice on how to overcome barriers regarding demonstrations. She suggests that teachers use her poems and her "think-throughs" for their demonstrations until they become comfortable with the subject matter. A particular strength of the text lies in how she presents the pedagogical implications. In her "read-throughs" and "think-throughs," Franco provides step-by-step procedures on how teachers can teach the reading and writing of poetry. She even provides teachers with questions to ask, prompts for providing and soliciting feedback, logistics for lessons, etc. She gives a clear picture of what the lesson can look like. In addition, she uses actual poems written by poets as examples and support for her claims. This best practice of using authors and poets as mentors and models is an effective and popular strategy for writing instruction. I, personally, have used this best practice of stylistic imitation and found it to be very successful with students at all grade levels, from kindergarteners to graduate students. The strategy is also effective with special education students and English language learners as the poems/models and demonstrations can be used as scaffolds.

An important point to mention is Franco's contention that teachers should not over-analyze poetry and discuss it for too long as it is meant to be manipulated and enjoyed. She connects poetry to the lifestyles of our students. Franco states, "My ideas come in short spurts, which is perfect for poetry. Many students

share this economic way of thinking" (p. 2). Franco, a former teacher, seems to be in touch with students' needs and interests. Another strength of this book lies in how she differentiates for age groups by offering variations and modifications.

Overall, I thought Franco's book was informative, well-written and inviting. But, I do have some constructive criticisms. First, Franco notes how poetry enhances vocabulary and satisfies standards but she doesn't sufficiently address these two notions. However, she does note how she chose the poetic forms after reading standards from a variety of states. I think Franco should have provided an example of a standards-based lesson and/or included some of the standards that would be covered. Given today's politically-charged, standards-based climate, teachers are concerned about how to address the standards. Second, Franco does not adequately address the issue of evaluation and assessment. Franco could have provided a rubric, especially for self- assessment which aligns with her theme of student ownership of work. Third, Franco failed to mention the popular practice of blogging and sites such as myspace.com as venues for practice, sharing, and publishing. However, she did stress the importance of publishing and offered sites for publication. Fourth, Franco provided lots of citations and quotes from poets. Although such citing offered authority, at times, I found this distracting. That being stated, I can say as a beginning poet and a former practitioner, I highly recommend this book.

Pages: **223** Price: **$26.95** ISBN: **1-57274-740-4**

Reviewed by Virginia S. Loh, a doctoral candidate at San Diego State University-University of San Diego , an adjunct professor at National University and University of San Diego, and a published children's book author with Candlewick Press.

LeBeau, Patrick R. (2005). *Rethinking Michigan Indian History.* East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press.

This is a dangerous book for teachers. LeBeau asks readers to become critical thinkers and make their own conclusions. In discussing citizenship education, Brighouse (2006) notes that students should be taught "the important skills of detecting bias and indoctrination (p. 125)." He recognizes that confronting important issues put the teachers at risk of many accusations from varied people within and without the classroom. Teachers daring such incursions should be well-informed about the issues themselves, know how to facilitate discussions, and think through moral questions (p. 123). LeBeau provides some important tools and resources in these regards.

This book is useful for teachers. The book is targeted for fourth graders through adult learners. There are four lessons intended to be done in order but teachers are encouraged to pick and choose to augment. This is not the history book most of us envision with that term. This is a wonderful book that uses and explores primary sources and secondary sources such as biographies and historical accounts. The book asks us to consider how and why Indian history is presented and taught? The principles are clear and important but not dogmatic.

- Most people have stereotypical views of American Indians.
- The U.S. Constitution protects treaty rights.
- American Indians are alive and well in the modern world.
- American Indians change and adapt; they are not frozen in time.

While this book focuses on Michigan, the lessons carry over state lines and can be used as models in other areas.

This book covers history, government, geography, and society. It is indeed a social studies and citizenship book. Lesson one addresses stereotypical images and could likely be used in second and third grade as well as higher levels. We need to teach more about commercialism and popular culture's interference with the good life. Lesson two uses biography to examine the great men theory and its focus away from Indian families and communities. Lesson three examines the U.S. Constitution and four basic concepts of treaty rights. This can help explain some common misperceptions about "all the money we give Indians." Lesson four uses maps from the past and present, as well as tables and graphs. Handling of data and critical analysis of spatial presentations are important skills for a critical citizen.

Each lesson includes activities and extensions along with photocopy ready handouts and resources. The cd includes the same materials. This is a useful and valuable book for anyone interested in assisting students in becoming autonomous, flourishing citizens.

References

Brighouse, H. (2006). *On education.* London: Routledge.

Pages: **215** Price: **$29.95** ISBN: **0-87013-712-3**

Reviewed by Michael W. Simpson, J.D., M. Ed., an Oklahoma mixed-blood lawyer and educator currently studying educational policy at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Email: mwsjd85@aol.com

---

Miller, Richard E. (2005). *Writing at the End of the World.* Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Writing at the End of the World raises provocative questions. Have the humanities become obsolete? Can educators continue to believe in the values of literacy when reading and writing are put to malevolent uses? How can teachers and students work together to discover – or construct – meanings in today's world? Miller's introduction defines his overarching question as follows: "In a secular society, how does one generate the sense that life is meaningful?"

Even more intriguing than his questions are Miller's attempts to answer them. In a transparently introspective manner, he models his conclusions within this text, exploring both the personal and institutional dimensions of the inquiry.

While the issues raised seem esoteric, connections to practice are substantive and abundant. Reinforcing the tenets of reflective practitioners, no assumption is left unquestioned. Miller begins by examining the belief that literacy is in itself an empowering force for social good. He notes that reading, writing, and speaking skills and dispositions can be used for many purposes – some of them patently evil. Miller acknowledges the heresy of this perspective; in the humanities, language arts are typically understood as the means to the kind of self-actualization that will yield social justice. Miller, however, argues that literacy itself, even literacy developed through dialogue around the "canons" of "great books," does not necessarily ameliorate alienation. Such a curriculum may in fact exacerbate cultural rifts that hinder meaningful education. To illustrate his point, Miller describes the impressive literary endeavors of Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold (perpetrators of the Columbine shootings) as well as Ted Kaczynski (better known as the Unabomber).

Miller weaves his assertions about writing, schooling, and culture through descriptions of seemingly disconnected social and educational touchstones. His approach, however, makes the commonalities among them explicit and significant. Drawing on personal experiences (like his father's suicide attempt) and global events (like 9/11), Miller's search for meaning constructs grounds for hope from the very ruins of alienation and despair. He sees optimism in student resistance, and motivation in teacher complacency.

To foster healing in a fractured world, Miller calls for writing with a distinctive purpose, one that moves beyond bureaucratic, informational prose:

> …there is another kind of writing I turn to in order to sustain the ongoing search for meaning in a world no one controls. This kind of writing asks the reader to make imaginative connections between disparate elements; it tracks one path among many possible ones across the glistening water. This writing is the lifeblood of the humanities in action. (p. 196)

Although this text doesn't offer activities for educators, it does fill an essential void. Miller engages with issues at the very heart of teaching reading and writing. Before considering *how* to develop students as writers and readers, he asks *why* we should do it at all. He provides cogent, scholarly, and moral solutions to the critical matters that educators face as we negotiate our roles in a world of shifting meanings. Miller helps us construct definitions of words whose labyrinthine ambiguities threaten our own sense of direction on a daily basis, words like *knowledge, literacy, accountability, intelligence,* and *terrorism.* Miller understands the contradictions of teaching today, as this excerpt from his conclusion confirms:

> If the goal is healing, what is the solution? In this case the answer is found in…learning how to speak in ways that others can hear, in finding a way to move and be in more than one world at once… The practice of the humanities…(is) about the movement between worlds, arms out, balancing; it's about making the connections that count. (p. 198)

Education is both a political and a personal endeavor; reconciliation of this dichotomy is an endless undertaking. *Writing at the End of the World* offers educators a explanation *and* a representation of that solution. This book bridges the archetypal rift between educational theory and professional practice, demonstrating that, especially in teaching writing, nothing is more political than the personal.

Pages: **248** Price: **$24.95** ISBN: **0822958864**

Reviewed by Julie Gorlewski, a doctoral student in Social Foundations of Education at the University at Buffalo who is certified in Secondary English Education and Elementary Education. She teaches English and is director of the Academic Learning Center at a suburban high school in Western New York.

Race, Phil (2005). *500 Tips for Open and Online Learning.* Second edition. London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Open and online learning (distance education) is perhaps one of the most rapidly evolving concepts in education today. With expectations for an increasingly educated workforce growing every day, more persons are turning to online education as a potential remedy to meet these demands. Colleges and universities are also benefiting from the influx of distance learning students with regards to increasing enrollments and tuition dollars. Despite these growing economic and societal trends, some things remain the same, particularly the need for good teaching and learning. Phil Race has witnessed the evolution of open and online learning for the past twenty years as a scholar, educator, practitioner, and consultant. His experience provides a wealth of tips and practical advice for anyone new to or interested in online learning.

As suggested by the title, the book literally offers 500 tips for open and online learning. Although it reads much like a handbook or an instructional manual, the text is full of 'how to' tips which is truly an asset to educational staff for whom this text is intended. Race covers everything from clearly defining the often-complicated jargon in distance learning to providing pointers on how to effectively use punctuation when writing course materials. Race also offers practical advice to administrators and teachers considering creating and implementing open and online programs of their own. Despite having a very limited scope, this text really packs in a great deal of information. Perhaps what's most remarkable about the book (from an academic perspective) is that it provides a great many general insights from the fields of education (pedagogy), technology, psychology, and business in one relatively comprehensive volume.

Each chapter is introduced with an outline of what is to come and suggestions for how to synthesize the material. For example, Race often acknowledges the issues discussed in each chapter are only an abbreviated presentation of ideas and concepts from an extensive and ever-changing literature. The bulk of each chapter reads much like a handbook, usually with no more than six lines dedicated to each concept. In terms of style, the text is very well written via use of practical language and the author wisely avoids any use of potentially confusing jargon. This is especially important given the intended audience.

Major criticisms of this text might include its lack of addressing the potential negatives involved with open and online learning, the simplistic treatment of complex issues, and to some degree, repetition. With the exception of warnings regarding the costs and expenses (both monetary and time) involved with open learning, Race neglects most other shortcomings or potential complications that may result from open learning. In the Appendix, he does, however, list 36 instances for which online learning may be problematic. One might also argue that many of the tips offered in this text are presented in an oversimplified manner. Although Race provides a list of further readings in the Appendix, references to particular readings within the text would be greatly beneficial for readers looking for additional information. This is very important considering the nature of this text. Finally, one may criticize the repetition of certain tips, as some readers will no doubt experience déjà vu with each passing chapter. In the author's defense, however, such repetition is inevitable as many concepts are not mutually exclusive or limited to one domain.

Race's aim is to provide a text full of useful and practical tips for educational staff and administrators who want to learn more about open learning. For those looking for an in-depth perspective, this text will likely be of little utility. However, the book will benefit anyone looking to save time and energy and acquire a general overview of some important concepts regarding open and online learning.

Pages: **200** Price: **$33.95** ISBN: **0415342775**

Reviewed by Kenneth D. Royal, a Ph.D. student in the Department of Educational Policy Studies and Evaluation at the University of Kentucky. Royal also holds a M.S. degree in Higher Education from the University of Kentucky and a B.A. degree in Business Administration from Alice Lloyd College.

Sirota, Audrey J. & Taschek, Laura Ianacone (2006). *The Heart of Teaching: Creating High-Impact Lessons for the Adolescent Learner.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey- Bass.

The Heart of Teaching works best as an introductory methods resource for pre-service educators who will be teaching in various disciplines, describing as it does deep principles that underlie all instruction. In the preface, the author explains that the five "principles delineated in the book have been researched and documented by the Center for Research on Education, Diversity and Excellence (CREDE)," a center with which Sirota was formerly associated. The book is organized around the five pedagogy principles developed by Roland Tharp and his associates at CREDE:

1. Students and Teachers Producing Together
2. Developing Literacy and Language Arts across the Curriculum
3. Connecting School to Students' Lives
4. Teaching Complex Thinking
5. Teaching Through Conversation

The authors point out that these principles are effective with all students in all subject areas, regardless of risk factors associated with specific socioeconomic, cultural, racial, geographical, or language groups.

Each chapter explicates a principle and then offers sample lessons from teachers in several disciplines. A history lesson from Laura Ianacone Taschek completes each chapter. Students in Grade 10 literature class create graphic organizers; students in Grade 9 biology create an island with a balanced ecosystem; students in Grade 10 history create a castle, connecting it to significant themes of the Middle Ages; students in Grade 11 trigonometry discuss how to label a triangle. By covering such a broad curriculum span, the book is unable to give many specifics in any one discipline but the premise is that a standards-based framework with lots of rubrics works across curricula.

The reader learns that working in teams can be as simple as stopping a tenth-grade world history lecture every ten minutes and asking students to turn to a partner and discuss a prediction, summarization, or clarification question--or as complex as the creation of a class book (though no directions for such creation are given) or the building of a scale model castle (directions given).

Surely, these standards-based lessons must generate a certain irony when they travel under such banners as students and teachers producing together and teaching complex thinking. The Teaching Complex Thinking chapter, for example, includes a Maya Angelou Literary Analysis rubric for Grade 9 or 10. Students are given an assignment sheet which begins, "You will be reading the text and maintaining a journal where you document, in summary form, what happens throughout the book. Read through the Maya Angelou literary analysis rubric. . . ." Veteran teachers might question how complex the thinking can be when the teacher defines the tightly controlled, cookie cutter rubrics ahead of time and fills the class with *you will be* declarations. The author's devotion to standards-based rubrics is especially disquieting in the method she offers students in analyzing literature. Readers would do well to consult *Rethinking Rubrics in Writing Assessment* by Maja Wilson (2006), who states, "The rubric's attempt to codify our reaction to text in number goes counter to every instinct we have about reading and response" (p. 29).

Throughout *The Heart of Teaching,* the language is the language of control: *Students know; students will be able to; students will participate; students will evaluate. . .* . Perhaps because I taught 7th and 8th graders for many years, my favorite is *students will ask,* as though student questions can or should be controlled. Fledgling teachers should be warned against such a conceit. My experience is that on a good day the best the teacher can promise is that *students might.*

At four points in the book, some examples of student participation are given but because this is an explanation, not a narrative, the dialogue seems contrived. Three out of four times, the students are nameless, rendered only as Students 1 , 2, and 3. The teacher sets tight boundaries and the nameless students respond on cue. As a longtime teacher, I wanted to hear actual student voices and wanted to see some of the messiness of inquiry-based classrooms. A look at the publisher's description in the catalog describes the pedagogical fence the authors are attempting to straddle: *The approach is easily geared to standards and can be used to strengthen and enrich scripted lessons or mandated curricular units.* Surely, this claim violates every one of the five principles provided at the outset.

References

Wilson, M. (2006). *Rethinking rubrics in writing assessment*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.

Pages: **150** Price: **$24.95 US; $31.99 CDN** ISBN: **ISBN 0-7879-7802-7**

Reviewed by Susan Ohanian, Senior Fellow, Vermont Society for the Study of Education.

Sirota, Audrey J. & Taschek, Laura Ianacone (2006). *The Heart of Teaching: Creating High-Impact Lessons for the Adolescent Learner.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey- Bass.

For those new to teaching in secondary education (grades 7- 12),*The Heart of Teaching* provides clear and innovative lessons to launch a promising teaching career. For the veteran teacher, Audrey J. Sirota's recent publication (with contributions by Laura Ianacone Taschek) offers a practical guide to transform a teacher or content-driven classroom to a student-centered one. For the modern educator who wants to create a positive, effective, and constructivist curriculum based on the educational philosophies of Paolo Freire and John Dewey, this teacher resource should be given special attention.

The Heart of Teaching: Recreating High-Impact Lessons for the Adolescent Learner (full-title) offers all educators regardless of content area, everything from thoughtful lessons based upon the best practices of experienced practitioners, objectives and standards, lesson plans and ways to conduct the lesson, and numerous ready-made detailed handouts (over 14). These individual lessons are based on five areas of emphasis: collaborative activities between student and teacher; literacy and language development across the curriculum; connecting learning to the students' lives, family, and community; teaching that requires higher order, complex thinking; and learning through conversational activities and dialogue.

Many lessons impressed this reviewer; one particularly interesting was a Language Arts/History unit for Grade 8 on "War and Destruction" that teaches middle school students about the "tragedies of war," persecution, bigotry, racial violence, and survival. As an introduction to Houston & Houston's memoir *Farewell to Manzanar*, students are divided into guards and Japanese-Americans. Students then perform a role playing activity, where guards "following orders" require that the Japanese-Americans pack their belongings and leave their homes in a matter of hours. Not only must students consider what they would bring with them, but they also must record their thoughts and emotions and reflect upon the experience in a series of "quick writes." These activities require conceptualization on the part of the participants, which ultimately increases students' enthusiasm and engagement.

A collage project in biology for Grade 9 or 10 centering on the concept of biodiversity also seemed worthwhile. Students must work in small groups and create a collage that reflects everything they have learned from "family, friends, community, television or radio, Internet, and school." Students must present their collage to the whole group and should experience others' productions through a "gallery walk." The teacher assesses the collage through the Collage Project Rubric, which is also provided in the unit. This introductory activity is used to gauge what students already know about the subject, and this strategy can be used to introduce other units in various content areas.

In my own senior level language arts classroom, I have stepped down as "the sage on the stage" and have tried to create a more constructivist student-centered classroom. That transition would have been much easier had I been able to take advantage of the carefully designed lessons and a guideline for their implementation in Sirota's *The Heart of Teaching.* Although many lessons are taken from content areas and grade levels other than my own, I will still be able to adapt these lessons to my own students, and I believe that others will be able to do the same. Consequently, maybe as Sirota hopes, many educators will be able to wed the pedagogy of elementary teaching with the content knowledge of secondary education—an interesting engagement and a marriage that is long overdue.

Pages: **150** Price: **$24.95 US; $31.99 CDN** ISBN: **ISBN 0-7879-7802-7**

Reviewed by Randy Baker, Doctoral Student at the University of Oklahoma and Secondary high school English teacher at Putnam City North High School in Oklahoma City

---

Stowe, Cynthia M. (2005). *Understanding Special Education: A Helpful Handbook for Classroom Teachers.* New York: Scholastic.

Understanding special education is an excellent soft cover book, written as a resource for regular classroom teachers working within an inclusionary model of special education delivery. It would be equally useful for teacher candidates and regular classroom teachers.

The introduction to the book includes a section entitled "About Inclusion" and "General Principles" which stresses the importance of creating a safe learning environment for all students. Stowe adopts a user friendly approach to organizing and presenting detailed information about a variety of common special education diagnoses in Section One, including: learning disabilities, brain injuries, attention deficit disorders (ADD/ADHD), pervasive development disorders (PDD), Tourette syndrome, mental retardation, gifted, speech

and behavioural disorders, as well as hearing, vision and physical disabilities. Section Two of the book, "What Do I Need to Know About the Special Education System", provides readers with valuable background information on the legal requirements (U.S. law) for developing and implementing Individual Education Plans (IEPs).

The book includes numerous case studies, which are useful for exploring common issues that arise in an inclusionary context from both the teacher and students' perspective. Other useful features in the book include easy to implement proactive classroom management tips, and a well organized and comprehensive Appendix with hard copy and electronic references.

The author's expertise in the field and ability to synthesize relevant information makes the book a great resource for special education teachers, regular classroom teachers, and teacher candidates, as well as a valuable reference book in library collections.

Pages: **128** Price: **$17.99 US; $23.99 CDN** ISBN: **0-439-56037-3**

Reviewed by Maura Ross, Instructional Technology Professor and Practicum Advisor at the Faculty of Education, University of Windsor. Maura's teaching experience includes primary, junior and intermediate classrooms, special education resourcing, and school administration.

Winograd, Kathryn (2005). *Stepping Sideways into Poetry Writing: Practical Lessons - Teaching Students the How-to and the Heart of Writing Poetry.* New York: Scholastic.

For teachers of writing, creative or otherwise, *Stepping Sideways into Poetry Writing* is a manual that is not only instructive, but also inspiring. Kathryn Winograd's style is friendly, helpful, stimulating and provocative. While part of Scholastic's Teaching Strategies for Grades 3-6, the book's structure and content is appealing and useful beyond its target market. Winograd writes to the poet in everyone; therefore, the book will find applause from teachers of poetry at all levels.

Stepping Sideways teaches how to find a young writer's voice through playing with words and everyday experiences. In doing so Winograd also teaches the major elements, types and forms of poetry, i.e., sensory language, haiku, simile, metaphor, rhythm and meter, line breaks and white spaces. The warm-up activities and exercises serve like yoga to loosen up the voice and open up the senses. The chapter "Appreciating the Soul of Haiku" is delightful, offering poems from antiquity as well as little soul bursts from young children who are clearly akin to the form. The poetry sampler shows that to be wise is to be childlike in ways both the master (Basho) and young, open-eyed poets understand.

Winograd guides the young writer into inner psychological experience. While doing so she teaches the art of personification, dramatic monologue, metaphoric weight and classical forms of poetry. She accomplishes her intent as stated: "I want students to recognize that the best poems happen through the accidents of language that arise from their inner selves…." (p. 8) She does this by sharing her own poetry, the poetry of former students, asking simple questions for a warm-up, and providing an exercise for all to do differently. I especially enjoyed the "What is…?" questions (i.e., What is the sky? What is love?), permitting students to find meaning particular to their lives in language unique to their own experience. Winograd also satisfies the teacher by outlining and reaffirming via the Teacher Corner what concepts and skills each lesson accomplishes.

Stepping Sideways develops the inner appreciative critic. Winograd shows how to celebrate and specify what's best in a poem, how to revise a poem, what transforms an experience or exercise into poetry. She describes walking about the classroom while students are writing. If a student is stuck, she says, "I will simply encourage them to keep moving forward, by pointing out words, lines, or ideas that strike me. Getting a positive comment from a teacher is incredibly motivating for them. If I see a line or an image that I think will serve as inspiration for the rest of the class, I'll ask everyone to pause a minute to listen to it. Remember that your students will learn a lot from one another." (p. 123) Winograd is present in first person throughout the book, as she is when walking about her classroom. Her lessons enable her to create relationships with her students and community among young writers.

Winograd concludes her book of lessons with a brief summarizing checklist of all the elements the exercises demonstrate and a list of the techniques she asks students to try. In less than 150 pages she has covered (1) shaping a poem with stanzas, line breaks, white space, titles, forms; (2) using concrete words, sensory images, pictures, figurative language, active verbs; (3) creating sound and rhythm; (4) experimenting with alliteration, assonance, consonance, couplet, cross rhyme, end rhyme, image, metaphor, mood, onomatopoeia, refrain, simile, stanza; (5) ideas for displaying, performing, playing games with poems; (6)

ways to collaborate with science classes and visual artists; and (7) methods to encourage interpersonal communication about feelings expressed in student poems. It is the clarity with which she has organized, written, punctuated and emphasized concepts throughout the book that makes *Stepping Sideways* especially refreshing and easy to use.

Finally, Winograd speaks to the professional teacher who has a specified curriculum and set of skills to teach and standards to meet. In a concluding chapter, she sets out how poetry fulfills standards culled from the Standards for the English Language Arts, sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association. For further research, Winograd provides lists of books for creative inspiration; practical aspects of poetry writing; instructional guidance; collections of poetry likely to motivate both a teacher and young student. For reference and further study, she offers a list of web resources. Librarians and Library Media Specialists will also benefit from the book and web lists.

One improvement to the book would be to include a brief How to Use this Book section in the first chapter. In reading through the book once and then going back, I discovered on the second use how helpful knowing how to connect with my inner appreciative critic is in doing the earlier exercises. Although the exercises are flexible enough for any teacher to adapt to one's individual teaching style, the author might offer suggestions for doing so at the outset.

On a personal note, I found myself doing the book as well as reading it. Be prepared to smile often when reading *Stepping Sideways.* It is jam-packed with lively, uplifting poetry and creative ideas to improve not only the art of teaching but also the human connections among students, teachers, and the world around us all. Adding it to a professional library is highly recommended.

References

National Council of Teachers of English & International Reading Association. (1996). *Standards for the English language arts.* Newark, Del.: International Reading Association; Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English. Further information available online at http://www.ncte.org/ab out/over/standards/

Pages: **144** Price: **$19.95** ISBN: **0-439-59730-7**

Reviewed by Jill L. Woolums, a librarian and webmaster at the Education Psychology Library, University of California, Berkeley. She holds a bachelor's degree in Education, a master's degree in English literature, and a master's degree in Library and Information Science. As a librarian, she provides services in instruction, reference and digital library development. Areas of interest include Internet research, children's literature, arts education and creative writing.