Brief reviews for September 2006

Abell, Sandra K. & Volkmann, Mark J. (2006) *Seamless Assessment in Science: A Guide for Elementary and Middle School Teachers.* **Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.**

Pages: 160   Price: $20.00   ISBN: 0-325-00769-1

Assessment is something teachers are in a constant struggle to manage. All educators know that effective teachers have to be able to effectively measure students' learning, yet how can it be done in a way that will give them the information that they (and their administrators) need and help students also? How can assessment be managed without driving the teacher insane?

The difference is assessment *for* learning as opposed to assessment *of* learning. Ongoing assessment is already imbedded in effective inquiry-based instruction. However, whether the scoring of assessments is primarily designed to guide instruction or measure achievement toward the standards is another matter. Assessment that is primarily designed to measure learning, and is often considered punitive, can be effective. But somehow coupled with that must be assessment for learning, that is not necessarily used to quantitatively measure a student's cognitive abilities but is instead used to guide the path instruction should take to be most effective.

Abell and Volkmann discuss both types of assessment and how to effectively integrate them into a science classroom. Their 5E model (Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, and Evaluate) defines the phases during the process of inquiry with specific learning and assessment purposes for each phase. While the model is sound and the descriptions of each phase of the model are easy to understand, the most helpful thing is that at least half of the book is examples of ways that teachers have utilized the model.

The examples given for the 5E model show how the stages play out at several grade levels. Examples in physical science and the Earth and space sciences are given at primary (grades 1-3), intermediate (grades 4-5) and middle (grades 6-8) levels. Additionally, a table of online assessment resources is included in the appendix.

This book would be a wonderful way for a science department interested in revisiting their assessment policy to begin discussions. The examples described give rise to some very interesting ideas about assessment and how to balance formal and informal assessment. Solid assessment practices yield solid instructional practices.

Reviewed by Myka H. Raymond, Ph.D., Gifted and Talented Coordinator, Physics and Engineering/Earth Science Teacher, Overland High School, Aurora, Colorado.

Allen, Janet & Landaker, Christine (2004). *Reading History: A Practical Guide to Improving Literacy.* **Oxford: Oxford University Press.**

Pages: 153   Price: $30.00   ISBN: 0-19-516595-0(hardcover)

Janet Allen and Christine Landaker's *Reading history: A practical guide to improving literacy* is an appealing presentation of strategies that engage students in the reading side of history. With techniques well-grounded

in the literature, Allen and Landaker include so much in the opening chapter; it's a wonder they found more to write. It turns out that Allen and Landaker found a lot more to include.

The book is structured around the concepts of building background knowledge, providing support for reading comprehension, making learning meaningful to students and best practices. Without making readers aware of it, the authors use this structure to take the reader through the learning process. In each chapter, Allen and Landaker highlight the use of active learning strategies and illustrate their capabilities in advancing student learning to the next level. Each collection of techniques builds on the new abilities gained from the previous set of activities. For instance, the first chapter techniques of admit slips, book passes, read alouds, list-group-label, predict-o-gram and concept ladder help students build their content knowledge.

Allen and Landaker follow those strategies in chapter two with techniques that make the knowledge meaningful, help with new vocabulary, and provide support for reading different styles, such as narratives and exposition. Using activities like question games and graphic organizers students gain support for their reading comprehension. While going through this second portion, Allen and Landaker make it clear that these comprehension strategies will only work if the background knowledge was built first.

In making history knowledge meaningful for students, *Reading History* again looks to graphic organizers and other techniques to help with the learning of dates or concepts. But Allen and Landaker recommend these strategies to assist students in seeing and appreciating multiple viewpoints and in taking ownership of history by learning how to turn their new knowledge into tangible work. Activities such as writing alphabet books and timelines allow students to document their new learning beyond the traditional question and answer scenarios.

Many texts fail to address the presence of testing in our schools and how active strategies fit the testing reality. It is gratifying that Allen and Landaker finish this portion of the book with just such a discussion. They believe that these techniques help students at test time in four ways:

- They teach students to read all text types (narrative, exposition and functional).
- As engaged learners, students will view tests as another learning activity.
- They teach students to reason and think critically about questions.
- Activities could be used to help the students decode a practice test in preparation for the assessment.

Allen and Landaker don't finish with testing. They conclude with a nice consideration of best practices in the teaching of reading. Emphasizing that there is no perfect method that will reach all students, Allen and Landaker highlight practices that will ensure a solid foundation for student learning. Practicing what they preach, they include a teacher planning diagram to reflect on the instructional decision making process and ensure that the theory and activities balance with student learning.

In *Reading History*, Allen and Landaker consistently highlight the use of supplemental materials so it was no surprise to find a rich collection of appendices filled with such items as graphic organizers, professional reading recommendations, sources for supplemental materials, book lists for titles that complement textbooks, a webliography and the authors' own list of references from the book itself.

Allen and Landaker have written a wonderful guide to incorporating reading into history. But reflective readers should be prepared to stop and think on how these same strategies can be used throughout the curriculum. This reviewer certainly feels more prepared for teaching.

Reviewed by Melissa Cast, University of Nebraska at Omaha

Barnes, Donald L. & Fischer, Wyman E. (2005). *Teaching Thinking Skills Using Non-Fiction Narratives, Book 3: Grades 7 and 8.* **Marion, IL: Pieces of Learning.**

Pages: 226   Price: $26.95   ISBN: 1-931334-66-8

Teaching Thinking Skills Using Non-Fiction Narratives, Book 3: Grades 7 and 8, is the third book in a series of three covering thinking skills instruction in the third to eighth grades. The authors, Barnes and Fisher, retired professors from Ball State University, present a collection of thirty reading passages arranged by Flesch- Kincaid reading levels. Many of the passages are enticingly titled. Some contain puns such as "Mummy Knows Best" about Egyptian mummies, or "Some Day Your Prints Will Come" about fingerprints. Some of the passages contain titles reminiscent of tabloid headlines, "The Fearful Little Girl Who Became a Champion of the Poor" about Eleanor Roosevelt, and "The Sultan Who Was Afraid to Die" about one of the last Ottoman emperors.

The book contains fifteen pages of preliminary material for teachers that review Bloom's Taxonomy and present a scope and sequence grid of the thinking skills contained in this volume and the other parts of the

series. Instructional steps are included to 'insure [sic] that students receive maximum benefit from the narratives and activities that follow" (p. 9). The preliminary material includes "Levels and Verbs to Use with Bloom's Taxonomy" (p. 14) from a folder publication of Engine-Uity Ltd. called *Verbs and Products for Independent Study,* and "Representative Activities for Bloom's Taxonomy" and (Student) "Products for Various Learning Styles", both reprinted from the book, *Thematic Activities for Student Portfolios* (p. 15).

In the preface to the book, the authors say, "we hope that the unusual narratives in this book and the probing questions will spark lively discussions and help students develop and capitalize on their broader, sometimes hidden competencies" (p.6). The narratives are unusual in that most, with the exception of the passages after page 155, lack cohesive opening or concluding paragraphs. The bodies of the narratives often bear little relation to the opening paragraphs. A passage that is concerned with counterfeit money, "Money Isn't Everything, But It Is Very Helpful", begins with a long description of the invention of money, salt payments to Roman soldiers, and the use of "playing card" money by the French colonial governor in Canada, before even getting to the point of the passage in the third paragraph (pp. 30-31). Another passage, "Angel of Mercy", about Florence Nightingale spends six paragraphs reviewing types of nursing careers before covering Florence Nightingale's life (pp. 42-44).

Many of the passages seem to be an unfocused, haphazard collection of facts without any transitions between paragraphs. The passages are written in a choppy, discomforting style similar to initial student offerings in a remedial English class. "If You Had Your Life to Live Over Again" begins with a description of immigration to the United States, and is followed with paragraphs about tenement life, diseases and colonial remedies, child labor, the orphan trains, slavery, Joseph [sic] (Josiah) Henson, Frederick Douglas [sic] (Douglass), lynching, a lack of civil rights for African Americans and then ends abruptly without a concluding paragraph (pp.36-37).

Quite a few of the narratives dealing with history contain the phrases "many years ago" (p. 56) or "early days", (p. 126) which can refer to any period in history from the dawn of history (p.126), ancient times (p. 56) or medieval times (p. 127). One reading, "The Sultan Who Was Afraid to Die", recounting the reign of Abdul Hamid II contains only two dates 900 A.D. and 1903. The questions following the passage ask students to make an assumption based on descriptions of his use of antiseptics and vitamin pills about the time period in which Abdul Hamid II lived (p. 103). The answer key says "we can assume that vitamins had been discovered and doctors knew that antiseptic solutions would kill some germs" (p. 98). Another passage, "Angel of Mercy" about Florence Nightingale contains an incorrect death date for the subject of the passage (p. 44).

None of the passages contains source notes. This is problematic because the sixth paragraph on page 50 is a direct, unattributed quote from a newspaper article entitled "Power from blood could lead to 'human batteries' " in the August 4, 2003, edition of the *Sydney Morning Herald.* Students will learn neither proper research nor thinking skills nor ethics from these "carefully crafted narratives" (p.6).

The authors' preface also states that students will "…encounter intriguing historical figures, fascinating animals and seldom-discussed events in the development of our nation. A number of different ethnic groups are represented in these narratives" (p.6). In addition to the misspellings of the names of Frederick Douglass and Josiah Henson referred to above, Denmark Vesey is described as a "free Negro", a historically correct but archaic term (p.79). The wedding customs of the Rom people are recounted in this way, "The twelve-year-old bride was obviously upset…Gypsies have traditionally arranged early marriages for their children…It wasn't long before the government officials stepped in and cancelled the wedding (p.126)". The wedding fairs of the Berbers of North Africa are described as "a loud, smelly bazaar" (p. 127). None of these statements will encourage an appreciation for diverse cultures and peoples among our students.

Students can also learn intriguing facts about the burning of thousands of mummies in place of coal to power Egyptian steam engines and Egyptian railroads (p. 19). In the same narrative, readers are told about the use of recycled mummy wrappings as food wrap paper in Canada, two hundred years ago, resulting in a cholera outbreak, (p.19). The first fact was originally a 'tongue in cheek' statement from Mark Twain in *Innocents Abroad,* chapter LVIII.[1] The second fact is assumed to be urban folklore, although there has been a reported discovery of a New England newspaper with a note claiming that it was made of recycled linen from mummy wrappings (Heideman, 2003 It's Moving. It's Alive!, para. 12; Wolfe, 2003). Since there are no source notes or citations, none of the information can be verified, although it is presented as fact.

The most amazing scientific fact contained in the text was that, "in rare instances young children have even replaced body parts. Children under the age of ten have been known to grow new thumbs and fingers" (p.139). The same narrative describes the removal of one half of the brain of an infant girl in Chicago after she was afflicted by encephalitis lethargica (sleeping sickness) and her tremendous improvement, because the remaining half of her brain had taken over all normal functions (p. 139). Again, no dates or sources are given for these statements, and they are presented as fact.

The Teacher Pages presented with each passage seem to be well organized even though they follow the haphazard flow of the passages. The Teacher pages contain vocabulary words, answer keys and suggestions for enrichment activities. The student questions are sufficiently probing, and for the most part are developmentally appropriate.

However, the badly written and edited narratives, the lack of source citations or notes on the authors of the narratives, and the unattributed copied material present a very poor model of writing for students and an even worse model of thinking and research skills. It is disconcerting that the better organized passages are those with the higher reading levels (pp.155-226). For these reasons, *Teaching Thinking Skills Using Non-Fiction Narratives, Book 3: Grades 7 and 8* is not recommended for classroom use.

References

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Power from blood could lead to 'human batteries' [Electronic version]. (2003, August 4). *Sydney Morning Herald.* Retrieved August 10, 2006 from htt p://www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/08/03/1059849278131.html

Wolfe, S. J. (2003, November) Long Under Wraps [Electronic version]. The Book, 61, 4-5. Retrieved August 15, 2006 from http://ww w.americanantiquarian.org/Thebook/Nov2003.pdf

Footnotes

[1] Mark Twain in *Innocents Abroad: Roughing It,* (1984) New York: Library of America chap. LVIII, p. 505. *I shall only say that the fuel they use for the locomotive is composed of mummies three thousand years old, purchased by the ton or by the graveyard for that purpose, and that sometimes one hears the profane engineer call out pettishly, "D--n these plebeians, they don't burn worth a cent--pass out a King*;"--*[Stated to me for a fact. I only tell it as I got it. I am willing to believe it. I can believe any thing.]*

Reviewed by by Sheila Kirven, Education Services Librarian, New Jersey City University, Jersey City, NJ.

Boudett, Kathryn Parker; City, Elizabeth A. & Murnane, Richard J. (Eds.). (2005) *Data Wise: A Step-by-Step Guide to Using Assessment Results to Improve Teaching and Learning.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Publishing.

Pages: 212   Price: $59.95 hardcover; $29.95 paper   ISBN: 1-891792-68-7 hardcover; 1-891792-67-9 paper

This book consists of a preface, introduction, four sections, nine chapters, and 212 pages. Different educators author the introduction and chapters. The purpose of the book is explained very well in the first paragraph of the preface: "In an effort to determine how best to prepare school leaders to use student assessment results to improve teaching and learning, a group consisting of faculty and doctoral students at the Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE) and school leaders from three Boston public schools worked together for two years. This book is a product of our collective knowledge about what school leaders need to know and do to ensure that the piles of student assessment results landing on their desks are used to improve student learning in their schools." This is an excellent "how-to" guide to be used by those "learning on the job."

The introduction and each chapter begins with a school-based scenario where educators are examining data and using various strategies and protocols to either design a plan or to solve a student learning problem. The Introduction, written by the editors, begins with a principal examining his school's state exam results. This principal is like many principals who receive their data and know that there is something the faculty can learn from the data but do not know where and how to start. The preface concludes with sections on why leaders should start with high stakes test results and how to use the book.

The premise underlying the book is that "a good school is not a collection of good teachers working independently, but a team of skilled educators working together to implement a coherent instructional plan, to identify the learning needs of every student, and to meet those needs. . . . The process of learning from data contributes to building an effective school and to helping the school continue to improve its performance" (p. 2).

This book provides strategies and tools for identifying possible explanations for strong and weak student performance, for examining the importance of alternative explanations, and for planning and executing

instructional strategies to improve teaching and learning. This is done through the Data Wise Improvement Process Cycle, which includes three phases; Prepare, Inquire, and Act. The chapters of the book discuss the various phases in this cycle.

Section One discusses the Prepare phase and includes chapters on Organizing for Collaborative Work and Building Assessment Literacy. In the first scenario the principals return to their campus after a central office training that required schools to incorporate data analysis into their instructional planning. The school leaders who attempt this must be committed to building a "data culture" or "culture of inquiry" within their schools. The book presents three activities that can support this kind of school culture: creating and guiding a data team, enabling collaborative work among faculty, and planning productive meetings.

The data team is a small group of people who are responsible for the technical and organizational aspects of data work. Their duties may include managing the collection and organization of data from the state, district, and classrooms; creating graphic displays of this information; and teaching faculty members how to collect, organize, or display their own data. The data team members need to have a clear understanding of teaching so that they know what kinds of charts and templates teachers will find most useful.

Guiding a data team begins with the three tasks of creating a data inventory, taking stock of data organization, and developing an inventory of the instructional initiatives currently in place in the school. It is important for the data inventory to include information about three types of data sources: external assessments, internal assessments, and other student-level information like demographics and background data. The second activity, enabling collaborative work, suggests that the more people involved in data analysis and interpretations, the more effective the resulting school improvement efforts will be. Two things that school leaders can do to support effective data discussions are to build strong teams and to create a schedule that allows for regular collaborative work.

The authors recommended using a protocol to start the conversation in collaborative work. Protocols are structured ways of organizing interactions among group members. One protocol, the Compass Points protocol, is quick and provides an excellent opportunity for members to get to know each other. Protocols lead to conversations that often deal with much deeper issues while maintaining a nonthreatening atmosphere. The authors warn that unless school leaders, especially principals, are willing to champion the cause of analyzing data regularly and using the results to make decisions for the school, data work will not become a meaningful part of the schoolwide reform. Again as with any systemic reform, the instructional leader's promotion and participation in the activity is very important.

Next the authors present concepts, which will help a faculty develop "assessment literacy." There are several principles for interpreting assessment results: sampling principles of testing, discrimination, measurement error, reliability, and score inflation. Along with the principles, assessment issues and different ways of reporting performance are revisited for the readers. There is a section explaining why one may want to trade details for reliability. The authors explain and demonstrate that when there are fewer items used in reporting performance, the results will be less reliable.

Section Two, is the Inquire phase. In discussing Creating a Data Overview, readers learn to: decide on educational questions, reorganize assessment data, show comparisons, and facilitate constructive conversations. One entire chapter is organized around the tasks a data team would perform to prepare for a faculty meeting on assessment results. The discussion also gives many details, visuals, and examples of all the tasks, which can be used by many schools to discover patterns in assessment results. Before committing to a particular course of action or investing time in developing solutions, it is important that data users understand the learner-centered problem, defined as a problem of understanding or skill that underlies students' performance on assessments. Learner-centered problem means that the problem is about learning, not that the learners are the problem. The goal is to help schools identify a learner-centered problem that is common to many students and if solved, would help meet larger goals for students.

Data teams are encouraged to begin with a single data source. The source chosen depends upon the question being asked and the context. The single data source should be able to show patterns in students' understanding and thinking. After observing a single source then other sources should be used to triangulate. This can help confirm or negate assumptions about students learning. With these multiple sources of data, a common language can be developed concerning what students need or the learner-centered problem.

Since education is under control of teachers-teaching will be the focus of solutions in action plan. The action plan should encourage the reframing of the learning problem as a problem of practice – a critical step before the action plan. The "Problem of practice" is an expression of the student learning problem and the teaching related to the problem. Four steps are given to investigate instruction and articulate a problem of practice. They are:

1. link learning and teaching
2. develop the skill of examining practice

3. develop a shared understanding of effective practice
4. analyze current practice

A structured protocol like the Affinity Protocol is a tool to link teaching and learning. This helps teachers take responsibility for student learning. It means going past student problems and linking them to the learning and teaching process. Many educators and schools stop at the fact that some students live in poverty, have family problems, or lack parental help. After the process of linking learning and teaching, educators must develop the skill of examining their practice. This means being able to recognize and understand what one is observing in a classroom. It is important to describe and not evaluate. By doing this schools begin to develop a shared understanding of effective practices. once this is accomplished, the staff is ready to design an action plan to help solve the problem.

Section Three is the Act phase. This is where the action plan is developed. Successful action plans usually include four tasks:

1. Decide on instructional strategies that will solve the problem of practice identified through analysis of student and teacher data. The instructional strategies become the heart of the action plan.
2. Agree on what the plan will look like in classrooms. The team should reach a shared understanding of the strategy by carefully describing what team members would expect to see teachers and students doing if the plan was implemented well.
3. Put the plan down on paper. Documenting roles and responsibilities and specifying the concrete steps that need to occur, builds internal accountability for making the plan work. Identifying the professional development time and instruction the team will need and include it in the action plan to let teachers know they will be supported through the process of instructional improvement.
4. Plan how you will know if the plan is working. Before implementing the plan, it is important to determine what type of student outcome data you will need to collect in order to understand whether students are indeed learning more.

An assessment plan is part of the action plan. The two most challenging decisions schools confront in developing assessment plans are identifying the kinds of assessments to use to measure progress and deciding how to set appropriate goals for student progress. *Data Wise* provides visuals of individual student conference sheets, a problem-solving poster evaluation rubric, and a monthly progress assessment plan to aid participants.

In order to make sure that everyone is on the same page, the authors recommend that the action plan be communicated clearly, that it be integrated into ongoing school work, and that leaders use the teams who worked on the action plan for support. Frequent classroom visits assure that all teams are following the action plan. The team should promote consistency in the action plan rather than conformity and adapt professional development plans to meet ongoing needs that emerge from the actions. To find out if the students are learning more, do a regular check with teachers about the learning outcomes, help teachers see the big picture, and honestly evaluate what is working and not working. After all this has been done one must celebrate all victories and tasks. Revisit the criteria and tasks to set future goals or raise the bar as needed to keep the cycle ongoing.

For any team of educators needing to implement a coherent instructional plan, to identify the learning needs of every student, and to meet those needs, this book will be very helpful. The reviewer believes that if the goal of a school is to review student assessment results to improve teaching and learning, following this book would be beneficial.

Reviewed by Shirley Key, Ed.D., Associate Professor, University of Memphis

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Brighouse, Harry (2006) *On Education.* London: Routledge.

Pages: 143   Price: £50.00 or $80.00(hardcover) £9.99 or $15.95(paperback)   ISBN: 0-415-32789-X(hardcover) 0-415-32790-3(paperback)

A philosophy book as a brief review for practitioners! Preposterous! Indeed, the idea of a philosophy book for busy school practitioners dealing with day to day pressures from the trenches seems silly until one engages a very readable, clear text from Harry Brighouse. Brighouse envisions that teachers will read his book, hoping that he causes no offense and encouraging them to take his arguments seriously and critique them in light of their own experiences (p. 135). With the increasing pressures on schools and teachers, a book that helps teachers focus on important principles and values is needed.

Part One consists of four chapters that argue for four principles for child focused schooling. Chapter One concerns the provision of schooling that has children learn about a wide range of ways to live and the

education that allows them to reflect and possibly reject the ways of their parents. Chapter Two states that children should have an education that allows them to be self-sufficient in the economy. The focus should be on the child and not on whether the economy needs more of a specific job filled. Chapter Three argues that children should be educated to have rich and flourishing lives separate from the economy. Chapter Four proposes schooling that allows children to be effective participants in public decision-making.

Part Two deals with three specific policy issues: state funding for religious schools, inculcation of patriotism, and citizenship education. Brighouse, a citizen of both the U.S. and the U.K., draws interesting distinctions between religious matters in the U.S and the United Kingdom. This contrast allows the reader to focus on the important values of educating autonomous children who are good citizens and illustrates the down-sides of a strict wall in the U.S. The chapter on patriotism comes at a key time in our nation's history. This book allows one to see the various forms of patriotism and the dangers inherent in some forms. Brighouse warns of misleading myths in citizenship education that appeal more to emotion but do little to develop the habit of skeptical inquiry. By teaching students the skills of bias detection and indoctrination recognition, we can create good citizens and prevent politically biased schooling. Importantly, Brighouse discusses reasons for the perceived decline in civic participation that have nothing to do with the nature of the citizens. He mentions structural barriers and changing circumstances that have little to do with schooling. This is always an important point as schools are asked to solve all social problems.

Readers will appreciate the easy straightforward style and the 5 x 8 inch compact size. Brighouse displays some narrow historical understandings. He blames sixties students for the demand for relevant education and the narrowness of today's schooling while he ignores the demands for relevance long before the 1960's by many progressive educators including those from Professor Brighouse's current employer. Brighouse is a leading philosopher on education and his ideas should be considered by all, especially practitioners. Self-reflection is essential and framing important values, which often compete with one another, aids that reflection.

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

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Cartledge, Gwendolyn & Lo, Ya-yu (2006). *Teaching Urban Learners: Culturally Responsive Strategies for Developing Academic and Behavioral Competence.* **Champaign, IL: Research Press.**

Pages: 221   Price: $24.95   ISBN: 978-0-87822-554-5

Teaching urban learners: Culturally responsive strategies for developing academic and behavioral competence is geared, according to the authors, for both general education and special education teachers of primary level students who exhibit the greatest risk factors for failure. They cite difficulties in reading and behavior as risk factors. The authors compiled a wealth of teacher friendly strategies that can be easily integrated into an existing core curriculum. They claim a deep background in helping teachers of urban learners succeed and assert that they tested each of the suggested strategies in authentic urban classrooms.

This text is appropriate as a resource for general education and special education practitioners rather than as a textbook for teacher candidates because it lacks the theoretical underpinnings that preservice teachers need to understand, but that practitioners have.

Overview
There are eleven chapters contained in the four sections of the text. The sections deal with 1) Culturally responsive instruction, 2) Effective academic instruction, 3) Improving social competencies, and 4) Parent involvement. Each section is further subdivided into one or more chapters. Each chapter in this well-written text follows a user- friendly format that includes applications of the strategy, a rationale for its implementation, definitions where helpful, descriptions of effective pedagogy, and the benefits to the students. Additionally, each chapter offers realistic timetables (e.g., daily, weekly, grading period) for each strategy's implementation sequence, and a generous list of hard copy and/or electronic resources for further reading and suggestions.

Strengths of the text
The overall strengths of this text include:

- The realistic vignettes that open each chapter illustrate a child's typical behavioral or academic responses to general classroom proceedings. Cartledge and Lo revisit the child described in the vignette at the end of the chapter and provide follow up behavioral or academic reactions.
- The authors provide a variety of appropriate strategies that are presented for the reader's consideration

and potential use.

- The authors provide a number of examples for the reader in order to speed implementation of the highlighted strategies
- The authors provide a generous supply of visual illustrations throughout the chapters (e.g., response cards, p. 53, 58; social greeting cards, p. 136-137; monitoring charts, 164). The graphics provided can be clearly understood and easily connected to the explanatory text.
- In the opinion of this reviewer, the teaching strategies described have merit.

Section one notes the needs of urban children and highlights the need for strong literacy instruction. The plight of urban learners and a description of effective urban school settings comprise the first chapter. Few would argue with the authors' comments about the value of literacy education; however, some teachers may not be as familiar with teaching reading as they are with teaching content areas. The second chapter defines and offers examples of useful strategies.

Section two concentrates on strategies that increase the likelihood of engaging students in their own learning process. The use of response cards, peer tutoring, and oral reading are explained and illustrated. Numerous pictures of examples help demonstrate the use of any techniques with which teachers may be unfamiliar. These procedures use either commercially produced materials or items that are simply created with readily available supplies, and a little time.

The chapters in section three are particularly helpful. Chapters seven and eight (Behavior management and Social skills instruction, respectively) will appeal to any teacher regardless of the school setting. These skill areas tend to go hand-in-hand and the authors offer strategies to teach children the social skills without embarrassing or singling out particular children. Chapters nine and ten discuss individual and school-wide behavior management plans that they claim are helpful in urban settings. The focus of both the individual and school-wide behavior management plans seems to be positive, rather than punitive.

After having read the earlier chapters, readers sense a need or desire to involve the parents. Section four provides ideas for reaching parents who work long hours, do not speak the same language as the teacher, and may not realize the value of their involvement in their children's education. All of the teacher's other work with the child might be for naught if the parents are uninvolved.

Areas of concern
The literacy competence of typical urban children, who are also minorities, is often below that of their cultural or racial majority counterparts. This book does not address the needs of older students who are without some, or all, of their basic competencies and skills. This reviewer had the sense that the information presented in Chapter two, (Beginning reading instruction) is, as the saying goes, "a mile- wide and an inch deep" with regards to literacy instruction. Literacy is a wide topic and the reader might choose to seek additional information elsewhere after reading this chapter. The chapter presents skill attainment and development, with little emphasis on literature for the middle or high school student who may also lack basic academic competencies. Along with basic reading skills instruction, comprehension and critical reading are areas of high need in urban schools with high numbers of minority children whose first language might not be English.

A drawback is that the demographic proportions of teachers in urban schools often does not match that of the students served. For example, the percents of African American, Hispanic, and Latino children may outweigh the percent of Euro-American students. Many of the students may be receiving free or reduced price meals, which indicate that the families of the students earn low incomes, yet the majority of the teachers may be white, middle-class females. While the teachers struggle to understand their students, they may be uninformed as to the influences coming from home that manifest themselves in children's behavior. The text does not address some of the reasons that these strategies might be effective and more importantly, what cultural stimuli exist outside of school for these children and that potentially influence their academic progress and behaviors.

The demographics and characteristics that make up urban schools vary somewhat from those that make up suburban or rural schools, yet there are similarities in what students need academically and behaviorally. The text appears to cater to a specific subset of children, but this reviewer believes that the strategies offered in this book apply to children in many school settings who are academically and behaviorally challenged.

Summary
Overall, this is a worthwhile text as a resource for general education and special education practitioners or as a supplemental text for teacher candidates. The suggestions appear genuinely helpful and the information appropriate given the increasingly culturally diverse populations that make up our nation's classrooms. We need to close the achievement gap that exists between minority and majority children, reach and involve parents of all children in their education, and provide a safe learning environment for all students, teachers, and staff.

Reviewed by Mary Ransdell, Ed. D, assistant professor of elementary education at the University of Memphis. She enjoys her work with preservice teachers, both before and during their professional semester, and with those preparing for national board certification. Her professional interests include master teachers, effective teaching, and the use of cooperative learning. Email: mransdll@memphis.edu.

Goldberg, Mark F. (2006). *Insider's Guide to School Leadership: Getting Things Done Without Losing Your Mind.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey- Bass.

Pages: **110**   Price: **$29.00**   ISBN: **0-7879-8208-3**

Goldberg is a prolific author, counting four other books and 90 articles in educational journals among his achievements. *Insider's Guide* is a compendium of practitioner wisdom, organized into 11 chapters on the following topics: recruitment and retention; safety and emotional well-being (of pupils); keeping up (personal development); meetings; staff development; leadership; charisma and creativity in leadership; supervision of staff; statistical data and other forms of information; parents, community, and communication. A set of rules for each topic is presented, totaling 55 rules in all. He points out that textbook answers do not exist for many of the daily problems encountered by school administrators and offers his rules as concrete guidelines that might help in working through the daily issues of school administration.

These rules would be useful to both novice and experienced school administrators in carrying out many of their activities. A copy of this slim volume (110 pages) could be tucked into a desk drawer as a useful reference. For example, a recently appointed assistant principal, having been assigned to find someone to fill a new position, would find in the first chapter five rules on the purpose and process of hiring and mentoring that could be followed to successful completion of the task. Embedded in the rules is an effective way of managing the selection committee that strikes a balance between giving members of the committee a genuine voice in the process and directing them. Veteran administrators might turn to this book to review the guidelines so that they might improve in an area in which they have already demonstrated competence; or, in a hectic moment of cognitive overload, to reflect on their own priorities. The most experienced school administrator would find the advice in the second chapter to be a refreshing counterpoint to the pressure of accountability: the safety and emotional well being of pupils takes precedence over their education. His discussion under each of the six rules for this topic is packed with wise guidance.

These two chapters, along with the chapter on meetings and the scenario presented in the last chapter, are the strongest parts of this book. The rules for effective meetings are simple: only call meetings that are needed, prepare carefully, make meetings worthwhile and interesting, hold a retreat for major issues, and use forced choice for contentious issues. Each of these rules is accompanied by detailed recommendations that, if followed, would result in productive meetings and would remove a significant source of faculty dissatisfaction. If anyone subjects you to another unproductive meeting after you read Goldberg's rules for successful meetings, you will feel the urge to loan them your copy

The chapters on supervision of staff; personal professional development (Keeping Up); staff development; parents, community, and communication; and statistical data and other forms of information are also strong. The chapter on the supervision of staff begins with questions about the purpose of supervision and is followed by a reminder that the supervision needed in many schools today is often markedly different from that of 20 years ago. The chapter on personal professional development contains recommendations for membership in professional associations, periodical literature to read, enlisting local resources, and keeping abreast of two or three special interests. The chapter on staff development recommends the formation of learning communities or study groups, giving them manageable goals, and careful planning of staff development courses that reflect school priorities.

The chapter on parents, community, and communication recommends area coffees, publication of a high quality newsletter, one or two workshops for parents each year, and inclusion of parents on a site-based school committee. While many of the guidelines for a high-quality school newsletter would apply equally as well to forms of e-publishing; email, blogs, or school web sites are not included except that it is noted that many schools now use e-mail for newsletter distribution.

The overarching principle presented in the chapter on statistical data and other information is that data must be readily available and understandable if people are going to use them. The principal should undertake a review of the data that is collected, delegate data collection, and issue clear guidelines for data gathering, while avoiding excessive involvement in data and reporting, as this could lead to ineffectiveness. However, administrators are advised to closely monitor data that corresponds to the three or four priorities that they have established. Seven questions for the principal and staff are provided that should lead to more informative and useful information. Small groups of teachers and subject areas or grade levels should analyze state standards, tests, and test results. Goldberg underscores that data should be results oriented,

and he recommends that data be examined over time, asking if participation, attendance, or achievement scores have changed over the past several years. Although technology is indispensable in both collecting and analyzing the massive data sets found in today's schools, technology is not mentioned in this chapter. The advice on these topics seems somewhat less insightful than that of the strongest chapters.

There is good advice in the two chapters that remain, Leadership and Charisma and Creativity in Leadership, such as an admonition to avoid hogging the limelight. However, the rules-oriented approach of the book that serves admirably in the functional areas of school administration bogs down a bit on the softer terrain of leadership. The first two rules will be discussed here to illustrate some of the difficulties. Goldberg's first rule under the topic of leadership is to know who you are as a school leader. He appears to dismiss much of what is published as leadership research in favor of best practices and then suggests that the reader decide if he or she is primarily a visionary, a renewer, or a skilled manager. He offers no explanation of what he construes as best practices, how these are identified, or how he determined that they are superior to research. The second rule states that all leadership work is situational. However, rather than draw on Fiedler's contingency theory (leader-member relations, task structure, and leader's position power), he identifies level of cooperation, representativeness of the group, level of material resources, obstacles, and realistic task parameters as important situational variables. Little support for the validity of his three roles (visionary, renewer, and skilled manager) and situational variables is offered; presumably, best practices are the source of these.

Despite this conceptual weakness, the two leadership chapters contain gems; for example, "be the last person to get overwhelmed." I also especially like rule seven in this section: "worry about ethics, legality, fairness, and decency all the time" (p. 55).

If Goldberg were to revise this book, I would like to see references that point the reader to more detailed information, as he did in citing an article by James Comer under his rule number four, "include parents in a site-based school committee" (p. 96). The credibility of the book rests entirely on the author, as he doesn't tell you where to find support for his advice (with the exception of the Comer citation). These drawbacks aside, Goldberg delivers on his promise to give practical advice and examples for school leaders. *Insider's Guide* distills much into relatively few pages. This book can function as a mentor- or consultant-in-a-desk-drawer, on call for a quick consultation as needed.

Reviewed by Jess House, University of Central Florida

Hillman, Carol B. (2006) *Mentoring Early Childhood Educators: A Handbook for Supervisors, Administrators & Teachers.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Pages: 120   Price: $17.50   ISBN: 0325008833

The collaborative supervisory model discussed by Carol Hillman in this book has three proactive participants – the supervisor, the cooperating teacher and the student teacher. Hillman brings home the fact that while education is all about the child, mentoring is all about the student teacher. She takes the same degree of dedication and humility required of practicing teachers within the classroom and applies it to the supervisor-student teacher relationship. In Hillman's words,

> Teaching is a gift… a gift for all persons in the field. Above all, teaching is an opportunity to create meaningful relationships with others. It is an opportunity to make a difference, to open new windows, open new doors, and allow rays of light to spill across a given space. Teaching is a thoughtful process… a process that calls for listening, observing, evaluating and reflecting. It is a process that pleads for time and quiet and much introspection along the way. Teaching is more than just knowing: it is knowing and feeling in very close harmony. It calls for much understanding of how to best analyse and balance the two, and then to proceed with wisdom. Teaching is a gift, a gift so that you, in turn can enrich the lives of others. (pg. xi)

This humanistic sentiment can be seen as a predominant voice throughout the entirety of the book. Hillman's book provides an effective tool that can be used by any of the three participants in an actual mentoring setting.

The book's main target audience is the supervisor of early childhood educators. As a tool the supervisor can use it while organizing, conducting and evaluating mentoring sessions as suggested in Chapter One – The Role of the Supervisor in this book. It provides useful insight into the role of a supervisor as a collaborative mentor who uses keen observational techniques to guide the student teachers into discovering and improving their practice.

With the busy schedules that most supervisors face today, the simple and practical approach towards

developing an open communicative relationship between supervisor and student teacher is outlined by addressing the role of the supervisor right from establishing introductory contact with the student teacher to the final farewell to the student teacher from the early childhood centre. The inclusion of a number of useful forms that are applicable in such mentoring situations provides the supervisor with an easy-to-use resource that will assist in making the administrative aspect of this role effective and efficient. It also provides for the supervisor useful insight into the mind and heart of the student teacher.

Chapters Four to Six deal with facilitating student teacher learning as well as finding a balance and dealing with some challenging issues that might occur during a mentoring process. It provides insight from Hillman's own experience on how to lead student teachers into developing their philosophy and practice of teaching during this critical mentoring period. One goal is to help student teachers ascertain whether they are cut out to be a teacher or not.

For the cooperating teacher, Hillman provides an overview of the whole mentoring process as a reference guide. Cooperating teachers can see how critical their role is in the mentoring process. They can become vital friends to student teachers going through the mentoring process; they can provide their own practice as a drawing board whereby the student teacher may learn the art and craft of teaching. It also provides a guide on how to use three way conferences effectively and how to use the supervisor as an important resource in building up a stimulating early childhood learning environment within the classroom. The book provides insight for cooperating teachers into what a student teacher must listen and look for in a learning environment as well as how student teachers effectively use their observations, reflective journals and conferencing time to expand their relationships with cooperating teachers.

For the student teacher, prior reading of this book will acquaint them with the whole task of being mentored. They will be able to see the length, breadth and in effect the scope of this experience in their overall development as a professional teacher. The book provides a valuable basis whereby student teachers will be able to make their experience more enriching and valuable for their own learning, for assistance to the cooperating teacher and for the students within that classroom. It provides insight into how as a student teacher, one must move from simple to complex tasks and be able to deal with difficult kids and limited resources. Hillman provides student teachers with valuable insights into their roles as mentorees in this process, gradually gaining confidence in themselves and their teaching skills. The book also underlines the importance for self-evaluation and introspection in order to improve practice. Hillman provides a very constructive approach. Her list of critical questions to be used in a reflective journal by the student teacher, the cooperating teacher and the supervisor in developing a means of communication and analysis of the learning process appears in chapter four. In addition, Hillman adds an assortment of appendices providing sample observations, journal responses and communication forms that can assist a student teacher in finding the right path towards success in this journey.

Finally for researchers in early childhood education, the book provides a versatile approach towards mentoring. Through its introduction of a new supervisory model, it provides researchers with the basis to further test, modify, enhance or develop the supervisory model outlined. Hillman's rich experience as a teacher and a supervisor provides an in-depth analysis of the mentoring process that a researcher can use as a basis for furthering research into early childhood education especially in the area of pre-service training and development.

Reviewed by Venesser M. Pate, Doctorate of Education student, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia

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Johnson, Paul (2006). *Get Writing! Creative Book-Making Projects for Children.* Markham, Ontario: Pembroke Publishers, distributed by Stenhouse.

Pages: 64   Price: $16.95   ISBN: 1-55138-201-6

Get Writing! is an outstanding teacher's resource for the elementary level teacher who needs guidance in the how-to's of teaching students to create books. This resource features a multitude of book-making projects while emphasizing creating books as a focus for advancing writing skills.

Get Writing! includes twenty-five different book templates including the pop-up, the zig-zag, the origami, and more. Each book style focuses on elementary aged themes and includes step-by-step instructions on how to make a book. Each template also includes several *USE IT!* sections to help the novice teacher get started in the writing process. The book-making projects range in skill level from easy to more advanced and also include ideas on how the themes can be used and incorporated into curriculum ideas.

Get Writing! is a book that will help any teacher easily begin book-making and writing in the classroom, promoting creativity and engagement as students learn to write. Any one of the templates and ideas could be

used in short or long-term lessons and serve as a building block for content. If you are interested in book making in your elementary classroom, this book is full of easy and quick ideas for you and your students, promoting critical thinking and creativity.

Reviewed by Heidi C. Mullins, Assistant Professor in Art Education- College of Arts and Letters, Eastern Washington University

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Reeves, Douglas B. (2006). *The Learning Leader: How to Focus School Improvement for Better Results.* **Alexandria, Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.**

Pages: **219**   Price: **$26.95**   ISBN **13: 978-1-4166-0332-0**

Doug Reeves, in *The Learning Leader: How to Focus School Improvement for Better Results,* proposes a framework for ensuring school leadership practices are connected to student achievement. Reeves' examination of current leadership practices, as well as aspects of modern school culture, is direct and passionate. He is unequivocal in his belief that current leadership practices are perpetuating the structural inequalities of schools. The book serves three purposes: (a) exposes educational myths that serve as barriers to change, (b) suggests school-wide practices to enhance student achievement, (c) outlines a framework for effective school leadership.

In my role as an Assistant Principal in a comprehensive public high school, I found this book to be of great benefit. Like many high school administrators confronting the realities of change, I am cautious when it comes to books making grand promises that in the end go unfulfilled. However, the reward of this read was not found in Reeves' proposal for a new leadership framework, nor in his suggestion of curricular changes that impact student achievement. In fact I found those sections to be incomplete and lacking sufficient explanation. Reeves' other works in these areas, such as *The Daily Disciplines of Leadership: How to Improve Student Achievement, Staff Motivation, and Personal Organization* (2002) and *Holistic Accountability: Serving Students, Schools, and Community* (2002) provide a more complete picture of his recommendations.

The real richness of this book is in Reeves' impassioned plea for a dramatic attitude adjustment in our schools. For me and other administrators who intend to initiate change and are preparing to step before their respective communities to make their initial pleas, Reeves' work helps us anticipate the statements from naysayers in the back row. Reeves succinctly breaks down the *educational mythology* of schools that serve as impediments to change. "No one chooses failure, and the presumption that failure is a choice is deeply rooted in the need to elevate blame over responsibility" (p. xxiii). He provides numerous examples of the *blame culture* in schools and confronts those assumptions that too often go undiscussed in schools. His refreshing analysis, at times sarcastic but always well documented, makes those who are comfortable with the status quo uncomfortable, if not downright embarrassed. The following excerpt is a good example of this tone and approach:

> The curricular anarchy that is the culture of this system allows poor performance to be clouded by economic advantage and parental involvement, at least for the first 11 years of a student's life. After that, these leaders can blame hormones, television, and Nintendo- anything except taking personal responsibility for leaders in the system that lack the will to confront a culture in which the care, comfort, and convenience of the adults are elevated over the interests of children. (p. 4)

He describes this culture of blame as shear impotence and a self- selected victimhood at the root of schools' struggles to break free from past practices.

> Educational leaders could subscribe to what I have called the "Potted Plant Theory of Leadership," perhaps best described as determined impotence. This is represented by the deliberate choice to surrender leadership initiative and eviscerate the hopes and aspirations of students and committed teachers. After all, the reasoning goes, since demography is destiny, there is nothing educators and leaders can do except witness the inexorable destruction of the lives of another generation of students as demographic influences take their toll. (p. 16)

For those leaders who are willing to meet the challenge and strive for real change, Reeves provides brief examples of schools that have met the challenge so that ethnicity, class, and demographics are no longer predicators of student success. "If we receive a bell and deliver a bell, then we have done nothing more than deliver human cargo from one year to the next" (p. 177). Past practices of hoping for the silver bullet or leaving the lives of our students to random acts of chance are insufficient for the task ahead. At times, he is reminiscent of a high school coach who is disappointed with his/her players' performance and openly

frustrated with those who lack the courage to get out on the field and execute the game plan.

An excellent example of Reeves' efforts to confront educational mythology occurs in the last chapter and addresses the shortcomings of letter grades. He refers to current practices as *sucker punches* for students and typical of a system that lacks a commitment to early interventions to support the growth of all students. "Letter grades do not reflect student achievement in an astonishing number of cases" (p. 113). For Reeves, this chapter serves as an opportunity to provide a detailed analysis of the failings of the bell curve. He argues for a creation of *mountain scores* to replace the traditional acceptance of the curve. He suggests that while there are inevitable distinctions among students, "those differences in performance need not be as wide as traditional interpretation suggests" (p.178). Reeves utilizes this commitment in assessing students as an opportunity to let go of unproductive and ineffective punitive systems of grading. More importantly, this shift in grading philosophy represents the culminating transformation of Reeves' vision of effective schooling.

In order for the leader to be a catalyst for needed change, Reeves proposes a framework based upon the following three presumptions:

1. Leadership, teaching, and adult actions matter.
2. There are particular leadership actions that show demonstrable links to improved student achievement and educational equity.
3. Leadership is neither a unitary skill set, nor a solitary activity (pp xxiii-xxiv).

Two of the book's chapters, Challenging Leadership Myths: Hope for the Exhausted Leader and Architectural Leadership: Why You Cannot Do It Alone, address the imperative for school leaders to think and act differently. School leaders need to create and maintain an organizational culture that utilizes the talents and abilities of all members of the organization. Restructuring schools is too great a challenge for the *solitary heroic leader*. School leaders need to create an environment of professional effectiveness with clearly articulated goals and corresponding deliberate actions to acknowledge any organizational shortcomings and create an environment of action. "We survive as a species and as leaders of organizations not due to solitary efforts but due to organizational and collaborative success" (p. 26).

In the chapter on the Dimensions of Leadership, Reeves explores components of effective leadership linked to improved student achievement. The dimensions include, vision building, the development of relationships, knowing your organization as a system, maintaining a commitment to reflection and collaboration, utilizing analytic skills to address uncomfortable truths ("students do not exhibit low academic achievement because they are poor but because of the way we treat poor children" (p. 57)) and recognizing the importance of personal communication in all its forms. Throughout the chapter, he illustrates these characteristics with brief illustrations to ensure understanding of the specific dimension. In the chapter on What Matters Most, Reeves explores the religion of documentarianism in our schools. This chapter serves as a dramatic example of current school improvement practices that miss the mark. He sites a study that indicates rigid adherence to school improvement plans may actually serve as an obstacle to improved student achievement.

The Learning for Leading framework also illustrates a number of classroom practices that enhance student growth. First and foremost, Reeves addresses the reality that "teacher quality matters: it is a decisive variable associated with improved student achievement" (p.18). This is where school leaders must make the choice to exert control over allocation of resources. "No matter how much we improve the quality of teachers, we allocate this precious resource in perverse manner, giving the most effective teachers to economically advantaged students and denying those teachers to impoverished students" (p. 18). Reeves is able to back his assertions with a number of success stories over a decade of research. "Now we are seeing '100 100 100' schools in which 100 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches, 100 percent are members of ethnic minorities, and 100 percent score proficient or higher not only in state reading tests but also in assessments of math, science, and social studies" (p. 80). These schools, according to Reeves, utilize the following practices to enhance their effectiveness: a) holistic accountability b) a commitment to non fiction writing across the curriculum c) assessments in contrast to tests d) immediate and decisive intervention e) constructive use of data to replicate and celebrate successes.

While Reeves' examples about unpacking the educational myths are on target, the how is missing. More detail regarding the implementation of his suggested practices would be beneficial (i.e. case studies). There are a number of appendices that help serve an interested reader in assessing and mapping progress towards the implementation of this model. In the end, Reeves' argument is the most powerful and empowering aspect of this book; what we do as leaders does matter and given deliberate action and adjustments in our thinking, all schools can break cycles of inequality.

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Reviewed by Kevin Braney, Boulder Valley School District.

Sarkisian, Ellen (2006). *Teaching American Students: A Guide for International Faculty and Teaching Assistants in Colleges and Universities.* **Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.**

Pages: 130   Price: $14.95   ISBN: 0-674-02141-x

The international student population in higher education in the United States has grown over time. According to the *Handbook on International Study* (1958), data on international students has been collected each academic year since 1921–1922. There were 6,163 international students in American colleges and universities that year. The growth is demonstrated dramatically when you compare that with the international student population today. During the 2004-2005 school year, there were 565,039 international students and 89,634 international scholars in America. Since the 2001 -2002 academic year, India, China, and South Korea are the countries that have sent the most students (n= 179093, 30.7%) to the U.S. The percentage of students from those three countries has increased, while the overall numbers of international students has decreased (2004-2005, n= 196347, 34.7%) (Open Doors, 2006).

In 1992 Smith, Meyers, & Burkhalter projected that the changing demographics of higher education would lead to an increased number of international graduate teaching assistants. This has occurred; the use of international graduate teaching assistants is commonplace at research universities. More recently, Tavana (2005) stated that "The use of international teaching assistants (ITAs) by research universities had also become a financial necessity" (p. 2). One of the main challenges for international teaching assistants is achieving awareness of culture and how it impacts the college classroom (Sarkisian, 1990; Smith, Meyers, & Burkhalter, 1992).

In *Teaching American Students* Sarkisian offers international faculty and teaching assistants a practical guide to improve their instruction of American students by providing an understanding of American culture. The Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning at Harvard University piloted a program in 1981 for international faculty and teaching assistants to aid them in instructing in the classroom. With this text, Sarkisian's goal was to update and compile information, handouts, and materials from the Bok Center program into a small book that could be used as a reference. This text includes sections on how American students view education, interacting with the American students, giving presentations, leading discussions, and understanding the American beyond words (body language, voice, and eye contact). The last half of the book includes 15 appendices covering a wide range of topics that can serve as a supplement guide to the instructors including topics such as the syllabus, first day of class, office hours, lectures, evaluations, grading, writing reports, and sexual harassment.

Quotes from international faculty and teaching assistants from a variety of cultural backgrounds provide a foundation to discuss teaching American college students. There are many areas, such as academic background, how students learn, and student-teacher interactions, that can impact how an instructor interacts with students. A major thrust of this text is countering assumptions by providing the reader with facts about American students, their academic backgrounds and expectations. Sarkisian also discusses relationships between students and teachers and suggests strategies for instructor use. Interwoven throughout the text is common terminology in higher education that will help the international faculty member and teaching assistant better understand the students. These terms are available in a comprehensive glossary for quick reference.

Sarkisian points out that U.S. students focus on a specialized area much later than in many other countries. Furthermore not all U.s. high schools are the same and students come to universities with a variety of backgrounds and experiences. Sarkisian states "trying to find out as much as possible about the background and abilities of their students" (p. 8). is a key in being a successful instuctor. Possible strategies include obtaining information about student demographics, education, and work experience, asking other faculty and teaching assistants about the level of preparation that can be expected, and asking students why they are taking the course. It is important to understand the student as best possible to help match their expectations and provide them the service desired. While Sarkisian does not directly state how this would impact academic rigor, Chaffee (1998) states "At a minimum, students are daily consumers of our services. In this sense, they are inarguably our customers…increasingly aware of and vocal about their expectations. To the extent that this orientation comes to prevail, institutions that take little interest in student expectations do so at their own peril" (pp. 24-25). This book will help international faculty members provide better service to the students they interact with daily. While Sarkisian feels students must also make adjustments to learn from diverse instructors, it does not follow that providing excellent service would in any way impact academic

rigor. A key item the author notes is that there are many differences among the native countries from which international faculty originate.

Sarkisian states that in America students are typically required to do assignments, work on projects, and complete assessments throughout the semester. It is not typical to have only one big test at the end of a course. It is expected that the faculty member and teaching assistant will prepare an overview of the course in the form of a syllabus that schedules lectures, assignments, and tests. Active participation of students is another important course component stressed in this book. Sarkisian points out that many American colleagues feel that engaging students and having them participate will increase learning. A quote in the text from a teaching assistant from China states "In, China, students don't ask as many questions as American students do. . . American students are more active" (p. 36). The text asserts that many international faculty feel that American student expectations result in "spoon feeding" (p. 9) course content. The author counters that it is important to outline exactly what is needed in assignments, provide students with grading criteria (rubrics), make instructions consistent and clear, and focus on giving several short graded assignments rather than one large one. Meeting students' expectations helps to ensure they are satisfied with the service of the university.

The book provides key information to improve faculty interactions with students. Many of the assumptions international faculty members make create barriers to their interaction with students. Sarkisian highlights many strategies to improve the instruction. While much of the information provided might appear to be second nature for many American faculty, it will help bridge the gap for international faculty hoping to approach and interact with students. Specifically, Sarkisian tells faculty how to introduce yourself, discuss your English skills, know your students, and keep a sense of humor. There is also a discussion on understanding the meaning of students beyond the spoken word. The impact of body language, voice, and eye contact are all covered. These areas all impact how individuals interact. Not understanding the differences in culture can create many barriers for faculty and student interactions.

The section on presentations and discussions provides fundamental information on how to help students better understand a presentation. Key topics such as writing down words, utilizing graphics, drawings, and diagrams, using verbal signs when presenting, providing specific examples, and avoiding the use of jargon are a few of the hints suggested. Additionally, the author stresses keeping the lines of communication open. Leading discussion successfully involves planning questions, listening to students and encouraging them to participate, directing the discussion, and not letting discussion turn to silence. This section on presentations and discussions would be valuable to help teaching assistants or faculty in a variety of settings and from diverse backgrounds.

The basic resources in this text would be beneficial to anyone teaching in higher education, whether they are international faculty or not. The second half of the book is reference material. It includes a glossary of American academic terminology; resources on speaking and listening effectively; and resources and selected readings on teaching, culture, and teacher training. These sections would provide a new faculty member or teaching assistant many valuable materials to assist in teaching.

I would use this book if I was conducting training on American teaching and learning for international faculty and teaching assistants. Additionally, this book would be an excellent resource for a higher education course on current issues in higher education. Finally, with the globalization of higher education, this book would be a great resource for any faculty member who will be supervising international teaching or research assistants.

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Reviewed by Michelle E. Bartlett, a doctoral student in Educational Leadership with a focus in Higher Education at Clemson University. Her research interests are human resource development, employee relationship management, and research methods. Michelle has a Master's Degree in Human Resource Education from the University of Louisville. She currently works as a consultant for HRD Leader. And James E. Bartlett, II, Ph.D., assistant professor in the College of Hospitality, Retail, and Sports Management at the University of South Carolina. James has served as a faculty member at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and as a research associate for the Office of Community College Research and Leadership and as a primary investigator the National Research Center for Career and Technical Education. His research interests include faculty productivity (teaching and research), service quality, and research methods.

Wormeli, Rick (2006). *Fair Isn't Always Equal: Assessing & Grading in the Differentiated Classroom.* Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers and Westerville, OH: National Middle School Association.

Pages: 218   Price: $23.95   ISBN: 1571104240

Rick Wormeli tackles the difficult subject of assessing and grading students in differentiated classrooms. The book is organized into four sections (Differentiation & Mastery, Assessment, Grading, and Implementation & the Big Picture) and sixteen chapters. In addition to a table of contents, there is a glossary of important terms, bibliography, and a subject/title/author index.

Fair Isn't Always Equal is intended for all secondary teachers. However, Wormeli specializes in middle education and his insights work best for this group. The writing is a compelling combination of analogy and logic that is illustrated with anecdotes and personal experiences. The result is an easy read that offers practical advice for teachers in differentiated classes.

Wormeli has four beliefs that drive his book. His first belief is that differentiation is an effective mechanism for student learning. Wormeli's definition of differentiation is compatible with Tomlinson's (2001) definition of work that is tiered up or down based on student abilities. Wormeli is an advocate for focusing instruction and assessment on standards. He does not advocate particular standards, but he suggests that whatever standards are used should be prioritized in terms of important concepts and skills. This means that "fluff" assignments should never be given (pp. 34-35).

The author's second belief is that the goal of education is mastery of the skills and important concepts that have been established for students to learn. Because the question of what should be mastered is beyond the scope of the book, Wormeli focuses on the criteria for the evidence of mastery. This section is influenced by Wiggins & McTighe (2005). (Readers desiring more background on what constitutes evidence of mastery should consult chapter seven of their *Understanding by Design.*)

The third belief driving the book is that assessment should be used as a tool to inform instructional decisions. Readers will come away with a clear understanding of the role of pre-assessments, formative assessments, and summative assessments in a differentiated classroom. Readers wanting broader coverage of the relationship of assessment to instruction should consult Popham (2003).

Wormeli's fourth belief is that academic grades should be a direct reflection of mastery. This means that factors such as effort, behavior, and attendance should not be included in calculating grades (chapter eight). It also means that students should be allowed to redo work without penalty (chapter ten) and should not be graded on homework (pp. 116-120). For broader coverage on the topic of grading readers should consult Marzano (2000) or Guskey & Bailey (2001).

This is a thoughtful book. Even readers who disagree with Wormeli's beliefs will benefit from reading his views. I recommend this book for academic libraries, pre-service teachers, and middle school/junior high teachers in differentiated classrooms.

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