Brief reviews for March 2007

Bayly, Michael J. (2007). *Creating Safe Environments for LGBT Students: A Catholic Schools Perspective.* **New York: Harrington Park Press.**

Pages: 146   Price: $17.95   ISBN: 1-56023-606-X

Creating safe environments for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) youth is a challenging task for any school, but particularly so for Catholic schools where homosexuality has long been religiously stigmatized as sinful. Michael Bayly addresses this challenge head-on in his book designed to lead facilitators through the steps of facilitating Safe Staff training sessions for Catholic high school educators. The book addresses not only the challenges of meeting the spiritual, psychological, and emotional needs of LGBT youth, but also the challenges of meeting the needs of Catholic school faculty and staff who must reconcile their desire to be helpful to LGBT youth with the teachings of the Catholic Church. *Creating Safe Environments* offers a pastoral perspective that balances Catholic doctrine and explains the theological rationale for creating safe environments for LGBT Catholic youth.

This book uses a Safe Staff training model that was developed by the Catholic Pastoral Committee on Sexual Minorities (CPCSM) in the St. Paul/Minneapolis Archdiocese. After achieving initial success in offering Safe Staff trainings to Catholic high schools within the St. Paul/Minneapolis area, the CPCSM recognized the need for greater awareness of issues regarding LGBT youth in Catholic schools. Bayly wrote this guide to disseminate the CPCSM Safe Staff model to other Archdioceses nationwide.

The book offers step-by-step directions for a series of five staff training sessions. The sessions are designed to guide participants through recognizing the need for Safe Staff who can compassionately respond to LGBT youth (and all youth questioning their sexuality), defining the role of Safe Staff members, understanding the needs of LGBT youth, reconciling the LGBT reality with the teachings of the Catholic Church, and establishing safe environments in Catholic high schools. The guide includes spiritual readings, hand-outs, discussion topics, and role play scenarios for each session. Additional readings for participants to consider between sessions are also included in the materials.

Creating Safe Environments provides a much-needed tool to help Catholic schools address the issue of sexuality and the needs of LGBT students within the Catholic educational system. It illustrates the complex and political nature of the situation while asking that Catholic educators address this sensitive topic not solely from doctrine or out of pity, but with an emphasis on social justice and the pastoral need to care for all students. Bayly challenges those who take part in the training to not simply tolerate LGBT students, but to embrace them for their differences and recognize their unique gifts and existence.

Bayly traverses the complicated terrain by contrasting the theological issues with the reality that LGBT students face increased persecution and higher suicide rates than their heterosexual peers. He calls for the Catholic community to take action to embrace its LGBT students and create a safe environment in which they can learn and develop. He does this through various means including an examination of the cultural context in which the *Bible* was written and the passages often used to condemn homosexuality. Bayly also provides an honest look at the various statements that have emerged from the documents issued by the U.S. Catholic Bishops, which at times have not been the most positive toward LGBT peoples, but which he recognizes as important in the on-going discussion. Finally, Bayly addresses the reality that the Catholic Church is constantly changing, just at a slower pace than other institutions. The pastoral move to discuss sexuality outside of Catholic doctrine is a positive advancement. While Bayly's guide may not suffice for all schools, it provides useful guidance on what the issues are and how the Catholic school community can and should recognize the existence and needs of its LGBT students.

While the book is intended to be a guide for facilitators leading Safe Staff training sessions, we question whether an interested person could pick up this book and lead a training session without having additional support or resources available. First, not all high schools are the same, and we are not sure that this model will fit all schools' needs. An introduction that helps schools assess their particular needs and tailor the training sessions to their situation might make the guide more useful to a wider range of schools. In addition, the book fails to give an overall vision for the guiding framework. The theological frameworks are hidden within the many hand-outs for each session, which are compiled together at the end of each chapter. Therefore, one has to read all of the hand-outs of the book before one understands how the sessions fit together and their grounding in Catholic theology. Each session includes a list of topics to be explored, but a clear listing of the purpose and objectives for each session is needed to help would-be facilitators understand what each session is designed to accomplish. Furthermore, while each chapter includes a step-by-step flow of hand-outs to read and associated discussion topics, the guide could be greatly improved if there were suggestions for specific questions to ask to stimulate discussions and tips for how to respond to common participant questions and concerns. Finally, many sessions include open-ended role-play situations to help participants work through the issues introduced in the sessions. However, the guide could present some suggestions for how to lead a discussion of the role-play scenarios and how to respond to role-plays that may lead away from the direction the facilitator intended. Without these supports, we feel the guidebook may leave potential facilitators in a precarious position as they attempt to organize and lead their first Safe Staff training sessions.

Overall, this book is a courageous document that presents materials to begin and continue the discussion on the issue of homosexuality in the Catholic Church. Bayly carefully walks a tight line between not alienating the Catholic hierarchy while making the needs of LGBT students visible. We hope that in opening the door for this discussion he is laying the groundwork for the Catholic Church to move toward nurturing LGBT peoples as whole human beings rather than viewing them as objectively disordered.

Reviewed by Kristin L. Gunckel and Adam J. Greteman, Michigan State University.

Bonk, Curtis J. & Graham, Charles R., Editors (2006). *The Handbook of Blended Learning: Global Perspectives, Local Designs.* **San Francisco: Pfeiffer.**

Pages: 585   Price: $75.00   ISBN: 0-7879-7758-6

As technology is slowly integrated into our personal lives, it will inevitably achieve the status of the overlooked. In many introductory Information Technology textbooks this is seen as the move from "information" to "knowledge" (Jessop & Valacich, 2003). For example, as a new driver, we are aware that we should place our hands in the "10 and 2" position (information stage), but as an experienced one, we just get in and begin to drive (knowledge stage). As professors and their students move along this information/knowledge continuum in their interactions with communication and networking technology, we are starting to see the same casual induction of technology into classes on campuses across North America.

Although integrating technology into the classroom in small steps is part of a natural evolution of teaching and learning, a committed, sustained, and well thought out implementation plan, blending the appropriate technology with traditional classroom interaction, will lead to better outcomes for students. Whitelock (2003) has suggested that "blended learning has gained ground with practitioners and not theorists" (p. 99), and a review of the literature currently available on blended learning would support the fact. While many case studies have been written, citing individual attempts with various types of technologies, there have been few attempts to create a broad understanding of blended learning design in academic and corporate settings.

The *Handbook of Blended Learning* offers the reader both corporate and educational perspectives on blended learning, drawing on case studies from each setting. It provides instructional designers, trainers, and faculty insight into possible combinations of technology and face-to-face interaction by offering an overview of many combinations of traditional and technology- enhanced educational experiences, in many different environments, and impacting many different types of students. These include studies that took place in corporate training settings, high school classes, and on university campuses, both for profit and state sponsored. It consists of a collection of 39 chapters written by experts in many different areas, including technology, pedagogy, instructional design, and classroom based and online teaching. It offers insight into what worked ñ and sometimes what didn't ñ under a multitude of circumstances and with a variety of different kinds of students.

The chapters are organized into eight parts, each containing three or more chapters related to a specific topic of discussion. The first part of the text offers a definition and discussion of blended learning, outlining why it is imperative that blended learning be approached systematically and carefully in order to maximize the benefits that may be realized by changing the experiences of students engaging in learning activities. The

term "blended learning" is defined as a system that "combine[s] face-to-face instruction with computer-mediated instruction" (p. 5). This definition emphasizes the idea that blended learning "is the combination of instruction from two historically separate models of teaching and learning: traditional face-to-face learning systems and distributed learning systems" (p. 5). What combination of technical and traditional might be appropriate would depend on many factors, such as the course content, students' ability to access technology, teacher's familiarity with technology, availability of support and technical services, and even the subject area of the proposed class. This complexity makes it impossible to identify a single, simple model for blended learning. An examination of some of these different factors, and the resulting individual blended models, is outlined in the remaining seven parts.

Part two focuses on the experiences of corporations who have chosen to create blended learning training modules. Corporate trainers are interested in blended learning for a variety of reasons, including a geographically dispersed student base (Dennis, Bichelmeyer, Henry, Cakir, Korkmaz, Watson & Bunnage, chapter 9), unique learning or performance needs (Lewis & Orton, chapter 5), the need for peer-to-peer learning environments (Ziob & Mosher, chapter 7), and the need to support management personnel who are in training (Hanson & Clem, chapter 10).

A framework, called the "Learning Ecology Matrix" is presented by Wenger and Ferguson in chapter six, which may be used as a guide when developing a blended learning environment consistent with the needs of an organization and the individuals involved within a corporate environment. The model focuses on four instructional elements: studying, practicing, teaching, and coaching, as set in a matrix consisting of self- to guided navigation on one axis, and a concrete knowledge focus to experience and practice focus on the other. A second iteration of the model is introduced, which includes the concept of knowledge management and how it might be introduced into the four dimensions of the original matrix

Parts three and four look at higher education's exploration of blended learning models. The eight chapters that make up these sections explore issues related to blended learning, using New Zealand, Wales and the United States as geographic backdrops for their studies. While it may be argued that the institutions working primarily online, such as Jones International University, have no single geographic base, they are accredited in the United States, and therefore are grouped, for the purposes of this discussion, with that geographic region.

The amount of technology being implemented in classrooms is explored in chapter 11 by Ross and Gage, who discuss a range of possibilities. For some classes, a traditional course is augmented with some technology based enhancements; in other courses some traditional activities are eliminated, to be replaced with technology based activities. The discussion of different mixes of face-to-face and computer mediated interaction continues in chapter 12, describing different levels of computer integration as fully, mostly, somewhat and supported online. At the extreme end of the continuum, Reynolds and Greiner (chapter 15) look at a teacher training program at the National University where all formal classes are completely online, but the face-to-face field experiences qualify that program to be included as a blended learning environment.

Benefits, such as "expanding access, improving quality, serving diverse student populations, reducing time to graduate, addressing student desire for technology in education, and greater insight and tracking of student progress" (p. 152) are also discussed in part 3. Chapters thirteen and fourteen look at these benefits both in terms of the research literature (Jones, chapter 13), and personal experience at the University of Central Florida (Dziuban, Hartman, Juge, Moskal and Sorg, chapter 14).

The inclusion of the for-profit universities illustrates a unique crossover of perspectives on education either explicitly stated or implied between corporate training centres and the not-for-profit sector. The three for-profit universities represented, University of Phoenix, Capella, and Jones International University, all articulate a more business focus, such as the ability to remain competitive (Pease, chapter 18) and the ability to work in a "proficient" manner (Lindquist, chapter 16). Their approach to blending may be somewhat different because their pedagogical philosophy is based on online courses, and they are faced with the challenge of moving from an online to blended format, instead of face-to-face to blended, as is seen in the other universities contributing to this text. Instead of examining what might be best accomplished using a technology mediated environment, they examine what is done best in a face-to-face environment, with the understanding that their students may find it difficult to attend these face-to-face meetings, and therefore, they must be kept a minimum. Together, these two types of institutions, online and traditional, emphasize that the blending of technology with interpersonal interactions offers students unique and influential learning experiences.

Part five examines higher education from around the world, including case studies from Japan, Korea, Australia, Canada, Mexico and Israel. Individual iterations of blended learning, sensitive to the customs and expectations of the students they serve are presented. Countries embracing technology, such as Korea and South Africa, illustrate both the opportunities for students because of increased access, and some of the downfalls that students report, such as increase in workload (Lee & Im, chapter 20). Owston, Garrison and Cook (chapter 24) reflect on similar findings, where students from eight Canadian universities reported

increased time required on their studies. They also note "that instructors and students seemed generally satisfied with their blended learning experiences" (p. 263), a feeling which is reported directly or indirectly, throughout the book.

Part six returns to examining corporate sponsored programs, using Cisco Systems and the World Bank as examples, but carries the context of global concerns forward from Part five. Another matrix, supplied by Jagannathan (chapter 32), allows the reader to contrast blended learning with web-based learning on one axis, and facilitated vs. independent study on the other. This is a useful framework for examining many of the case studies presented, both from corporations and from higher education.

Parts seven and eight look at the strengths of blended learning, such as the ability to rapidly change content (Collis, chapter 33) and to tie training in with work flow (DeViney & Lewis, chapter 35). Oliver, Jerrington and Reeves (chapter 36) discuss the ability of blended learning to support authentic learning activities both in formal learning environments, and in corporate settings. The implementation of blended learning by the military (Wisher, chapter 37) and the use of virtual reality training experiences (Kirkley & Kirkley, chapter 38) also emphasize the importance of technology when implemented thoughtfully into training programs.

The final chapter discusses the authors' view of the future for blended learning, and contains an insightful list of ten major trends and predictions, many of which have either been implemented in corporate and higher education settings, such as podcasting, or are currently being incorporated into courses, such as on-demand learning modules.

One of the strengths of *The Handbook of Blended Learning* is that it presents many different combinations of technology and traditional learning situations, describing the circumstances and reasons for choosing the different technologies available, and the outcomes of blending technology with more traditional types of learning environments. It provides the reader with an understanding of what benefits technology may bring to students when combined with personal interactions, and provides excellent, practical examples and advice for those of us who are interested in enabling student learning through technology. It does not deal to any great degree with some of the drawbacks identified in the research literature, such as the cost to develop and implemente blended learning environments, difficulties reported by students accessing the support services they need, and attrition rates. It does, however, offer insight into what may work for different types of students under different circumstances, information which is in short supply right now.

References

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Reviewed by Christine Brown, a Ph.D. candidate at York University, in Toronto, Canada. Her area of interest is technology-enhanced learning for adults, looking at how best to introduce a sense of community into distance education classes.

Burns, Edward (2006) *IEP 2005: Writing and Implementing Individualized Education Programs, (IEPs).* Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.

Pages: 290   Price: $61.95 (Hardcover); $41.95 (Paperback)   ISBN: 978-0-398-07624-5(Hardcover); 978-0-398-07625-2 (Paperback)

IEP 2005 is a must read for anyone who writes, uses or reads Individualized Education Programs for students with disabilities. For preservice and inservice teachers it updates them on the latest federal laws and regulations. For parents it tells them how to assure the best educational program for their child with a disability. For administrators it should make them more comfortable with simpler IEPs.

Dr. Burns makes every effort to demystify the process of writing IEPs without reducing their effectiveness or importance. In fact, he argues that the properly written IEP is the most powerful tool in assuring the best educational outcome for a student with a disability. *IEP 2005* is based upon the most recent revision of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in 2004 and the Federal Department of Education regulations written in 2005. (The regulations are based upon the act.)

Burns takes the reader through the entire process of determining which students need IEPs, who should attend the meeting, what preplanning is needed, what information to include and what information should not be included. Burns feels that many IEPs include too much information, become too cumbersome and are less useful thereby. He believes that states and local school districts (LEA = Local Education Authority) try to put too much information into IEPs with the intent of avoiding lawsuits instead of doing what is best for the

students.

IEP 2005's usefulness is reduced by two factors. First are frequent typographical and editing errors that force the reader to figure out what the author intended. For example: "Complaints: Parents can present a complaint relating to IDEA but must do so with a two month period before the date of the alleged violation or when the alleged violation should have been known." (p. vii) Another problem is the alphabet soup of abbreviations, starting with the title IEP and continuing through IDEA, FAPE, LEA, etc. Although the abbreviations are written out and defined at least once it is easy for the nonprofessional reader to become confused looking for the meaning.

If the reader is able to wade through the editing and abbreviation issues this is a valuable tool for those who would write, use or evaluate IEPs.

Reviewed by Billy M. Rhodes Ed. S., Brevard Achievement Center, Rockledge, FL

Faltis, Christian J. (2006) *Teaching English Language Learners in Elementary School Communities: A Joinfostering Approach.* 4th edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice Hall.

Pages: 247   Price: $30.67   ISBN: 9780131194427

According to Watson et al. (2005), the US Census data from 2003 show that 18% of the population of the United States does not speak English as a first language. They also cite public school data showing that 9% of the pre-K-12 public school population are English Language Learners (ELL), a total of 4.4 million students in 2000. Trends show these numbers rising steadily over the next 20 years. Despite this increase in ELL students, many teachers think that they are inadequately prepared for meeting the needs of this population. Faltis' text aims at helping pre-service and in-service classroom teachers be better prepared to meet the growing demand on teachers for competence in teaching ELL students. Faltis "presents a teaching framework for English- speaking teachers who will be working in ethnically diverse classrooms with students who are learning English as an additional language" (p. vi). The author calls this framework "joinfostering," which he describes as fostering a classroom environment in which all students can join in.

In the Preface, Faltis explains the changes that have been made to the Fourth Edition, which include a stronger focus on the socio-cultural aspects of learning, and on social justice issues related to English learning, than the previous editions did. The author has also strengthened the connection between theory and practice by presenting research-based practices from bilingual and ESL teaching settings, and has included a chapter on assessment. The text also uses "running case episodes" in each chapter which follow three teachers and their experiences in multilingual classrooms.

The running case episodes are a strength of this text in that they present "real life" situations that are tied to the issues in the chapter offering the reader insight into the sometimes opposing views that each teacher has, and how teachers deal with the various issues that arise in a class with multilingual students. The episodes are written in a lively manner, telling the story of Julia Felix, and her interactions with her students, as well as Peggy Dimwitty, a veteran second grade teacher, and Rudy (Jake) Jacobson, the bilingual teacher. However, while Julia, the new teacher, is presented as a multidimensional and sympathetic character, Ms. Dimwitty, the veteran teacher, is presented as very rigid and unsympathetic in her dealings with ESL students. While this unflattering portrayal of the veteran teacher opposing the idealistic new teacher adds to the drama of the situations, it also perpetuates stereotypes of both groups of teachers. As a book which purports to focus on socio-cultural and social justice issues, these stereotypical caricatures are out of place.

Teaching English Language Learners in Elementary School Communities is divided into seven chapters. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the book, explaining the joinfostering concept, and then addresses the linguistic and cultural diversity that teachers may expect in their classrooms. Chapter 2 examines the historical and current state of bilingual and ESL education in the United States. Chapters 3-5 focus on various classroom organization and management strategies as well as specific teaching strategies, which the author calls the "heart and soul of this book" (p. 10). These strategies focus on how to arrange the classroom, design content teaching, and facilitate group work in ways that encourage active participation by all students. Many of the strategies will be familiar to experienced teachers, but Faltis expands them to take into account some of the specific learning needs of ESL students. Chapter 5 also includes a brief annotated Resource List of children's books from the 1960s and 1970s centered around the theme of working together. While the books seem to support this theme, an updated list is probably in order. Chapter 6 looks at the importance of actively involving family and community in the classroom and school. Chapter 7 concentrates on the importance of using a variety of types of assessment, so that assessment can be a teaching and learning tool.

This textbook seems more appropriate for pre-service teachers, since in-service teachers would probably be familiar with most of the concepts and theories in the book. However, the text offers the information in a concise and well-organized manner, with a focus on how to adapt strategies to ESL students. The text ties theory to practice using numerous references to the work of many experts in the field of education, such as Lev Vygotsky, Linda Darling-Hammond, Jim Cummins, and Steven Krashen. The examples and case studies illustrate and support the topics well, and the Activities section at the end of each chapter provides a variety of types of activities for applying the knowledge.

The two main weaknesses in the text are the flat portrayals of the characters in the case studies, and the lack of adequate resource lists. The author could have included a Resource List for each chapter to point the reader toward more in-depth information on the topics covered in the text, as well as on topics which were not covered comprehensively, such as No Child Left Behind, and its effect on English Language learners, which is mentioned briefly in the assessment chapter.

References

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Reviewed by Lynn W. Zimmerman, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Education, Purdue University Calumet

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Ganske, Kathy (2006). *Word Sorts and More: Sound, Pattern, and Meaning Explorations K-3.* **New York: Guilford.**

Pages: 404   Price: $58.00 (Hardcover); $32.00 (Paperback)   ISBN: 1-59385-309-2 (Hardcover); 1-59385-050-6 (Paperback)

Kathy Ganske is a former classroom teacher. Her book is a practical book for teachers of young children. She begins with an introduction into the importance of word study and why this is important in building foundational knowledge. "THAT'S" is a mnemonic she has created to explain to her readers the essence of word studies. The mnemonic stands for:

T = Thinking
H = Humor
A = Appropriate Instruction
T = Talk
S = Systematic approach and some sorting

She explains the relevance of each of these aspects of the mnemonic with word sorts and developing the foundation of early literacy. Ganske has a unique section titled Teacher to Teacher: Tips from Teachers for Teachers included in the early part of the book. This section includes strategies shared by teachers from the real world and also tips for teaching different concepts of early literacy instruction. Readers of the book will be able to relate to some of the instances shared by other teachers and will also gain knowledge of strategies that have been tested out successfully by other teachers.

The book is divided into sections each focusing on one stage of building literacy learning. Every section includes practical examples and templates for teachers to use for activities related to each stage. The first section focuses on Emergent Learners, specifically on *Phonological Awareness, Syllables, Onsets and Rimes.* The second section focuses on Letter Name Spellers, specifically on *Initial, Final Consonants, Vowels, Digraphs, and Blends.* The third section focuses on Within Word Pattern Spellers, specifically *Vowel Patterns and Complex Consonant Patterns.*

The format of the book is very practical. There are several activities and ideas shared for different stages and for each of the specific concepts. Reproducible templates for the activities and ideas are included in the book with clearly explained examples. Links to children's literature have been carefully provided for the different concepts shared and for several of the activities and ideas as well. Throughout the book it stands out to the reader that the author has kept in mind the reality of classrooms with diverse abilities of students. The concrete examples of activities demonstrate for the reader the interactions between the students and the teachers. The activity discussion explains how and why that particular word study activity might enhance the learning of the particular concept.

The Appendices include sample Literacy Assessments, reproducible activity and game cards and a whole appendix on working with Spanish speaking English Language Learners including a discussion and ideas for activities.

Ganske has used a practical approach in this book. As a college instructor of teachers of young children I consider this book as a worthy resource for educators who teach young children. The layout in a step by step manner and activities and ideas that are easy to follow make this book a handy resource. The illustrations in the reproducible activities are easy to decipher thereby making the activities meaningful and easy to relate for the students.

Reviewed by Annapurna Ganesh, Arizona State University, Tempe

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Jarvis, Peter, editor (2006). *The Theory and Practice of Teaching.* Second edition. London: Routledge.

Pages: 272   Price: £23.99   ISBN: 0415365252

The second edition of *The Theory and Practice of Teaching* has undergone massive revision, with almost all of the chapters being rewritten or brand new creations for this edition, so much so that Peter Jarvis states that it "is a substantially different book" (p. xi). Almost half of the chapters have been written by Peter Jarvis, the rest being authored by other experts in the fields of education and management studies.

The book is split into three sections. The first offers a broad discussion of central theoretical issues involved in teaching, challenging the reader to thing about what it means to teach and what it means to learn, as well as considering the ethical issues that are involved in both questions. Section two considers different teaching methods and styles, such as problem-based learning, experiential learning and mentoring. These chapters focus more on the theoretical issues surrounding the use of the teaching methods discussed, than offering practical approaches and guides to developing that style of teaching. The final section of the book is concerned with the theory underpinning certain types of assessment in both traditional settings and distance learning. By way of conclusion the closing chapter offers a discussion of the future of post- compulsory education, particularly the professionalisation of teaching and changes in the student learning experience.

There is a good deal of excellent material in this book, with a number of chapters requiring specific mention. Chapter 3 offers a stimulating discussion of the difference between teaching style and teaching method. Challenging the notion that "once the method is right, any competent teacher can achieve the desired ends", Jarvis argues that the personality and style of the teacher can play an equal, if not more significant, role in the student learning experience (p. 32). This emphasis moves away from rigid attempts to standardise teaching and recognises that teaching "is fundamentally about a concerned human interaction." (p. 36). Chapter 6 on didacticism provides a balanced approach to the value of lectures in university education, presenting arguments both for and against the practice, and recognises that given the increasing number of students in higher education lectures are here to stay for the foreseeable future. The chapter's author, Colin Griffin, claims that in the post-modern age we need not only defend lectures, but the very act of teaching itself, and offers a series of thought provoking interpretations of how lecturing, and more broadly teaching, should adapt to address these issues. Finally, Chapter 11 presents an interesting discussion of practice based learning, with a particular focus on the use of learning journals. Indeed, the chapters in this volume are uniformly thought provoking and provocative, constantly forcing the reader to question the basis of their own technique. However, the book is not without its faults.

Aside from poor copy editing, which frequently draws attention from otherwise concise and well written chapters, the audience of the book could have been thought through more carefully. Despite assertions to the contrary (pp. xi, 246), the book is only of very marginal interest to those working in the compulsory sector. The overwhelming majority of the text is concerned exclusively with issues relating to the post-compulsory sector and those outside would do well to invest their time and money in more relevant sources. Potential readers should also note that there is little here by way of practical guide to teaching ñ the focus is overwhelmingly the discussion of the theory underlying particular methods. Furthermore, the provocative nature of the text means that not all the views expounded are widely accepted approaches to teaching; at times controversial arguments are presented with little differentiation from more mainstream approaches. For instance, aspiring lecturers would do well to note that the approach common to humanistic teaching and personal development workshops, as outlined by Paul Tosey, in which physical contact and brief massage is used as an ice breaker is by no means a universally condoned method of building a positive classroom dynamic, even if efforts are made to ensure "that [it] is not experienced as invasive, sexual or otherwise inappropriate" (p. 133). Nonetheless, it is the provocative nature of this volume that is one of its main strengths, seen in another chapter authored by Tosey on the learning community, in which he develops a compelling argument about the place of emotional development in experiential learning (p. 175). Finally, although the volume covers an impressively broad array of issues, it is surprising that there is very little about teaching and technology, a factor remarked on at the end of one chapter (p. 183), though aside from some brief comments relating to technology and distance learning in chapter 16, little has been done to redress the situation.

The Theory and Practice of Teaching is an excellent introduction to some central issues in pedagogy and would be a particularly effective reader for courses introducing junior faculty members to teaching in post-compulsory education, as long as it is recognised that aspects of the text are deliberately polemical. While, due to limitations in length, the majority of chapters offer only a broad overview of each topic, they all successfully provoke engagement with the important issues at hand and force the reader to consider the impact on their teaching.

Reviewed by Geoff Baker, Research Associate, Centre for Integrative Learning, University of Nottingham.

Kennedy, Mary (2005). *Inside Teaching: How Classroom Life Undermines Reform.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Pages: 288   Price: $25.95   ISBN: 0-674-01723-4

Educational reform is something that educators and think tanks all over the world have struggled with. All educators want what is best for students and for those students to succeed in becoming educated, well-rounded and constructive members of society. However, the multitude of reforms that have been attempted (and have subsequently failed) is an issue that frustrates anyone who has set foot in a classroom, including students.

Reform developers are convinced that their ideas will make a difference in the education of students. When a reform fails to have a lasting impact, the reformers, as Kennedy appropriately points out, have assumed that for whatever reason, educators are unprepared, unwilling or unable to implement the reform, However, reformers rarely take into account the circumstances. They need to realize what a day of teaching in the United States entails.

Inside Teaching: How Classroom Life Undermines Reform is the summary of an incredible amount of research and energy that went into creating something that teachers can pick up and feel defended. A more appropriate audience would be the reformers, many of whom have little or no experience in the classroom, but it is unclear whether they would want to read it, as it appears to be geared more toward classroom teachers.

The book explains the different categories of reform initiatives (more rigorous and important content, more intellectual engagement, and universal access to knowledge). Then it discusses the hypotheses about why reforms fail (teachers lack sufficient knowledge or guidance, teachers hold beliefs and values that differ from reformers', teachers have dispositions that interfere with their ability to implement reforms, the circumstances of teaching prohibit teachers from changing their practices, or the reform ideals are not realistic).

Each chapter is a summary of research using case-study material from different classrooms, carefully analyzing both the teacher and student behaviors. Each chapter identifies a particular aspect of daily teaching reality and then looks at what part of the reform ideals cannot be met based on what occurred in the classroom. Kennedy provides detail about both the cases being studied and previous relevant research. Nonetheless it is sometimes difficult to see how this information led to the conclusions she draws.

The researcher gives sound reasons for the decision to only include elementary classrooms in this book; all studies need to be pared down to be manageable. Since the conclusions drawn apply to classrooms across K-12 levels, it would have been appropriate to include middle and high school classrooms in the data. Given the scope of the study and the research questions examined, the decision to limit to elementary classrooms prevents this book from being completely transferable across grade levels.

Overall, the study was sound and the data and conclusions interesting and instructive. We can only hope that those that decide that they know more about how to change education will stop and realize that more study is needed about how a "real" classroom works before launching some of the ideas that have no hope of working in the timeframe that has been identified.

Read an excerpt http://www.hup.harvard.edu/pdf/KENINS_excerpt.pdf

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

National Writing Project, editors (2006). *Writing for a Change: Boosting Literacy and Learning Through Social Action.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Critics have noted that the very same young people who appear bored and helpless in formal school environments are invigorated with enthusiasm, capacity and interest to learn in extra-curricular activities, community groups and youth movements. Many educational reforms have attempted to tap into those energies to invigorate school education. *Writing for a Change: Boosting Literacy and Learning Through Social Action* recounts one such attempt to integrate the principles and processes of informal youth and community work with the aims and structures of formal schooling.

This book is the product of a four-year collaboration between the U.S. National Writing Project (NWP), a teacher professional development network, and the U.K. Centre for Social Action (CSA), a social action facilitation and research unit working primarily in community settings. In 2001 a group of NWP teacher-consultants attended a series of CSA workshops and began working with CSA facilitators in order to experiment with ways of using social action in their classrooms and schools. The book documents some of the results of this experiment and provides practical suggestions for other teachers who may be inspired to follow their lead.

The book is organised into three sections. Part One: Social Action in Practice includes ten descriptions of how various teachers and students from the NWP have taken hold of Centre for Social Action ideas and activities and the results of their efforts. The experiments range from very ambitious and impressive projects ñ e.g. the creation of a youth-run youth centre, campaigning for the removal of a local land fill ñ to more limited but nevertheless meaningful transformations of classroom community within the confines of traditional curricular topics. Unsurprisingly, most of the activities are infused with literacy, and the most interesting and exciting activities involve writing to achieve genuine social change (e.g. writing grant proposals, brochures, letters). This section also includes a revealing chapter written by students, who add a valuable perspective to complement their teacher-facilitator's account.

Part Two: Getting Started with Social Action includes three chapters on the theoretical underpinnings of the work described in part one. The principles of social action emphasised by the authors include a commitment to social justice and human rights, a belief in the power and insight of the students to define their own problems and solutions, an understanding of the complexity of social problems, a belief in the power of collective action and the principle that the teacher is facilitator rather than leader of the social action process. A five-stage inquiry, action and reflection process is also outlined, along with insights from participating teachers and guidance about what to consider before starting in your own classroom.

Part Three: Stuff You Can Try: Activities for Social Action includes nineteen activities for community building, inquiry and action planning.

I would recommend the book for all teachers and other educators interested in considering ways of making their teaching more relevant to students' lives. Its readable, narrative style makes it easily digestible, and it is packed with good ideas and practical examples of their implementation in diverse classrooms. I would less readily recommend it to teachers and researchers who wish to critically examine these ideas and their implementation. The practical descriptions often read like conversion testimonies: the author relates how she didn't believe that this would work, but she put her faith in the process (as instructed), and the results far exceeded anything she could have imagined possible. Though some of the authors allude to problems and complications ñ e.g. tensions between teacher and facilitator roles, pressures from the broader school and policy context ñ these issues do not receive the sort of discussion they deserve.

Reviewed by Adam Lefstein, Academic Fellow in Pedagogy and Classroom Interaction, Oxford University Department of Education, adam.lefstein@edstud.ox.ac.uk

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Reid, Robert & Lienemann, Torri Ortiz (2006). *Strategy Instruction for Students with Learning Disabilities.* New York: Guilford Press.

When working with students I often find myself searching for strategies and simplified instructions that will enable me to transform educational theory into practice. I often ask myself, how can I facilitate the learning of exceptional students with minimal resources? How can I improve the quality of instruction that I provide for students? In their book, *Strategy Instruction for Students with Learning Disabilities,* Reid and Lienemann provide answers to these questions. They also provide teachers with theoretical and practical information on learning disabilities and strategy instruction.

This book is easy to follow and progresses in a logical fashion. It begins by providing readers with the

theoretical foundation for the book. Next, it explores what a learning disability is, the characteristics of students with learning disabilities, why one should chose strategy instruction and what the Self-Regulated Strategy Development model (SRSD) is. The authors then move on to discuss how teachers can implement strategy instruction and the SRSD model in their classrooms. That is, they provide sample lesson plans and examples of how the SRSD model and strategy instruction can be used in writing, reading comprehension, math and study skill development.

Moreover, this book presents the idea that all students can succeed if their abilities are recognized and used effectively. Therefore, although this book is aimed at helping students with learning disabilities, the ideas that are presented are extremely beneficial to all students.

Reid and Lienemann put forth the idea that teachers should always be teaching from the student's location and therefore teachers need to be tailoring their instructional strategies to meet the needs of individual students. Recognizing that this tailoring process can be overwhelming for teachers, Reid and Lienemann provide step by step instructions on how to tailor instructional strategies to fit the individual needs of students. In addition, they show teachers how to facilitate students in a manner that will allow students to regulate and monitor their own learning.

While reading this book one will discover that many of the processes that Reid and Lienemann suggest are already being used in the classroom (i.e. scaffolding, modelling and ongoing assessment strategies). However, Reid and Lienemann's theoretical perspectives on instruction and their step by step breakdown of effective strategy instruction help to improve these processes. That is, their book helps teachers establish consistency in terms of the steps that they take when helping students obtain independent and self-regulated learning practices.

Overall, Reid and Lienemann do an excellent job in connecting theory with practice. Their easy to follow layout and step by step instructions make this book a valuable resource for both new and experienced teachers.

Reviewed by Katherine Moreau, MA, Chalmers Research Group, Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario

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Shulman, Judith H. & Sato, Mistilina, Editors (2006). *Mentoring Teachers Toward Excellence: Supporting and Developing Highly Qualified Teachers.* **San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.**

Pages: 268   Price: $32.00   ISBN: 0-7879-8434-5.

This book is well named; it describes exactly what it purports to: how to mentor teachers toward meeting the teaching standards as articulated by the (U.S.) National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). Teachers included as mentees here are both those with experience as well as the inexperienced, capturing the "delicate" situation of a younger mentor paired with an older, more experienced mentee. Rather than dealing with the emotional, social aspect of mentoring, these cases focus on the goal: to improve teacher practice.

Nineteen cases of mentoring are described; communicating the challenges associated with helping teachers share and learn from one another, both on an individual and group basis. Each of the cases has three parts: the narrative; one or two commentaries that analyze the case from perspectives different from the author of the case; and then a teaching note to assist mentors or facilitators in making sense out of the case. These cases and commentaries are written by different people, comprised of academics and practitioners. Their diverse perspectives help to convey to the reader that there is no one best way to mentor.

The cases and the different responses to these cases do illustrate an array of challenges that mentors may be confronted with, and I quote from page xix:

- Enabling teachers to analyze and reflect on their practice according to a set of teaching standards;
- Using a vision of accomplished teaching that can be demonstrated in a variety of ways as the basis for collaborative conversations;
- Balancing professional development and assessment support;
- Determining the appropriate role of the mentor for a high-stakes assessment;
- Supporting teachers who do not have appropriate content and pedagogical content knowledge;
- Recognizing personal biases about teaching when providing critique to others;
- Meeting the needs of challenging mentees;
- Setting personal boundaries in the mentoring relationship;
- Creating a supportive climate for teachers to risk making their teaching public with colleagues through videos, samples of student work, and lesson plans;

- Dealing with the complexities of individual mentoring;
- Structuring and sustaining group process;
- Mentoring colleagues at a school site; and
- Attending to issues of student diversity and educational equity.

I thoroughly enjoyed reading and reflecting on the nineteen cases in the book. They present a variety of issues and situations well captured in the structure of the book. Part one, entitled The Role of the Mentor, first describes the conflicting roles of a mentor and then presents a group mentoring situation. Part two, entitled Vision of Accomplished Teaching, deals with a beginning teacher who lacks basic skills, and demonstrates the challenge of a facilitator working with a group of teachers who do not fully support the professional development goal. Part three deals with three complexities of effective mentoring: bias on the part of the mentor and the mentee, and helping linguistically diverse teachers develop (i.e., improve) their writing skills. Part four illustrates two challenges of groups: one, when one individual is unwilling and unprepared for participation; and two, when some group participants have segregated themselves into a visible minority group who challenge the facilitator's "normal" practices. Part five, setting boundaries, deals with two examples of teachers who, despite mentoring, show no demonstrable improvement toward the professional development goals. Not all teachers progress at the same rate, and not everyone should or will remain in this profession, despite attaining certification.

The final part, Mentoring One's Colleagues, gives some final perspectives. It reminds us that even an experienced mentor can be challenged when providing assistance to a group of novice teachers in a "circle of learning." Individuals have different personalities, backgrounds, learning styles, strengths and weaknesses. The support provider is required to ascertain when and how far to push another teacher to change practices. The mentors themselves are on a journey, a journey with a group of teachers, who are collectively striving for self-improvement of their teaching practices. Each time mentoring occurs, the mentor learns new strategies both for teaching and in ways to interact with colleagues. The mentor must continue to be a reflective practitioner, questioning how she/he works with teachers. Challenges are associated with both individual and group mentoring.

The concluding chapter by Judith Shulman reiterates the usefulness of case discussions such as those included in the book, as a vehicle for gaining different perspectives on issues. She provides a detailed curriculum plan for working with a new group with the aim articulated as "to establish an ethos of critical inquiry that encourages multiple interpretations, conflicting views, and equitable participation, and not to come up with a consensus on the one best way to analyze the case" (p. 242). This final chapter is, on its own, a wonderful pedagogical contribution to the professoriate and working with adult learners.

The book concludes with two appendices. The first is a note on the methodology of writing cases and the process that the editors undertook to develop these excellent cases. The second is a current Selected Annotated Bibliography that supports the approach taken in this book: where a mentor is a "critical" colleague who facilitates one or more teachers in the process of their professional development of moving to attaining some higher standard of teaching certification.

In all, I found this book to be very readable, highly informative, and extremely well organized. The table (Table 1.1, pp. 6-7) is an excellent organizational tool for the reader/facilitator as to which cases deal with specific kinds of issues. The cases, each being written by either a practitioner or an academic, and then being commented on by one or more academics or practitioners, helped to expand my reflective thinking. I was reminded more than once of Covey's phrase, "Seek first to understand, before being understood." The role of the mentor (support provider) in teacher professional development is becoming more and more prevalent. This book reinforces just how complex, context-specific, in a state of flux, yet how essential, is the role that the mentor has in moving teachers toward extant standards of practice.

Reviewed by Ruth Rees, Faculty of Education, Queen's University at Kingston, Ontario

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Smith, Stephanie Z. & Smith, Marvin E., Editors (2006) *Teachers Engaged in Research: Inquiry into Mathematics Classrooms, Grades Prek-2.* **Greenwich, Connecticut: Information Age Publishing.**

Pages: 236   Price: $73.25 (Hardcover); $39.95 (Paperback)   ISBN: 1-59311-496-6 (Hardcover); 1-59311-495-8(Paperback)

Anyone involved in the development of teachers will treasure this book because it provides another avenue to help teachers become reflective, observant, introspective—the professionals they wish them to become.

This book is one of four in a series that provides a picture of teachers in and out of the classroom. It makes explicit what reflective teachers do to improve their teaching and thus provide better learning opportunities for

students. The foreword to this series, written by Marilyn Cochran-Smith, does a thorough job of preparing readers for what they will find: "Teachers in the ordinary work of teaching taking time to do research on their teaching and on their students' learning with the goal to accomplish a deep understanding (by both) of the mathematics being taught." Cochran-Smith highlights that a community of learners was involved in the inquiry that is described in each of the chapters.

The first chapter gives the introduction to the PreK-2 book. It contains a table of detailed information about each of the nine other chapters followed by a brief summary of each. The reader is then given an explanation of the three common themes that highlight teacher inquiry as found in the book. These are examining children's thinking, collaborating with others, and the repetitive nature of inquiry. The chapter ends with the following suggestions on how this volume can be used: by teachers who wish to broaden their knowledge about teaching and learning mathematics; by collaborative groups in courses for pre service or in service teachers or in professional development situations; by those who wish to search the relevant literature for information about teaching mathematics for understanding; to encourage teachers to do research; and as a resource for others who are interested in getting insight into the work of teachers or for those interested in doing research on the work of teachers or to see how teacher researchers can make contributions to mathematics education.

The second chapter, the first one authored by teachers, provides an excellent beginning to the research chapters because it describes how the authors became involved in research. The format of the InMath Teacher Research Sessions is given with an explanation of how these sessions helped to get teachers to begin to reflect on their teaching in a collaborative setting. The authors then demonstrate the planning, reflection, individual revision, and collaborative revision that are featured in these sessions through the use of classroom vignettes and narratives. The mathematics topic used to demonstrate these is numeration at the kindergarten level.

The next two chapters address Algebraic Thinking in first and second grades. Chapter three presents second graders as they begin to form generalizations, discuss conjectures and explore proofs using even and odd numbers. The data collected demonstrate the depth to which these students are led by the teacher. The chapter is a mix of classroom conversations and teacher reflections spread over a seven month time period.

The next chapter addresses first and second graders forming generalizations about operations. The author begins the chapter explaining how the professional development programs she has experienced over a 13-year span prepared her to do research in her own classroom. Some of the experiences she lists are writing about her mathematics teaching; collaborating with others; developing cases to explore student learning; exploring the mathematics she had to teach to understand it more deeply; and collaboratively analyzing lessons to determine the effect on students' work. Her research into her first and second graders' work to see if there is evidence of generalizing was sparked by a project she was attending on algebraic thinking. The reader is then treated to the details that she begins to notice; the discourse that she has with her students; how her research question becomes more focused; and the connections she sees between computation agility and algebraic thinking.

Measurement is the topic in chapters six and seven. In chapter six the researchers concentrate on linear measurement leading the first and second graders from direct measurement through units. The work is typical of what is found in the curriculum for those grade levels but the researcher presents it in ways that deepens the understanding of the zero point and the unit

In chapter seven a very different approach to measurement is presented. In fact, instead of beginning the first grade students with numbers, the researchers use measurement as the basis from which the need to add and subtract numbers evolves. The measurement activities start with direct measurement and move to indirect. The activities are unique in that length, volume, area, and mass are all included. The authors give a description of how they became involved in the project that led them to teach measurement in this way. Descriptions of the activities and discussions between teachers and students give one insight into the depth of understanding these students have attained. The authors summarize the chapter by declaring the depth of knowledge of mathematics they achieved in designing activities and teaching in this unique way. They conclude that their challenge will be to disseminate this material for others to use and being able to answer the questions of teachers and parents about these materials.

Even though the final chapters present research in geometry, number sense and patterns, the mathematical topics are used to discuss: inquiry, assessment, and questioning. As in previous chapters, each uses a case study approach to give the reader a look into the classroom. These cases contain vignettes, classroom discourse, and teacher explanations, descriptions, and reflections. The chapter on number sense and assessment provides sample assessment tools in the appendix. The one on questioning and patterns provides the reader with an in-depth description of the use of questioning to reveal students thinking. The chapter on geometry and inquiry demonstrates how researchers were able to get students to refine their definitions of geometric plane figures while providing the reader with insight into how the teachers used inquiry

to analyze student responses to questions about geometric figures.

Collectively all nine chapters provide evidence of the research that teachers can perform in their own classrooms and the positive impact this research can have on student learning. In addition, the book provides avenues to engage teachers or prospective teachers in discussions about specific mathematics topics giving them ideas upon which to build their own insight into mathematical topics. But most important these chapters give all an inside view of what a professional teacher does to ensure that the lessons presented to students are effective in getting all to learn.

The teachers of mathematics in this book demonstrate that ordinary classroom teachers can perform research in their own classroom and when doing so they can become the teachers we wish to have in every mathematics classroom.

Reviewed by Merle T. Harris, Independent Consultant presently working with the Algebra Project on an NSF IMD grant and with the school districts in New Orleans, Louisiana, Orangeburg, South Carolina, and Halifax County, North Carolina.

Sosik, John J. (2006). *Leading with Character: Stories of Valor and Virtue and the Principles They Teach.* **Greenwich, CN: Information Age Publishing.**

Pages: 235   Price: $69.95(Hardcover); $39.95(Paperback)   ISBN: 978-1-59311-542-5(Hardcover); 978-1-59311-541-8(Paperback)

In the wake of the unethical behavior by executives at Enron, WorldCom, and Arthur Andersen, the sex scandals involving priests in the Catholic Church, and evidence demonstrating that not even politicians in the highest office in the land are above lies and deceit, is it any wonder that many of us are questioning what is meant by the word leadership these days? Yet anyone who thinks that morality, ethical behavior, and down-to-earth common decency no longer inhabit our boardrooms, religious institutions, or the White House, should read this book. Not only does Sosik illustrate how 25 historical and contemporary leaders from the corporate world, politics, and popular culture represent strengths of character including wisdom, courage, humanity, and justice, but he shows how such virtues align with positive business and humanitarian outcomes. Not least he helps readers identify what it is they can do in order to put these *authentic leadership* principles into practice for themselves.

At the heart of Sosik's book lies the recent focus on positive psychology (e.g., Linley & Joseph, 2004; Seligman & Csikzentmihalyi, 2000; Snyder & Lopez, 2002), whose adherents argue that there is greater value in better understanding optimal functioning and what makes life good and meaningful for people than continuing to focus only on what is not working. Hence Sosik, who oversees the Master of Leadership Development program at Penn State University, explores how positive psychological constructs such as fairness, self-control, and humility are exemplified by individuals who contribute much to our world. Deliberating about what it means to be "good" is nothing new, of course. As Rohan (2000) points out, Aristotle's discussion of eudaimonia in works like Nichomachean Ethics (c. 350 BCE/1980, cited in Rohan, 2000) explored the issue of human flourishing that sounds remarkably like the "authenticity" advocated by Sosik. What Sosik accomplishes here, however, is to help the business student see that the terms *authentic* and *leadership* can be combined in the corporate world without it seeming like an oxymoron or by relinquishing profits and productivity.

Having set the stage by reviewing some of the background research upon which his book relies, not least the taxonomy of character strengths and virtues developed by Peterson and Seligman (2004), Sosik then relates the stories of well-known individuals such as Maya Angelou, Martin Luther King Jr., Mother Teresa, former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, and Warren Buffet. Of course, one of the challenges of a book of this nature is who to choose as your subjects, given that people generally want to read about individuals whom they can immediately recognize. In many respects the inspiring life histories of these and the other leaders included by Sosik (e.g., JFK, Oprah, Bill Gates) have been subject to over-kill in books and other media. Therefore it was refreshing to find the final chapter of this book relating ten stories of "unknowns" whose stories I generally found more inspiring than those of the familiar luminaries.

Sosik reveals that this book emerged from a course he developed at Penn State University in order to "illustrate to my graduate students that character strengths and virtues represent the 'raw material' or substance of authentic transformational leadership" (p. x). What Sosik means by that term is the way some exceptional individuals combine the charisma, vision, and drive expected of all leaders with qualities such as knowing what it is they stand for, and remaining true to those principles no matter what. Hence authentic leaders don't just have goals, they have values; they're not all about personal power and self-aggrandizement but how they can nurture and help express the talents of others. In contrast to the "Used-Car Salesman" (p. 30) behavior of Enron's Ken Lay, WorldCom's Bernie Ebbers, and Tyco's Dennis Kozlowski, each of whom

was only "out for himself" (p. 30), Soski valorizes the approach of Mary Kay Ash, the cosmetics company founder who advocated work-life balance with the saying "God first, family second, career third," and African American publishing magnate John H. Johnson, the recipient of many awards for his philanthropy and entrepreneurial spirit.

Written in an engaging, easy-to-read style this is the sort of practical book that many students like myself prefer over heavily-referenced, theoretical tomes, and hence would make a welcome addition to a business or psychology major's reading list. Nevertheless there are a few things that detract from this book, not least the rather amateurish line drawings used to depict each of the 25 well-known leadership exemplars. Sosik does credit the artist in the Preface but does not specify whether she is another of the graduate assistants who contributed to the book's development. Maybe using photographs was beyond the publishing budget, but I think they would have provided a more professional tone for this book. Equally picky on my part is noting the incorrect spelling of the international accounting firm implicated in the Enron scandal. However, one would expect a Professor of Management and Organization to know that Arthur Andersen is spelled with an "e" rather than the Anderson to which Sosik continually refers. It was also hard for me not to raise an eyebrow at the inclusion of National Security Adviser Condoleeza Rice in the chapter on wisdom and knowledge, given media criticism that she has given misleading or contradictory statements about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and Saddam Hussein's connections to al Qaeda. However, overall this book successfully accomplishes the worthy goal of highlighting the character strengths and virtues that psychologists have listed as important to living a good life, and relating them to positive outcomes in business and beyond.

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Reviewed by Elizabeth Smith Alexander, Doctoral Candidate in Educational Psychology at the University of Texas at Austin. Elizabeth's dissertation study explores the positive psychological construct of hope as an achievement emotion. Specifically, she is looking to compare differences in thoughts, feelings, and behaviors between high hope young adults and low hope young adults from disadvantaged backgrounds. Email: esalexander@mail.utexas.edu.

Topping, Donna Hooker & Hoffman, Sandra Josephs (2006). *Getting Grammar: 150 New Ways to Teach an Old Subject.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Pages: 144   Price: $18.50   ISBN: 0-325-00943-0

Subject-verb-object. Even the greatest sentences follow this pattern in their basic form. Most of us understand this naturally, but do we know how to explain it to growing writers? Do we know how to move beyond the memorization of grammar rules to develop writers who also naturally know how to construct interesting and meaningful sentences?

Donna Hooker Topping and Sandra Joseph Hoffman do not believe we do. They wrote the book *Getting Grammar: 150 New Ways to Teach an Old Subject* because of an observed need to train educators in grammar instruction. As professors of literacy education, they saw in-service teachers struggle with how to make the study of verbs and clauses and conjunctions and prepositions "interesting and real" to their students (p. 1).

As I gave serious thought to the methods I used when teaching my first grammar units, I recognized that I simply taught grammar the way it had been taught to me. I presented the information in the textbook in a lecture format and then asked my students to practice what I had just told them by answering questions 1-10. Intuitively, I knew there had to be a better, more engaging way to learn and practice grammar. I tried to make a game or two of my own up, but without someone to model this type of grammar instruction for me, I was at a loss.

Topping and Hoffman know that educators "rely on their apprenticeships of experience (the way they have been taught) and observation (the way they have seen teachers teach)" (p. 2). This is why they put together 150 different grammar lessons designed to engage not only the students' intellectual capacities, but their physical, musical, and dramatic skills as well.

As I prepare my students for their standardized tests, I now have a tool to use for reviewing all of those long-forgotten grammar rules. The few that I have already used have gone over very well with my students. The authors' experience as literacy professors in an elementary education program means most of the games were designed with elementary students in mind. However, I found that most can easily be adapted for upper level classes.

One aspect of the book I especially like is the section on teaching grammar to non-native English speakers. The section helped me see the struggles ESL students face in a new light. In addition, each chapter begins by reviewing the grammar rule dissected in the chapter's activities. This is helpful for educators who feel less than secure in their own grammar knowledge. The short reviews and quizzes for each chapter also build an educator's confidence in the subject matter. There is even sufficient detail that many substitute teachers could lead the activities with ease and comfort.

While there are many tools for grammar instruction online, this will become a handy and concise tool for educators who wants to spice up their grammar instruction.

Reviewed by Jennifer April Sabin, Eighth Grade Language Arts Educator. Frostproof Middle-Senior High School, Frostproof, FL.; She also serves as the Advisor for The Warrior, the student newspaper of Webber International University in Babson Park, FL.