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Brief reviews for November 2009

Borrero, Noah, & Bird, Shawn. (2009). *Closing the Achievement Gap: How to Pinpoint Student Strengths to Differentiate Instruction and Help Your Striving Reader Succeed*. New York: Scholastic.

Pages: 144 Price: \$19.99 ISBN: 978-0-545-04876-7

In *Closing the Achievement Gap*, Borrero and Bird provide a practical and user-friendly guide to understanding how to celebrate diversity in the classroom and for providing theoretically sound pedagogy for learners who struggle in a variety of content areas. The text focuses on students in middle and high school with a special emphasis placed on English Language Learners, or ELL students. The authors begin the reading by providing charts with data that show the rapidly changing demographics of today's schools. With this changing demographic comes the need for education to find new and effective strategies for reaching diverse populations of students; Borrero and Bird have appropriately titled the introduction "Calling All Teachers to Close the Achievement Gap." This introduction is written in the tone of a "pep rally" of sorts; it encourages and motivates educators to get involved in making academic success a reality for all students. The book is divided into three parts with a total of eight chapters. The three parts include:

- Foundational Understandings
- Essential Reading Strategies
- Closing Thoughts

Each of these parts includes a solid research base coupled with practical strategies to assist teachers in understanding the nature of the achievement gap in middle and high school classrooms. Additionally, beginning in chapter two, the authors provide "break-out" pages entitled "View from a Classroom" and "Tips." The "View from a Classroom" showcases a teacher in action using some of the strategies Borrero and Bird suggest; these stories help the reader to make a realistic connection to the content in each chapter. The "Tips" boxes give more detailed information about the strategies presented in the chapters; each is supported by sound pedagogical research.

In chapter one, part one, Borrero and Bird provide statistics and research from the National Center for Education Statistics, 2005, in which the controversial subject of achievement gaps in reading scores between Caucasian, African American, and Hispanic students are highlighted. Although on the surface the information appears dire, the remainder of the chapter offers hope. This sets the stage for honest and open dialogue about the needs of diverse learners. Additionally, Borrero and Bird, in the first pages of the text, encourage educators and educational stakeholders to view diversity as an asset rather than a deficit. The asset rather than deficit model when examining the needs of diverse learners is primary to the authors' stance.

In chapter two, the issue of differentiated instruction is discussed and used as a model for what teachers can do in order to facilitate learning in all content areas. Some of the key points discussed in chapter two help to establish differentiated instruction as a pedagogical tool that "doesn't have to be more work, should include relevant curriculum, and should have specific goals for monitoring understanding (p. 34-35).

After the first two introductory chapters, there is a shift to dialogue about specific reading strategies, beginning in chapter three and continuing until chapter seven. Some of the strategies include:

- Think-Pair-Share
- Reciprocal Teaching
- Text Preview
- Vocabulary Grids
- Interactive Read-Alouds
- Monitored Sustained Silent Reading
- Read Aloud, Write Aloud
- 3PQ or Three-Part Questioning

Each strategy is explained in an easy-to-follow format and supports all content area teachers not just English or ELL teachers. Borrero and Bird also note that pre-packaged reading programs are not always the answer; good teachers know what students need and reading strategies such as the ones presented in this text provide a foundation.

The appendixes offer three black-line masters for use with sustained silent reading, a reading interest survey for use with students during the first days of school, and an exit ticket, a strategy that students use to reflect on what they have learned in class.

This text would be helpful to all teachers, but it does seem more suited for educators in environments where language diversity is prevalent. Understanding some of the unique concerns of ELL students discussed in the text might prove challenging for teachers outside of this environment. Additionally, the text only highlights a few reading strategies, which might appear limiting to educators with extensive experience in literacy achievement or educators who just need “more.”

Comprehensively, this text does an excellent job of providing background research related to achievement gaps, practical strategies to assist in closing achievement gaps, and real-world transcripts that showcase how teachers are implementing said strategies. *Closing the Achievement Gap* is a useful resource for novice or veteran teachers seeking ways to successfully use diversity as an asset in the classroom.

Reviewed by Markisha Webster Smith, Assistant Professor of Education, Northern Michigan University.

Diamond, Julie. (2008). *Welcome to the Aquarium: A Year in the Lives of Children*. New York: The New Press.

Pages: 223 Price: \$25.95 ISBN: 978-1-59558-171-6

I was intrigued with the title of *Welcome to the Aquarium: A Year in the Lives of Children*. I wondered what it had to do with education. It is Julie Diamond's story of a year of teaching kindergarten interspersed with her personal journal entries from that year. She also interweaves the professional literature that has helped shape her practice. Many times she references what she learned at Bank Street College. She also has specific writers to whom she frequently refers: Ruth Charney, Loris Malaguzzi, Carlina Rinaldi, Sylvia Ashton-Warner, John Dewey, and Vivian Paley.

As I started reading, I felt like I could actually experience Ms. Diamond's classroom. She begins by describing what she did to prepare for the coming school year and interjects her thought processes in arriving at decisions for preparing her classroom. "How will these fit in the room? Which areas should be adjacent, which separated? Although I've set up this room for years, I start by making a plan on paper" (p. 8).

Diamond tells us how the school year started once the children entered the class; how the children made the classroom theirs by creating the finishing touches to the room and establishing the daily routine for the class. She gives very rich examples of the evolution of her classroom during this year and includes all the developmentally appropriate practices she embodied.

The children make signs, set up the class library, make a wall alphabet. As they do this, they help put in place routines that will be part of classroom life, while at the same time beginning to see that responsibility for the room is theirs" (p. 21).

Although this is the story of one particular year, Diamond does not necessarily follow the year chronologically. The chapters focus on a variety of things: various subject areas; unit plans studied; relationships with parents, students, and staff members; observations that could be used in assessing various children; and her experiences as a mentor working with student teachers and teacher assistants.

Diamond includes the mistakes she made. In relationships with parents, she reflects on what she could/should have done differently:

When Henry began school, I already knew him and family. His older sister, Lisette, had been in my class.... Henry's parents... began the year--without knowing it--with a history. I had already characterized them as hard to reach.... As I observed Henry's disengagement from others, his reluctance to participate in the give and take of group life, I quickly drew a conclusion: I blamed his parents for not stepping in to protect both children from impulsive behavior, for failing to set limits. Now, looking back, without negating what I'd noticed... I believe I would have done better to have left open the question of the connection between his behavior in school and his home life (pp. 164-166).

As an instructor of early childhood education, I read through Ms. Diamond's account of a year in her classroom thinking, "This is a perfect example to share with my students!" There are wonderful descriptions of what should go on in a classroom, as well as examples of a teacher reflecting on what happened in the classroom. She includes, not only those things that were great, but also the times she felt she could have done better. This book is a good book to read for pleasure, as well as a supplement to classroom materials in undergraduate courses.

Reviewed by Debbie Stoll, M.Ed., Instructor, Department of Education at Cameron University. She is also a Ph.D. student at the University of Oklahoma.

Dumont Ron; Willis, John O.; & Elliot Colin D. (2009). *Essentials of DAS-II Assessment*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Pages: 401 Price: \$46.95 ISBN: 978-0-470-22520-2

Essentials of DAS-II Assessment is one title from the popular reference book series *Essentials of Psychological Assessment* by Wiley. The authors of this particular title have done a marvelous job of indicating all factors, useful case studies and explanations of the highly technical administration of the DAS-II assessment. Dumont, Willis and Elliot discuss the DAS II's results, strengths and weaknesses of observations made in the results given the scoring cut offs and qualitative assessments made based on the behaviors reflecting the result readings.

What is DAS-II? It is 20 subtests containing the cognitive battery called Differential Abilities Scale – Second Edition or DAS-II, for short.

Chapters in this book are built upon each other, as any good book contains sequential chapter progression, beginning with a concise introduction about the scale in Chapter One titled "Overview." The second chapter illustrates the administration of DAS-II, with the third chapter highlighting the unique features included in DAS-II from DAS-I, which pertain to basal and ceiling rules in item sets and their difficulty levels. The following chapters contain detailed technical information about scoring, interpretations of the results and a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of DAS-II as a psychological assessment scale. Useful comparisons are made with comparable scales used by psychologists in assessing clients' abilities which are also assessed by various subtests of DAS-II.

Thereafter, the seventh and eighth chapters of the book present succinctly written information pertaining to the application and case studies of DAS-II assessments. These are extremely useful chapters for graduate students in clinical psychology programs, since these chapters include detailed discussions on their results obtained from administering DAS-II with children of upper early years battery (2.6 – 8:11) and school-age battery years (5:0 – 17:11). Normed groupings based on ages, lower and upper levels of batteries and the over-lapping years are discussed with their impact on scoring. There is a discussion on composite scoring called General Conceptual Ability (CGA), which provides an estimate of overall reasoning and conceptual abilities. In addition, the Special Nonverbal Composite (SNC) is discussed for each of the subtests. Diagnostic subtests which measure specific abilities are also included in all of the chapters. Thus, the easy to follow and cross-referenced lay out of the book will enable scholars and clinicians to make the most efficient use of the chapter contents.

Some of the key elements of the book include frequently presented Rapid Reference boxes which provide a summary chart of important information discussed in relation to the administration, scoring, interpretation and comparative analyses on strengths and weaknesses of DAS-II assessments. This layout can provide excellent pointers over which substantive discussion can be spurred in graduate course work with students conducting practice administration of DAS-II. Clinicians can also use the book as a ready reference for refreshing their scoring and interpreting skills by making use of this book.

Secondly, current and historical literature review is narrated for a better understanding of the rationale behind the development of DAS-II, and how its subtests and scoring as well as interpretation techniques were modified and sustained over time. As the authors write, "Despite the fact that that no single theory or model has universal acceptance, there is a common core of theory and research that supported the development of the DAS-II" (pp. 5-6).

One thing missing in the book is a glossary. It would also be of help to new students or for reference to have a chart which reflects ideal or of-concern scores against cut off scores so that they can see how effective the subtests scores are to make an objective diagnosis of a given case based on DAS-II administration.

Lastly, the Don't Forget boxes in the chapters are a ready reminder of important facts and particular information for the readers to (a) understand the meaning and implication of a technical term and its use, and (b) note and be mindful of reasons behind specific adjustments and modifications in the administration, scoring and interpretation discretions, when needed.

In conclusion, *Essential of DAS-II Assessment* is another informative collection of research and guidelines for its use for psycho-diagnosis in clinical practice. University professors teaching clinical psychology course work and clinicians alike can benefit from the title, immensely.

Reviewed by Saira Qureshi, M.A. Applied Education Psychology, New York University.

Erben, Tony; Ban, Ruth & Castaneda, Martha. (2009). *Teaching English Language Learners through Technology*. New York: Routledge.

Pages: 220 Price: \$33.95 ISBN: 978-0-415-95768-7

In *Teaching English Language Learners through Technology*, Erben, Ban, and Castanda provide comprehensible, logical discussions in a three-part format for both pre- and in-service teachers who consider technology use in their teaching. This review will address this book's strengths and overall impact in the field of English and second language education.

The three-part structure provides a manageable presentation of this book. Part one has a concise introduction of the linguistic abilities of English language learners (ELLs) and the process of second language development. Following the introduction, an overview of five principles for creating an effective second language learning environment assists teachers to "construct a curriculum that is sensitive to the language developmental needs" (p. 20). The middle part mainly includes a selection of research on second language acquisition providing a thorough theoretical understanding of the five principles. This part provides practical suggestions for the use of technology in educational settings based on the application of the principles. The final part classifies technologies by considering their potential to support the five conditions. It also exhibits possible ways of infusing these grouped technologies into the classroom.

This book logically presents the information that interested teachers expect to know. The authors first propose the five general principles. Instead of immediately jumping to a discussion of exercising these principles, the authors highlight the importance of knowing English language learners prior to teaching them, when each of them is different in terms of their cognitive and linguistic abilities. The authors would agree, however, that students who live in the current digital era have habits of using technology as extensions of themselves (Blummer, 2008). For example, they exchange email or Facebook addresses when they make new friends; read news and articles online; and browse the internet for school assignments or their own interests. The extensive use of technology in students' everyday lives would have been worth inclusion in *Teaching English Language Learners through Technology* as it would encourage teachers to consider using the technology which students are already familiar in order to gain better language acquisition.

Readers would find that many books in the past two decades have advocated using technology in language teaching. However, only a few books have successfully validated the use of technology for educational purposes by laying the groundwork with research. For example, CALL Environments (Egbert & Hanson-Smith, 1999) focuses on Spolsky's (1989) theory of eight conditions for language acquisition while Vygotsky's socio-cultural concepts of valuing the benefits of group work construct the theoretical foundation for this book. Both books suggest that *opportunity* plays an important role in acquiring a language and technology can influence this critical component of language acquisition. Readers would also be happy to see that Erben, Ban, & Castaneda link theoretical implications and classroom practices by embedding a discussion of techniques and challenges at the end of the second part.

My review recommends this book as a comprehensible guide to English and second language educators who have a desire to teach their classes through technology. This book has rich theoretical findings for technology-supported language teaching and presents the information in a logical sequence although it excludes a discussion of students' digital habits. This book also makes valuable suggestions for applying these theoretical concepts into practice, which I believe will prepare readers to be digital teachers who can synchronize their students.

References

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Reviewed by Hung-che Chen, Texas A&M University Kingsville.

Hasebe-Ludt, Erika; Leggo, Carl; & Chambers, Cynthia M. (2009). *Life Writing and Literary Méttisage as an Ethos for Our Times*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.

Pages: 280 Price: \$32.95 ISBN: 1433103060

In *Life Writing and Literary Méttisage as an Ethos for Our Times*, Hasebe-Ludt, Chambers, and Leggo engage the reader with an interwoven text that both introduces life writing as curriculum theory and gives form to the art of multi-vocal autobiographical writing through méttisage. The authors take up life writing as both research and pedagogy while inviting the reader to enter in dialogue. Building on the scholarship of Ted T. Aoki and William F. Pinar, a commitment to the lived/living curriculum is present throughout book.

The book takes the form of a literary méttisage, the braiding of stories that give voice to lived experience and self-knowledge. Fragments of the authors' personal histories and life experiences are placed thoughtfully among the theoretical discussions of life writing as a conceptual framework for curriculum work and as a possibility of practice.

The word méttisage comes from the Latin word *mixticius*, the weaving of fibers into cloth. Using the idea of méttisage, interweaving life stories as "messy threads of relatedness," the authors theorize with and through storytelling (p. 1). Through this process of *wayfinding* through writing, the authors uncover lived experience. Their profoundly personal stories are organized in the book to overlap, interrupt, and resolve in relationship. Seven themes emerge from each *braid* of text, denoting the sections of the book: (a) creation stories, (b) mixed and mixing identities, (c) sojourners sojourning, (d) all our tangled relations, (f) stories take care of us, (g) dangerous strokes, and (h) opening to the world.

The decade-long collaborative relationship that the authors have enjoyed is evident in the way the text succeeds in being both instructive and inspiring. The varied textures at play in the literary forms (narrative prose, creative nonfiction, meditation, and poetry) complement the academic writing that is at once rigorous and understandable. The authors investigate life writing as a process of inquiry by asking the question, "What is the curriculum of being human?" (p. 2).

Drawing on post-structural theory, the authors explore and interrogate intimate understandings of self while opening a space for dialogue with the reader. Their three voices mix and mingle in a way that frees the reader to interpret the stories together or as unique layers. Hasebe-Ludt et al. write, that the

...decentering of the subject gives autobiographical work in education its transformative potential. Rather than a fixed, unmediated coherent self revealed truthfully in autobiography, subjectivity is an assemblage of fragments, and identity is fluid... (p. 33)

A new text is created as the reader discovers the varied textures of narratives in juxtaposition with another and in relationship to the reader's own story. I was compelled as I read to make notes in the margins, unfurling fragments of my own personal history. I was invited by the authors to return to forgotten memories of childhood growing up in Northern Arizona. As I read the intimate texts of three scholars locating themselves through autobiographical writing, I remembered personal stories that previously felt distant and removed from my professional work as a teacher and an emerging writer.

This book exemplifies the complicated conversation of curriculum work by providing the opportunity for the reader to consider the personal and the professional in a transformative space. In this liminal space between texts placed in relationship through *méttisage*, life story illuminates a lived curriculum. "Literary *méttisage* highlights the resonances between the experiences of the writers (speakers and actors) and their audience..." (p. 37).

As the twenty-seventh volume in the William F. Pinar Curriculum Studies series, this book attends to the autobiographical nature of *currere* in re-conceptualized curriculum studies. The hybrid nature of this book as a survey of the theoretical foundations of autobiographical research and pedagogy with the interwoven stories is innovative and refreshing. Teachers, graduate students, writers, and experienced scholars alike who are looking to learn more about life writing and story as curriculum study will surely enjoy this book.

Reviewed by Mary Elizabeth Meier, Ph.D. Candidate, Art Education Program, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA.

Lewin, Larry. (2009). *Teaching Comprehension with Questioning Strategies that Motivate Middle School Readers*. New York: Scholastic.

Pages: 128 Price: \$18.99 ISBN: 0545058996

Larry Lewin believes that student-generated questions foster better reading and thinking. His stated goals for *Teaching Comprehension with Questioning Strategies that Motivate Middle School Readers* are that the strategies presented will promote self-monitoring, will deepen comprehension, and will cultivate intellectual curiosity. The strategies described will help students realize that reading is a conversation with the author, whether one is reading fiction or a textbook. Using the methods described in the book, teachers and students can have meaningful conversations about reading material based on student curiosity instead of focusing solely on what they need to memorize for a test.

Throughout the book, Lewin provides lots of examples and question starters. He includes real questions written by real students and images of students' actual writing. Lewin suggests a variety of ways teachers can assess the questions their students ask and provides advice about how to solve common problems that arise. Lewin also provides generous references to the sources that have inspired his teaching.

Chapter one focuses on beginning activities teachers can use to introduce the concept of student questioning. The activities begin with students interviewing their teacher and fellow students, and then lead into writing questions about reading assignments. Later chapters expand on these concepts into intermediate activities: questions to myself, questions to a character (when reading fiction), questions to my teacher, and questions to the author. The classic questioning frameworks of Question-Answer Relationships (QAR) and Questioning the Author (QtA) are also discussed. Once again, these techniques build on the concepts presented in earlier chapters. The final chapter describes other advanced types of questioning activities aimed at creating suspicious, or critical, readers.

Lewin uses a variety of labels for different levels of questioning, such as puzzlement and wonderment questions, and thin, thick and sidekick questions. He connects the various levels of questions to Bloom's Taxonomy, and advocates that students learn to write a variety of questions from literal and inferential to interpretive and big picture.

Overall, the book provides practical activities and strategies that beginning and veteran teachers across the disciplines can use right away in their classrooms.

Reviewed by Kathy M. Irwin, MSLS, Librarian, University of Michigan-Dearborn

McLachlan, Angela. (2008). *French in the Primary School: Ideas and Resources for the Non-linguist Teacher*. New York: Continuum International.

Pages: 160 Price: \$49.95 ISBN: 978-0-8264-9896-0

Created for the French foreign language classroom, *French in the Primary School: Ideas and Resources for the Non-linguist Teacher* includes seven chapters of essential information for the French language teacher of primary school students. Each chapter is rich with activities and supporting resources for promoting the French language and Francophone culture in the classroom. More than a selection of activities, Angela McLachlan's text also includes pedagogic, linguistic, and technical resources to support beginning language teachers' preparation and development of coursework. The method's suggested practices reflect a theoretical and practical understanding of the most recent research in foreign language pedagogy. The author also shares her expertise in educational media and technology by reference to a variety of reputable web resources and digital learning tools.

True to its title, this ancillary provides language teachers with a wealth of language-based ideas and resources. The numerous activities and games are designed for the enhancement of literacy and numeracy in French, as well as exploration of the Francophone world. As a diverse compilation of performance and product tasks, the book targets a variety of academic subjects to support language learning across the curriculum. McLachlan also provides teachers with ideas for incorporating language learning curriculum into school-wide events.

What differentiates this book from many other teaching resources, however, is the role it serves as a support manual for reviewing or learning about language pedagogy practices. In the introductory chapter, "Getting Started with French: Ideas for Planning, Teaching, and Assessment," some basic elements of language teaching are clearly and concisely summarized through concepts such as the "three Ps of language teaching: presentation, practice, and production" (p. 4). Mini-lessons on grammar and pedagogy also provide helpful clarification on common areas of difficulty for teachers and students alike. Aspects of daily classroom life are also discussed with ideas for using classroom management tasks as opportunities for authentic communication in the target language. The author also provides guidance on curriculum and assessment standards in alignment with the United Kingdom's Key Stages language framework, a resource for beginning teachers all over the globe. The second chapter, which focuses on activities and techniques for introducing students to the French language, also serves as a teachers' reference for key information on general culture in France, as well as a wealth of web resources for further study of Europe and the Francophone world.

French in the Primary School bypasses any explanations of linguistic theory, as the text is intended for the "non-linguist teacher." Nonetheless, the activities and techniques promote practices, such as focus on form and use of first language resources, that are all but ignorant of second language acquisition theories. Using the UK's Key Stages framework, an overall scheme of language learning priorities is discussed in terms of "core strands" comprised of "oracy," "literacy," and "intercultural understanding" and "cross-cutting strands" which include "knowledge about language" and "language learning strategies." These elements recognize the importance of production, as well as comprehension; balanced practice of textual and spoken language, as well as including curricular elements that develop student awareness of the sociocultural elements of language competence.

The value of technology as a learning support is emphasized, which allows this text to stand out from its counterparts. Nearly every activity or idea is accompanied by relevant websites for further investigation or ideas for incorporating technological resources into the activity. McLachlan provides supplementary resources on nearly every topic mentioned, from language pedagogy to currency conversion. Access to these additional resources allows teachers and their students to adapt or elaborate upon listed ideas, or even create activities on their own. Such opportunities for self-directed learning reflect an understanding of the hands-on needs of net generation students and teachers.

A reliable resource for the beginning language teacher, *French in the Primary School* supports current theory of best practices in pedagogy, language learning theory, and digital learning. McLachlan's creative activities, ideas, and resources promote authentic communication, cultural exploration, and a lasting enthusiasm for French language learning among beginning teachers and students alike.

Reviewed by Kirby Chazal, graduate student of Foreign Language Teaching at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Rose, Mike. (2009). *Why School? Reclaiming Education for All of Us*. New York: The New Press.

Pages: 177 Price: \$19.95 ISBN: 978-1-59558-467-0

Don't be fooled by the size of Mike Rose's new book entitled *Why School? Reclaiming Education for All of Us*. Its thirteen chapters are packed full of essays and reflections on the status of contemporary education, for which Rose frequently displays a critical eye. Although almost pocket-sized, *Why School?* poses lofty, thought provoking questions: How important is the commitment to public education to a free society? How closely should schooling be tied to our national economic interests? How do we embrace and support all kinds of intelligence, not just those typically glorified in an academic curriculum?

Written in first person narrative, Rose deftly blends stories and experiences from his lifetime work as an educator into chapters intended to encourage the reader to engage in further introspection about what they "know" about schooling--both

K-12 and higher education--in the United States. Chapters are short and most are on stand-alone topics, making the book a perfect take-along for the briefcase or airport. Peppered with personal stories and making use of frequent examples to support his views, Rose ponders varied topics including “No Child Left Behind and the Spirit of Democratic Education” (Chapter 3) to “Reflections on Intelligence in the Workplace and the Schoolhouse” (Chapter 6) to “Standards, Teaching, Learning” (Chapter 8).

The author is at times highly critical of established institutional policies such as the current emphasis on high-stakes, standardized testing. He is careful to delineate between assessment and testing, suggesting that “standardized tests can well be part of this constellation of assessment, but should not overwhelm it” (p. 48). He further states that while NCLB has “cast a bright light on those underserved populations of students” (p. 44), we should be wary of an end result that enables poor kids to get an education driven by skills and routine while students in more affluent schools have curriculums that are more robust (p. 48).

Rose also communicates a concern about the role of American business in school reform efforts. In Chapter 4, “Business Goes to School,” Rose uses financier Michael Milken’s visit to an inner-city school as part of “principals for a day” program to illustrate his discontent for the lack of respect frequently afforded teachers. He maintains that while business motivation to become involved in education is usually to urge the preparation of a skilled workforce (p. 53), this kind of photo-op is rarely done in other settings and reiterates the idea that “anyone can teach.” He further suggests that if business leaders wish to continue such involvement, they should consider something more in line with their expertise such as participation in a budget meeting. Moreover, he offers concern that continued business involvement reinforces the belief that “kids go to school to get themselves and the nation ready for the global marketplace, and this rhetoric of job preparation and competition can play into reductive definitions of teaching and learning” (p. 56-67).

Rose discusses “Remediation at the University” in Chapter 9 as an ever important part of higher education; in fact, he argues that remediation has served to “democratize post-secondary education” (p. 119), allowing students from varied backgrounds, including the poor, the immigrant, the previously racially segregated and women to advance their education. He notes that “remedial programs are necessary if we want to educate a wide sweep of our citizenry” (p. 124) and any discussion of eliminating such programs on college campuses raises concerns about “how many or how few” we want to have access to higher education and in a larger scope, the kind of society that we seek to create.

Only Chapter 11 seems somewhat out of place. *Soldiers in the Classroom* discusses the importance of providing necessary support for veterans who wish to return to school. Rose explains that this support must take many forms; in addition to educational support, psychological, social, and economic support is often needed by veterans if they are to be successful in a higher education setting. Although this chapter follows two previous chapters which deal with the issue of college remediation, and few readers would argue that such supports are not important, its inclusion speaks to a more focused problem whereas the other chapter topics are more broadly based.

While the book brings to light ongoing concerns regarding the status of our nation’s school systems (or, as Rose states, “our schools are bedeviled by a host of ongoing problems, from funding to curricular faddism” p. 148), there is an underlying message of hope in the book. In Chapter 12, “A Language of Hope,” Rose shares examples from his travels across the United States, visiting both one-room schoolhouses and urban classrooms in an effort to better gauge the reality of what is happening in public schools across America. He calls for a wider public discourse, one that goes beyond blaming schools, teachers and administrators to one that “demands a capacious critique, one that encourages both dissent and invention, anger and hope” (p. 152). Nowhere is this message of hope for education more evident than in Chapter 7 entitled “On Values, Work, and Opportunity” where Rose shares examples from high school vocational classes such as auto mechanics, carpentry and plumbing and describes the pride the students’ take in their product and work. The vignettes illustrate “some of the very qualities whose loss we bemoan” (p. 94), and just as in the broader issue of public education, “if all we look for is pathology, we’ll miss everyday moments of promise” (p. 95).

Rose’s book is reminiscent of John Merrow’s *Choosing Excellence* (2001) in that it is a well-written but concise compilation of essays dealing with current educational topics. If the book’s intention is to stimulate thought and engage readers in intellectual conversations regarding the future and hope for American education, then Rose has met his purpose. Professional educators at all levels will find the book engaging. Additionally, teacher education faculty may find selected chapters helpful in stimulating discussion in their classrooms regarding the role and purpose of contemporary education.

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Reviewed by Laura Lloyd-Smith, Ed.D., a recent graduate of the University of South Dakota and adjunct instructor of education. Dr. Lloyd-Smith is a former school counselor who has research interests in the foundations of education, fostering secondary level parent involvement and blended course delivery.

St. John, Edward P. (2009). *College organization and professional development: Integrating moral reasoning and reflective practice*. New York: Routledge.

Pages: 252 Price: \$49.95 ISBN: 978-0-415-99212-1

Edward P. St. John has written extensively about college access and how financial considerations can influence the college

enrollment decision of high school students. He has also served as editor of many research publications and journals that focus on financing a college education. It is perhaps this interest in college access issues and a concern for those less fortunate that led St. John to author a book on social injustice and moral reasoning. St. John seems to plead with young and aspiring professionals to integrate moral reasoning in all of their professional decision-making processes; otherwise, St. John concludes, these individuals risk making serious misjudgments when it comes to working with their colleagues and having a positive influence on society as a whole.

St. John's premise is that moral reasoning should be integrated into professions in order to address the gap between theories of practice and the actual actions of professionals (p. xx). He uses Habermas' (2003) work with social democracy as a theoretical framework to make a compelling argument for the necessity of moral values in the professional workplace. In addition to previous research, St. John states that this book should be seen as a new framework in the discussion of how a professional can display their moral reasoning in their daily responsibilities.

A secondary objective of the *College Organization and Professional Development* is to provide a rationale for why moral reasoning in the actions of professionals is critical to their professional development and ability to make decisions that benefit society and the organization as a whole. St. John actually warns the reader that the negative consequences of "ignoring the moral aspect of decisions poses risks for professionals, their clients, and society" (p. 57). According to St. John, being a professional goes beyond following the rules and regulations of the position. In order to address the social ills of society, you must constantly reflect upon how your decision will impact others. He goes on to add that in order for moral reasoning to be most effective, it must be viewed as a legitimate qualification of the individual in the position in the same manner a technical skill would be viewed.

An ongoing theme of the book is that individuals come to positions from different frames and life experiences. St. John argues that without a formal process of professionals having to integrate moral reasoning in their positions individuals may not be made aware of the social injustices that exist in society, which St. John says will prevent these professionals from making a decision that is in the best interest of everyone. Not only are these decisions best for society, according to the author, but they are required for the professional development of the individual to take place. St. John cites Argyris and Schon's work (1978, 1996) on reflective practice within complex organizations to make the case for professional action that reduces inequality, social injustice, and environmental decline (p. 147). This research demonstrates the importance of creating a culture that allows, and more importantly, encourages, individuals to engage in open reflection and the testing of assumptions. Argyris and Schon (1976, 1996) acknowledge that this approach is more difficult to accomplish in larger and more complex organizations such as a university. However, St. John provides specific approaches that should be taken to contend with this complexity that includes:

- Create a culture of trust.
- Close the information loop.
- Establish a moral dimension to the organization.
- Reflect on practice.

St. John acknowledges that substantial institutional change can take several years, yet strategies can change instantly. "Discursive space for practitioners to reflect on real life challenges, along with a critical attitude toward moral challenges, is necessary to identify, reflect on, and address critical social challenges. Professional education should be altered to better prepare students to face critical social challenges as part of practice" (p. 190).

Case studies are one of the most interesting components of the book and they provide practitioners with analyses of situations and the differences in conclusions when moral reasoning and critical reflection is injected into the decision-making process. Specific cases utilizing a diverse group of individuals from a diverse group of professions demonstrate how moral reasoning would have led the administrators in each case to make better decisions if they had reflected upon the moral dimensions of the organization. St. John emphasizes that it is not enough for professionals to have a general discussion about how to handle specific situations. Instead, the professional must ask themselves how their decision will impact everyone involved. One strategy recommended for reflection is using a personal journal.

One critique of the book is that St. John's concern for the integration of moral reasoning in practice can seem at some times overreaching. He seems to argue that an individual can only make correct (socially justifiable) decisions if they disregard rationalized policies and regulations of the organization in favor of critically reflecting on the situation. St. John goes a step further by stating that professional expertise without moral reasoning makes the professional vulnerable to bias in their decisions and susceptible to immoral action (p. 18). This type of assertion opens St. John up to a criticism of being judgmental, particularly when he uses well-known partisan issues such as the No Child Left Behind legislation, Michael Moore's controversial movie *Sicko*, and the decision to go to war in Iraq to make his argument for a need for moral reasoning in professional practice. The book works best when St. John employs alternatives to the traditional way of problem-solving by professionals such as including the "powerless" at the table when important decisions related to social issues are made. One example he gives is to include those impacted by a financial aid policy in the construction of the policy in which they would be those most affected. According to St. John, this approach allows the professional to test their assumptions about the situation and critically reflect on the strategy prior to the strategy being instituted.

Overall St. John is providing a venue in the literature for a serious discussion about why professionals should always consider the moral implications when make decisions. This is a discussion that is overdue in the literature regarding professional development and the formal education of future leaders of organizations. St. John makes a compelling case for graduate programs to include this discussion in the curriculum and training of graduate students that is influenced by his research in access and social capital.

Although the book is geared toward aspiring professionals, it can also be useful to seasoned professionals who find themselves at a crossroads in their careers and are seeking new ways of thinking or addressing social issues. St. John leaves the reader with a sense of urgency for integrating moral reasoning in professional practice. It is as if St. John decided that in addition to his research on public policy that relates to college access and social justice, he perceives this book as an opportunity to appeal to the aspiring professional directly. This potential graduate school textbook could be interpreted as an effort to influence their practice once they are in a position to reflect on how their decision will impact the less fortunate that St. John has devoted many research articles writing.

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Reviewed by Patrice B. Mitchell, University of North Carolina Asheville

Shearer, Branton & Fleetham, Mike. (2008). *Creating Extra-ordinary Teachers: Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom and Beyond*. New York: Continuum .

Pages: 144 Price: \$22.95 ISBN: 978-1-85539-390-5

Creating Extra-ordinary Teachers: Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom and Beyond is inspired by Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences (MI) theory. However, even those teachers unfamiliar with Gardner's work will find the ideas in this workbook useful. Shearer and Fleetham's writing explores the eight forms of intelligence (musical, kinesthetic, linguistic, logical, spatial, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalist) to show readers where their strengths lie. The authors' main aims are clear: to increase understanding of the skills used by successful teachers; to give readers a glimpse into their own potential using MI profiles; to guide them into creating individualized leadership development plans; and to help these people to use their MI strengths to contribute to their own school communities.

The authors work in the fields of developmental psychology and educational training. Their writing reflects their experience in teaching, in working with classroom teachers, and in conducting workshops on The Multiple Intelligences Developmental Scale (MIDAS). Their book can best be described as a practical guide for readers who wish to develop their leadership potential.

The first section of the book explains the qualities of "extra-ordinary teachers" and how those individuals became leaders, while introducing Howard Gardner's work on MI. Section two outlines some practical applications of the theory. Sections three and four focus on career development through leadership and on some of the similarities and differences within the American and British education systems. The authors explain how people can develop their leadership skills in both systems.

The book includes self-assessments and leadership development planning materials. Readers can also complete an online questionnaire to get their own MIDAS profiles, used for the activities in the book. An alternate is to use the self-check list which is included. The conclusion of the book is particularly strong, as it contains related reference materials and links to the authors' websites and wiki-space--some useful tools for those readers who wish to further investigate the MIDAS assessment tool.

This succinct guidebook provides useful tips for new teachers who need to enhance their leadership potential as well as for established administrators looking for ways to motivate their colleagues. The authors demonstrate that giving direction or leadership can be about setting examples, about taking chances, and about helping others to grow. In these ways, Shearer and Fleetham show that all members of a school community can become leaders.

Reviewed by Mary Shaughnessy, Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario.

Smrekar, Claire E. and Goldring, Ellen B. (2009). *From the Courtroom to the Classroom: The Shifting Landscape of School Desegregation*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

Pages: 370 Price: \$29.95 ISBN: 978-1-934742-20-4

It has been five and half decades since the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas decision that officially ended race-based segregation in America's public schools. Yet, the research indicates that America's public schools are still very much segregated. However, barriers to desegregation are not overtly based on race but are now caused by other factors such as social class with race as a co-factor. Racial minorities are predominately working class which affects the neighborhood schools that they are assigned to attend and their access to resources. Pivotal court decisions are discussed in the book, *From the Courtroom to Classroom: The Shifting Landscape of School Desegregation*. Each chapter explains why and how segregation continues to persist. Legal scholars, education policy makers and administrators will be able to

benefit from the lessons learned from the aftermath of these court decisions.

Each of the book's three sections: "Post Busing," "Unitary Status," and the "Consequences of Court-Ended School Desegregation," covers a different era and the consequences of court decisions on schools. The authors use empirical research studies, political and legal analyses, and case studies to demonstrate how segregation is literally no longer a black and white issue (p. 100). The growing population of Mexican Americans as well as other non-white immigrant groups is also affected by segregated public schools. The authors assert that segregation is maintained through a combination of different factors and that a solution may benefit some but exacerbate conditions for others. Another major finding is that when the courts are not involved, another governing agency is needed to continually monitor, evaluate, and enforce desegregation efforts in order to prevent re-segregation (pp. 19-20, 236-237).

One major theme present throughout the book is the changing goals for desegregation. The Brown decision emphasized equal opportunity to learn and that segregation created inherently unequal learning experiences. The authors maintain that after the Coleman Report in the 1960s, the focus turned toward studying the achievement gap and determining whether or not school funding made a difference in creating equal educational outcomes (p. 9). The highly disputed Coleman Report essentially stated that schools do not impact learning independent of students' family economic background and peer group (Guthrie & Morrelli, 1971, p. 18). It overlooks the fact that a family's economic background determines the neighborhood in which a student lives and the local school in which he/she will attend. A higher economic status results in an increase in the quality educational resources due to amount of taxes paid by the parents to support the local public schools.

Then, the authors assert that unitary status, which allowed schools to act independently of court orders to desegregate, turned the attention back to racially isolated schools (p. 37). However, using race to assign students to schools as a way to desegregate then became unconstitutional (p. 49). Also, the definition of equal opportunity changed to mean treating all students the same was not the same as providing equal opportunity to learn. For example, some students needed language support (p. 100). Students whose primary language was not English, who were attending the same classes as other students but could not understand the language of instruction, were being disadvantaged.

Desegregation efforts also turned to students who attended the same school but were separated by tracking, which provided different learning experiences based on ability (p. 273). Research on schools has shown that tracking became a form of within school segregation based more on counselor and teacher biases about race and social class rather than academic ability (Free, 2006, p. 8). A separate school within a school was created.

Finally school desegregation is now being linked to long term societal goals of working and living in integrated settings (p. 246). The discussion has come full circle, back to open discussions of race. The original goal was the need to desegregate by racially integrating schools for equal educational opportunities which has evolved into the need to desegregate by racially integrating schools for equal opportunities in society. Personally, I found this goal for desegregation the most interesting because the United States is said to be a multicultural society and has aspirations of becoming more global yet its school system remains racially and ethnically segregated.

I also found the changing relationship between the courts and schools intriguing. In 2007, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of parents who sued a school district in Seattle for using race to integrate schools stating that diversity is not a compelling interest (Frey & Wilson, 2009). More recently, the United States Department of Education (2009) announced funding available for student assignment plans to avoid racial isolation and resegregation in schools, and to facilitate student diversity within the parameters of the law. Over the years, the Supreme Court appeared to be steadily withdrawing its support in desegregating schools. It looks like there will be some tension between the courts and the schools. I am curious to see how this friction will resolve itself over the next four years of the Obama administration.

From the Court Room to the Classroom: The Shifting Landscape of School Desegregation provides a critical analysis of the past research on desegregation and contributed new information where the previous research was either unsound or lacking. Its mixed methods approach provided a more complete understanding of the issues involved in how segregation is maintained from historical, legal, political, and social points of view. The book addressed a timely issue with implications for the future of American schools and society. While segregation may appear to be a vestige of America's past, harkening back to the days of Governor George Wallace and the Little Rock Nine, it is still alive and well in the twentieth-first century.

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Southall, Margo. (2009). *Differentiated Small Group Reading Lessons*. New York: Scholastic.

Pages: 160 Price: \$20.99 ISBN: 978-0-439-83920-4

For teachers at the primary level, most of the instructional time is spent on reading. However, due to the wide variety of skill levels in the classroom, it is hard to reach every student. For this reason, small group reading instruction is a major part of the literacy block. But it can be quite a challenge putting together effective groups every day that can reach the multitude of needs in the classroom in a limited amount of time. Margo Southall's book *Differentiated Small-Group Reading Lessons* helps make this task a little more manageable. Southall has worked in education for over 25 years in various positions that have allowed her to devise a small group strategy that works in the classroom. This is a book that would be helpful for teachers new to the classroom, as well as teachers looking to improve their small group reading lessons.

The book is divided into six chapters. Chapters 1-3 cover the basics and mechanics of a small group reading environment. Southall gives tips on grouping students, structuring lessons, using assessment to guide instruction, scheduling, and other management type of issues. Chapters 4-6 provide actual lessons for teachers on word study, fluency, and comprehension. The layout of this book is helpful because teachers will benefit from reading the first three chapters and then looking at lessons. This will give them a successful foundation for establishing small groups. Once this is organized, they can go right to chapters 4, 5, and 6 for easy to use lessons. Bookmarks that can be photocopied and used by students are available throughout the chapters. These are kid friendly ways of discussing ideas like fluency and comprehension. The bookmarks include pictures and very simple descriptions of what things like fluency actually mean. These will be sure to help students understand their own areas of strength and weakness.

The lessons provided by Southall are simple, effective ways to reach the individual needs of students. They do not take a lot of planning or study, which is helpful for any teacher. They follow a simple format of tell me, show me, guide me, and coach me. This is where the teacher tells the objective, shows an example of it, guides the student as they perform the task, and finally coaches as the student performs it with more independence. One lesson that I liked was "Train Your Reading Brain". In this lesson, the student is learning how to tackle high frequency words. The teacher guides them by having them find the easy parts of the words and breaking apart in this way. After some practice, they then work with a partner on sorting high frequency words. Finally they attempt this independently as the teacher watches. With this child friendly approach it is easy to see that children will walk away from their reading groups with the knowledge and skills intended.

Southall points out several things about small group instruction that I found to be key in understanding how lessons will be successful. She goes into detail about how this must be true differentiation, not just ability grouping. Meaning, students should be placed in groups that will be working on the same skill, such as inference. These students may have varying degrees of reading ability, but they all have a need to work on inference. This means there are no high or low groups. With this in mind, it is also important to recognize that small groups are not just for low students. High students may need help on specific topics. Also, it could be an advanced skill that several students are working on.

Overall, Southall's book is helpful in two specific ways. One way is that it helps teachers to really understand what a small group reading lesson should look like, both in planning and in action. Another benefit is the easy to use lesson plans that can be taken right from the book. They are detailed enough to give teachers a great lesson to use. But they are also flexible enough to be used in multiple grade levels and with multiple abilities. This will save the teacher time and provide valuable information in working in those key areas of reading.

Reviewed by Aaron Lentner, M.A., Azusa Pacific University, and elementary school teacher in Colorado Springs District 11. His interests include classroom management and moral education.

Stanley, Nile & Dillingham, Brett. (2009). *Performance Literacy through Storytelling*. Gainesville, FL:Maupin House.

Pages: 136 Price: \$27.95 ISBN: 978-1-934338-41-4

In *Performance Literacy through Storytelling* is an informative book for teachers in grades K to 8. Nile Stanley and Brett Dillingham describe performance literacy as the process of teaching students to perform their stories while embracing the two components of storytelling: story development and story delivery. The authors suggest that teachers need to make storytelling activities part of the daily curriculum and to take the time to listen to children's stories so that students can be encouraged to tell stories as often as possible as opposed to traditional storytelling applications used in schools for entertainment in classrooms at most once or twice a year. Stanley and Dillingham claim that engaging children in performance literacy helps students (a) develop self-expression and confidence, (b) become literate storytellers who can connect, sequence, and narrate freely, and (c) develop an increased interest in writing, reading, listening, and speaking.. In this way they can optimize success with reading, writing, and performing stories.

Throughout the book, Stanley and Dillingham provide a variety of examples of storytelling mini-lessons and activities that

address the joint standards of the International Reading Association (IRA) and National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). These mini-lessons are based on the Experience-Reflect-Apply (ERA) instructional framework (p. 11) for creating the lessons and activities. This framework includes:

- Students experience a story (or poem or song) through listening or reading
- Students reflect on a story (map out the story pattern drawing a visual portrait)
- Students apply, or demonstrate, their understanding by retelling the story or telling/writing a new story

The mini lessons are introduced throughout three chapters and inform readers of the how and what of each of the three stages of storytelling: beginning, intermediate, and advanced. Additionally, the authors present concrete ideas for helping students develop their storytelling skills before, while and after engaging in storytelling activities by providing tips to encourage students to find their storytelling voice (e.g., games for students to hone their effective use of sound, expression, and movement during their performances). Other tips guide the students to practice (e.g., performance tips), and illustrate how to teach and evaluate story delivery (e.g., checklists, rubrics etc.).

One of the strengths of the book is the idea of teaching students good audience manners as well as good storytelling skills. The authors suggest that by helping students be ready for peer storytellers, teachers not only establish a safe, supportive storytelling environment in their classroom, but also prepare students to be supportive, positive, and respectful story-listeners. As a result, all students in the class can develop, discuss, share, and model the storytelling skills to each other as freely and openly as possible. At the same time, the authors recommend balancing the holistic approach with the skills approach rather than emphasizing literacy skills, such as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, before the storytelling.

The CD included with *Performance Literacy through Storytelling* provides storytelling resources, such as stories and songs performed by either renowned storytellers or the authors of the book themselves. At the end of the book, the authors provide a list of resources to help integrate storytelling into classroom activities and provide information on digital storytelling. They also provide a companion Web site for additional teaching tips and an index of suggested stories by story type (e.g., cumulative tales, realistic stories, and talking beast stories or fables etc.)

One thing missing from this book is actual student work (performance or voices). Unfortunately, the CD doesn't include any either. The authors include detailed guidelines and mini-lessons for teachers to help children to be effective storytellers. However, due to the lack of the actual students' works, teachers may wonder if they really can apply those strategies in this book to their class and get the optimistic results that the authors talk about. This book would be more compelling by providing examples of students' works.

Overall, the book provides informative strategies that emphasize the importance of performing storytelling activities and helping students become sophisticated storytellers in order to stimulate literacy development. Many teachers in elementary and middle schools may find this book enlightening and practical.

Reviewed by Boh Young Lee, University of Georgia.



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