Brief reviews for January 2009

This will be my last Brief Reviews issue for *Education Review*. After more than a decade it is time to pass the baton. The new section editor is Melissa Cast-Brede of the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Melissa is an education and reference librarian at Omaha's Criss Library. She previously served as Director of Member Services for the Association of College and Research Libraries.

I want to introduce my final issue of Brief Reviews with a heartfelt "thank you" to all the scholars, teachers and librarians who have written reviews for the section over the last decade. It has been an honor and privilege to work with you, and I hope you will continue to support the journal by submitting reviews to Melissa. Contact her at mcast@mail.unomaha.edu

~ Kate Corby (corby@msu.edu)

Bache, Christopher, M. (2008). *The Living Classroom: Teaching and Collective Consciousness.* **Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.**

Pages: 254   Price: $21.95   ISBN: 9780791476468

Collective consciousness refers to unintended, cognitive resonances between people. In *The Living Classroom*, Bache argues that collective consciousness within a classroom creates a learning field. In a learning field, the memories and cognitions of students and the teacher can become accessible to the other people in the classroom and therefore affect the learning climate. Bache assumes this happens because of mind-to-mind communication on a spiritual level (i.e., telepathy). For example, a teacher who talks about child-naming uses an example in which he refers to a name that was always desired by one of the students in the classroom. The teacher is thought to have "picked up" this information from the collective consciousness in the classroom. Thus, teachers and students would communicate not only on the conscious, verbal level, but also share information on a more unconscious, invisible level of spirituality.

The book is written in an entertaining, interesting way. Bache uses many examples of experiences that he feels illustrate collective consciousness in the classroom. He is a university teacher himself and feels that he frequently experiences examples of what could be explained by collective consciousness and that these experiences cannot be explained by coincidence. The examples are, nevertheless, highly subjective and I was curious about empirical evidence that would validate or invalidate the rather philosophical theory described by Bache.

Bache devotes one chapter to the discussion of empirical evidence of collective consciousness. This chapter, however, did not convince me of the right- or wrongness of the theory. One problem with parapsychological studies is that they are often written as well as reviewed and cited by "believers." This may cause blindness for alternative interpretations of the findings, and experiments might even suffer from the unconscious influence of the experimenter. It has been argued that skeptics and proponents should collaborate in research in order to achieve more objective results (Schlitz, Wiseman, Watt, & Radin, 2006). What I found missing in Bache's discussion of the scientific literature on collective consciousness were alternative explanations, such as the influence of non-verbal communication, shared goals and desires by students in the classroom, and shared experiences. In addition, ideas about how the theories could be further tested, would perhaps have been more stimulating for the scientific readership in carrying out research on this topic.

Therefore, I have to conclude that as a philosophical/religious text, *The Living Classroom* is exciting to read. For those who want to read the book as a scientific text, however, disappointment is likely.

References

Schlitz, M., Wiseman, R., Watt, C., & Radin, D. (2006). Of two minds: Skeptic-proponent collaboration within parapsychology. *British Journal of Psychology, 97*, 313-322.

Reviewed by Francine C. Jellesma, University of Amsterdam

Blachman, Benita A. & Tangel, Darlene M. (2008). *Road to Reading: A Program for Preventing and Remediating Reading Difficulties.* **Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.**

Pages: 468   Price: $79.95   ISBN: 978-1-55766-904-9

Road to Reading: A Program for Preventing and Remediating Reading Difficulties by Blachman and Tangel offers support for early elementary reading programs. Designed for teachers of first through third grades with the possibility of addressing the remedial needs of older elementary grades, *Road to Reading* is a structured approach for small group and individual reading instruction to develop fluency by identifying letter sounds and high frequency words. Blachman and Tangel present six color-coded levels that progress through the same five steps: sound-symbol correspondences, decoding skills, phonetically regular words (PRWs) and high frequency words (HFWs), oral reading in context, and dictation. The teacher's manual includes detailed appendices as well as a CD-ROM with an extensive array of reproducible forms and teaching materials.

Blachman, Ball, Black, and Tangel's *Road to the Code: A Phonological Awareness Program for Young Children* (2000) sets the stage for *Road to Reading*. In this new book, Blachman and Tangel assert that "explicit, systematic, **research-based** instruction to help students understand the alphabetic principle" leads to "accurate and fluent word identification" (p. 1). The authors contend that "word recognition skills provide the essential foundation and support for good reading comprehension" (p. 1). The instructional elements of the program outlined in this manual align with the findings of the National Reading Panel (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000). In the introduction, the authors freely concede that *Road to Reading* "is not a complete classroom program" (p. 2) as it lacks clear vocabulary and comprehension instruction.

On the whole, the manual is teacher-friendly. Color-coded tabs allow for quick access to the sequenced levels. These levels, red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple, accurately reflect the increasing syllabic complexity of the focus words (PRWs and HFWs). From closed syllables, final "e" syllables, open syllables, vowel team syllables, vowel + r syllables, and consonant + le syllables, the students navigate both regular and irregular sound-symbol correspondences. The section for each level opens with goals and tips followed by materials and point-by-point procedures for the five steps.

In every level of *Road to Reading*, colorful icons represent each of the five steps. The repeated pattern of the steps establishes a familiar structure. Although time limits per step are proposed, the teacher determines the duration of each step based on students' progress; thus, the text is suited to differentiated instruction for small groups. The authors also include additional activities for increasing word recognition.

The most outstanding feature of the program is the amount of ancillary materials Blachman and Tangel provide. With 308 pages, the accompanying CD-ROM includes printable PDF versions of lesson plans, assessment charts, directions for making and using the sound board, individual letter cards, digraph cards, diphthong cards, word cards, and handouts outlining syllabication procedures. Appendix A presents sample lesson plans by level. In addition to the charts of decodable books in each color-coded section, Appendix B lists trade books by reading level according to dual color category (red-orange, yellow-green, blue- purple) for use in step four, oral reading in context. One limitation of Appendix B is the mixture of only a few titles of both poetry and nonfiction into a single list following the leveled selections. The "References and Suggested Resources" section contains a wealth of information about both classic research studies and current publications.

Overall, *Road to Reading: A Program for Preventing and Remediating Reading Difficulties* by Blachman and Tangel is a thoughtfully crafted support text for early reading instruction. Each level is carefully sequenced to build upon previously introduced skills. Each step reinforces letter and word work culminating in more fluent reading and writing practices. I recommend this teacher's manual as a valuable resource for any teacher of first through third grades interested in supplementing contextualized letter and word work.

References

Blachman, B. A., Ball, E. W., Black, R., & Tangel, D. M. (2000). *Road to the code: A phonological awareness program for young children.* Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing.

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (2000). *Report of the National Reading Panel, Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction: Reports of the subgroups* (NIH Publication No. 00-4754). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Reviewed by Amy J. Evers, a graduate student and teaching assistant in Language and Literacy Education at the University of Georgia. A former high school English and German teacher and middle school Reading Specialist, Ms. Evers's background provides a wide foundation for qualitative language study. Her interests range from enhancing teacher education at the university level to assisting both tutors and children in the UGA Reading Clinic.

Caldwell, JoAnne Schudt (2008). *Comprehension Assessment: A Classroom Guide.* **New York: The Guilford Press.**

Pages: 230   Price: $47.00(hardcover) $27.00(paperback)   ISBN: 978-1-59385-708-0(hardcover)   978-1-59385-707-3(paperback)

Comprehension is a process in which readers construct meaning by interacting with text through the combination of prior knowledge and previous experience, information in the text, and the stance the reader takes in relationship to the text (Pardo, 2004). Before the 1980s, little comprehension instruction occurred in the United States (National Reading Panel, 2000). Palinscar and Brown (1984) developed a technique called reciprocal teaching that taught students to predict, summarize, clarify, and ask questions for sections of a text. The technique had positive outcomes. Since then, the use of strategies like summarizing after each paragraph have come to be seen as effective strategies for building students' comprehension. The idea is that students will develop stronger reading comprehension skills on their own if the teacher gives them explicit mental tools for unpacking text (Pressley, 2006).

There are a wide range of reading strategies suggested by reading programs and educators. The National Reading Panel identified positive effects only for a subset, particularly summarizing, asking questions, answering questions, comprehension monitoring, graphic organizers, and cooperative learning. The Panel also emphasized that a combination of strategies, as used in Reciprocal Teaching, can be effective. Today, most reading comprehension programs teach students explicit reading strategies using teacher directed instruction with additional student practice.

In her timely book, *Comprehension Assessment,* JoAnne Schudt Caldwell discusses the different techniques that can be used in comprehension assessment. Caldwell starts the conversion with the definition of comprehension indicating that the development of comprehension skills in young children relates to not only reading but also listening and viewing. She explains that students participate in all three activities during class to learn new things and they are provided messages or meaning which require comprehension. Thus, educators need to know what students have comprehended as a result of these varied activities.

Next, the focus is on the term "Assessment." The author defines assessment and explains that it is a four-step process: identifying what to assess, collecting evidence, analyzing evidence, and making a decision. She describes the different assessment types and provides information about the importance of reliability and validity in classroom assessment. A layout of comprehension assessment strategies is also provided. The author describes that while decoding, the first stage of learning, can be measured easily and directly, comprehension can be difficult to measure since there is no uniform process to be measured. She presents a step-by-step guide on what to assess, how to assess, why assess, and pulling all together in order to measure comprehension.

The next three chapters offer definitions, descriptions and examples of questioning tools that can be used for comprehension assessment – questions, open ended assessments, and comprehension assessment through student dialogue. Caldwell explains the relationship between vocabulary and comprehension and provides guidelines for assessing word comprehension. One entire chapter consists of examples and discussion of the three possibilities for comprehension assessment proxies: fluency assessment, the cloze technique, and the sentence verification technique.

Caldwell then focuses on grading practices. She provides detailed information about the purpose and importance of grades, indicating that comprehension assessment is closely tied to grading practices, thus offering shortcut tools for describing a student's comprehension. She later gives a guideline on how to increase the validity and reliability of grading practices.

The last two chapters of the book discuss the topic of measuring comprehension through standardized tests and using classroom comprehension assessment as a counterpart to standardized assessment. The author starts by describing the purpose of standardized tests illuminating the different views of critics and supporters. Later she discusses how standardized tests measure comprehension. She talks about the limitations of standardized test and how educators can use standardized tests wisely if the tests scores are regarded as only one measure of effectiveness and as a rough estimate of achievement, rather than an absolute indicator. Finally a chapter is devoted on why there is no existing counterpart or complement to standardized testing and how teachers and administrators can form professional learning communities to discuss the use of classroom comprehension assessment as a counterpart to standardized assessment.

Overall *Comprehension Assessment* adequately prepares preservice and in- service teachers for many of the challenges they will encounter while integrating comprehension assessment into their teaching strategies. The precise structure and routine provided in this book make the topic easy for educators to implement from simply reading the book. This text is thorough, well-referenced, and easy to read. In addition, the book can be used as a complete reference for educators on how to assess students' comprehension during daily practice and impact student learning in more powerful ways.

References

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. (2000). *Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching children to read: An evidence based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction.* (NIH Publication No. 00-4769). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Palinscar, A.S., & Brown, A.L. (1984). Reciprocal teaching of comprehension-fostering and comprehension-monitoring activities. *Cognition and Instruction, 1*, 117-175.

Pardo, L. S. (2004). What every teacher needs to know about comprehension. *The Reading Teacher, 58*(3), 272-280.

Pressley, M. (2006). *Reading instruction that works: The case for balanced instruction.* New York: The Guilford Press.

Reviewed by by Dr. Zafer Unal, Assistant Professor, University of South Florida, St. Petersburg.

Carroll, David; Featherstone, Helen; Featherstone, Joseph; Feiman-Nemser, Sharon & Roosevelt, Dirck. (2007). *Transforming Teacher Education: Reflections from the Field.* **Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.**

Pages: 280   Price: $29.95   ISBN: 978-1-891792-33-5

Introduction

Transforming Teacher Education: Reflections from the Field provides an in-depth look at how Michigan State University (MSU) reformed its teacher education program over a ten year period. This case study "aims to advance our conversation about what quality teacher education looks like and why it is hard to create" (p. 2). The authors also paint a complete picture and expose the reader to the pitfalls and challenges of organizing an intimate, collaborative, year-long structure. Problems with teacher turnover and staffing of school liaisons are some of the concerns listed.

The text begins with background on MSU's history of reform in teacher education, focusing on the work of Judy Lanier, dean of the College of Education during the 1980s. Lanier's idea for working effectively in a large institution was to think small. She created four small thematic teacher preparatory programs apart from the mainstream program: heterogeneous classrooms, academic learning, learning community, and multiple perspectives. Lanier's concepts quickly gained acceptance and she began meeting with deans from other leading research universities. These meetings evolved into the Holmes Group, "a leading organization in the reform of teacher education during the 1980s and 1990s" (p. 11).

Small Learning Communities

By the early 1990s, Lanier succeeded in making more large scale changes at MSU with the movement to a five-year program that included a year-long internship for all teaching candidates. Teaching candidates were randomly assigned to one of three groups (later a fourth group of only secondary teaching candidates emerged). This book focuses on the work of one of these clusters entitled Team One, lead by Sharon Feiman-Nemser and Jay Featherstone. Their democratic ideals of education are apparent throughout the book. Team One's embrace of small learning communities, reflection based reform, and a year-long field placement program were among its most significant accomplishments.

MSU's reform movement attempted to break the large teacher preparatory program into smaller more effective teams, mirroring their students' actual future working environments. These smaller communities made it easier for faculty and staff to collaborate and also streamlined communication for all. For Team One this collaborative nature led to productive reflection and reform. Over a period of ten years the program improved and successful initiatives were expanded effectively.

Reform and Reflection

Chapter three addresses Team One's professional standards and their development. A subheading contained in the chapter entitled "Drafting (and Redrafting) Program Standards" shows the team's commitment to reflective practice. The democratic ideals of Dewey are cited as being very influential in the standards development process. This book explains the importance of not just creating standards but ensuring they have real meaning and passing that meaning on to the candidates.

Next, Helen Featherstone provides an intimate look at her reflective practices in teaching an introductory mathematics methods course. Featherstone acknowledges that "many prospective teachers bring to their teacher preparation courses a history of negative experiences with school mathematics, deep doubts about their ability to make sense of it, and considerable apprehension about teaching it" (p. 69). In looking back at her reflective journal writings, Featherstone sees two major themes she wanted to expose her students to: play and curiosity.

Student teachers worked closely with collaborating teachers for the entire year and the strength of their relationships was tested. Effective communication and collaboration helped Team One build a strong network of effective mentor teachers to work with the student teachers. Three chapters provide detailed explanations of how these networks were built and maintained.

David Carroll describes the mentor teacher study group that took place at one field location. For example, mentor teachers saw planning as a weakness in their student teachers, so they used some of their meeting times to address how to develop planning skills. The study group used videotapes of co-planned lessons to critically examine practices. This type of research based reflective practice was one of the greatest successes in Team One's reform of teacher education.

Field Placements

All the positive reforms initiated by Team One culminated during the field placements. The year long field placement is, perhaps, the most effective and interesting concept within this book. Team One's field placement success was achieved because of the aforementioned reflective, collaborative approach to the experience. Team One members supported all

stakeholders and worked to improve all areas of the field experience.

Cooperating teachers were a critical component of the field experiences. The initial concerns Team One had with their cooperating teachers were summed up in a quote from a cooperating teacher, "I thought my job was to provide a classroom for the student teacher to try out things she had learned at the university…I also thought I should watch her teach and tell her what she was doing wrong. But I did not see that as a central role for myself" (p. 141). The chapter details how Team One changed the traditional way of thinking about student teaching as a culminating experience to more of a beginning of learning for a novice teacher. The team strove to construct a learning community among the cooperating teacher, student teacher, and school liaison where all parties learned from each other. Student teaching was viewed as "a time to learn how to think and act like a teacher through co-planning and co-teaching" (p. 155). Cooperating teachers meet with each other in the Teacher Education Circle to address common concerns. This model was highly effective.

Later in the text Joseph Featherstone speaks to the success of the Teacher Education Circle. He states that Team One had their share of failures and some of the professional development schools were "flops" (p. 217), but the success in the Teacher Education Circle was the crown jewel of Team One, and provided a "vision of field-based teacher education that flowed from plural values" (p. 217).

Chapter eight continues the discussion of Team One's focus on field work. This chapter was written by Patricia J. Norman and explores her experiences as a school liaison. She uses a case study approach to analyze how she worked with a specific student teacher and how she collaborated with other Team One members. This chapter contains a statement that reflects Team One's attitudes on the learning process throughout chapters seven, eight and nine: "Interns were students of teaching. Collaborating teachers were students of mentoring. University liaisons were students of field-based education" (p. 179).

Critique and Recommend Usage

Transforming Teacher Education: Reflections from the Field provides some sound ideas for teacher education reform, especially Team One's work in the field. A year-long internship can provide a much richer experience for candidates. Team One's commitment to collaborating with mentor teachers was the most powerful reform idea. This is often the hope of many programs, but Team One made a serious commitment to making it work. Team One demonstrated that these intimate relationships can be fostered and maintained even in a large university setting. Providing field experiences for the candidates is important, but Team One's ability to create a strong triad of university, school, and candidate has benefit above and beyond what is listed in the this book.

At times, *Transforming Teacher Education: Reflections from the Field* loses some of its powerful conceptual ideas in a fragmented presentation. The most powerful ideas in small learning communities, reflective reform, and field experiences are scattered across various chapters written by several different individuals. The chapters seemed unconnected. The common themes had to be discovered rather than analyzed and interpreted.

This reviewer would recommend this book to deans or administrators looking to reform their teacher preparatory programs. The depth of the analysis into MSU's program provides descriptions that are specific enough for readers to implement them directly into their programs. As previously mentioned, the strongest component of Team One's reform was in the year long internship and the collaboration to get the most out of that year. Anyone looking for ideas on how to reform a teacher preparation program with a year-long internship may find additional information in Koppich, Merseth and Darling-Hammond's (2000) *Studies of Excellence in Teacher Education: Preparation in a Five-Year Program* as it describes two teacher preparation programs that both utilize a year-long internship, and provides a broader and more diverse set of conceptual program ideas. Students of such courses or workshops would benefit from the breadth that Koppich, Merseth and Darling-Hammond provides. Individuals in leadership who are making changes to a program's structure could greatly benefit from the depth and detail provided in *Transforming Teacher Education: Reflections from the Field*.

References

Koppich, J.; Merseth, K.K. & Darling-Hammond, L. (2000). *Studies of excellence in teacher education: Preparation in a five-year program*. Washington, DC: AACTE Publications.

Reviewed by Anthony Durr, Department of Education, Capital University.

Dehn, Milton J. (2008). *Working Memory and Academic Learning: Assessment and Intervention.* Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Pages: 382   Price: $45.00   ISBN: 047014419X

Milton J. Dehn's comprehensive examination of working memory includes definitions, historical and theoretical constructs, assessments and analysis, associated disorders, relationship to specific academic skills, and interventions. This significant study, grounded in the latest cognitive research and theoretical models, presents case studies to illustrate characteristic profiles of children and adolescents with working memory deficits. The case studies provide practical assistance and step by step guidance in interpreting and explaining cross-battery results in both written and oral formats for neuropsychologists, psychologists and educators.

Acknowledging the importance of working memory's role in learning and its multiple conceptualizations over the last 35 years, Dehn concludes that for his purposes, "the definition of working memory is limited to the management, manipulation, and transformation of information drawn from either short-term or long-term memory" (p. 2); yet, he emphasizes that his perspective is aligned with other researchers who distinguish short-term, long-term and working memory as distinct concepts. In reviewing multiple theories and models of information processing, Dehn begins to lay the foundation for the crucial role that working memory plays in higher level cognitive functions and acquisition of academic skills.

While Dehn's comprehensive examination of theories and models is both interesting and illuminating, perhaps the most significant aspect of this text is its practical guidance. Those readers who conduct assessments and those who interpret evaluations for intervention strategies will find the chapters on testing and analysis invaluable. Dehn begins by addressing the challenges presented in evaluating working memory and acknowledges, "There are no recently normed test batteries that are designed specifically for an in-depth assessment of working memory" (p. 128). That said, however, he provides an extensive and exhaustive review of multiple measurements and subtests that clinicians can use as a battery to evaluate different memory components including short-term phonological, short-term visual, working verbal, working visuospatial, working executive and long-term retrieval. Including an entire chapter devoted to cognitive batteries, he presents a veritable tool box for psychologists and related professionals that can be used to conduct hypothesis- driven psychological and educational assessments. Evaluators will appreciate the sample reports, interview forms, working memory analysis worksheets and test recommendations that individualize the assessment plan based on specific referral concerns.

Finally, Dehn presents remedial and compensatory interventions that are directly tied to working memory and its relationship to academic tasks. He discusses and gives practical examples of specific strategies including metacognition, memory-training, rehearsal, chunking, organization, computer- based intervention and mnemonics among others. Not only does he give training tips on how to use the strategies, he also addresses how to select strategies for intervention and what to do when these strategies fail. The use of case studies and appendices that include forms for working with individual clients illustrate how to match test choices, how to analyze and interpret results, and how to implement effective strategies for intervention.

Dehn's comprehensive examination of working memory provides readers with both a theoretical understanding of memory's impact on acquisition of academic skills as well as a practical training manual. This is a must-have guidebook for those conducting psychological and educational evaluations and for those educating children and adolescents with working memory deficits.

Reviewed by Patricia Mytkowicz, Ed.D., an associate professor and coordinator of a program for multilingual students with learning disabilities at Curry College in Milton, Massachusetts.

Herr, Norman (2008). *The Sourcebook for Teaching Science, Grades 6-12: Strategies, Activities, and Instructional Resources.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Pages: 584   Price: $32.95   ISBN: 978-0-7879-7298-1

The author's love of science and creativity in presenting ways to make it fun, understandable, and meaningful is clear throughout the text. The goal of *The Sourcebook for Teaching Science, Grades 6-12* is to provide an array of teaching strategies, resources, lessons, activities, and ideas to enhance/augment the teaching and learning of physics, chemistry, biology, and the earth and space sciences. Written to enable teachers to stimulate student interest and involvement in the sciences, Herr uses learning theory based activities that make the teaching and learning of science more fun. It is designed to enhance any secondary school science curriculum, not supplant it. The back cover states that activities in the text "are based on National Science Education Standards and state science content standards," although it is not clear which states' standards are met, or if every states' standards are met. Concurrent with the printed materials, there is a free companion Web site, www.sciencesourcebook.com, with technological resources for teachers. The structure of the Web site mirrors the table of contents of the text.

The text is easily understandable and very pragmatic in its discussions. Its organizational structure begins with a focus on scientific literacy and then moves on, sequentially, into the issues of scientific reasoning, understanding, problem solving, and research. Each chapter focuses on a specific set of scientific learning skills and begins with a nice review of the theory and practical applications of that skill set. The final section of the text, Part 6, covers a wide range of topics related to resources for teaching science. The discussions for the teacher at the beginning of each chapter are concise but rich in content. Overall, the book is designed to be a treasure chest of specific ideas and activities to teach specific components of the scientific learning process and it does this beautifully.

In his introduction, the author says the book includes explanations on how to adapt the strategies, ideas, etc. included for English Language Learners and that the book is intended for a diverse student population, but he never clearly defines what is meant by this. It is possible to assume that this diversity is one based in language skills, given that the book includes tips on teaching English as a second language (ESL) students and it does this for the first three chapters. This is not done in any of the subsequent chapters. It is important to remember, however, ESL students in America are "culturally" second language students as well and science is not as wholly objective a discipline as Western culture purports. For example, Western science is taught as if the mind and body are two distinct entities or systems; a concept that would be foreign to some cultures. Chapter two also discusses what features a teacher should look for when picking a science textbook for English learners but it is clear the traits listed would be desirable in texts for native English speakers as well.

The title of the book makes it clear that this text book is meant to be applicable to Grades 6-12. That is a very wide span of the educational process. Children develop intellectually from a concrete thought process to a more abstract one during those years. The question that arises is whether one book can really capture how to effectively teach science across this intellectual development process. Do the projects included reflect the changing learning and perceptual maturations of brain development across these years? By default, they do; but the projects and activities are not divided along these lines nor are there any designations for what intellectual requirements are necessary for them. For example, in chapter 2 there is a summary of techniques for improving scientific reading and comprehension with annotations of where a more in-depth discussion of each technique may be found later in the text. Neither the list nor the later discussions provide any guidance on the age appropriateness for the techniques listed. While teachers may adapt the activities to fit the learning levels of their students, this would imply the same activities can be used for seniors in high school as late/elementary or early middle school students. Brain development research would not completely support this assumption.

It would have been interesting for the book to consider and discuss this developmental issue either in a stand alone chapter or at the beginning of each new section of the book. I wish the author had been clearer in which activities were geared towards middle school learners and high school students. It seems as if the book ignored these differences in its efforts to be a single resource text for the entire secondary school curriculum.

For example, chapter 6 discusses the levels of reasoning and introduces Bloom's taxonomy. This taxonomy ranges from memorization (knowledge, concrete thinking) to evaluation (requires very abstract thinking). Activity 6.1.1 is designed to test students on their ability to determine the level of reasoning required by specific biology statements or questions. The activity directions note that it is not necessary to understand the content of the questions in order to identify the level of reasoning they represent. This seems rather fallacious unless the instructor emphasizes the use of specific words with specific levels of reasoning while explaining these concepts. For instance, "explain" is a synonym for comprehension while "predicting" indicates application.

Although the author does not designate them as such, I found that, apart from the first section of the book (chapters 1-4), the majority of the activities are geared for high school students. With some effort, many could be adapted to younger students. Most teachers tend to teach specific grades throughout their careers, so those who focus on middle school may find many of the activities too advanced for their students and too consuming to adapt for use. Also, middle school students do not attend the same school as high school students in most public education systems, so it is not clear why a single book would attempt to focus on two separate sets of learners. The book overreaches in trying to be a complete resource text for such a wide range of educational grades. It would have been better if it had been geared either for high school (grades 9-12) or middle school students (grades 6-8).

Despite these shortcomings, the book does have an immense store of activities to be considered. It provides clear instructions and examples of how to adapt specific activities for specific fields of science such as biology or physics. For teachers looking for new ways to teach students how to think about science, no matter what the discipline, this book will be a wonderful source of ideas and inspiration.

Reviewed by Michele G. Curtis, MD, MPH, Associate Professor at the University of Texas—Houston Medical School.

Holcomb-McCoy, Cheryl (2007). *School Counseling to Close the Achievement Gap: A Social Justice Framework for Success.* **Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press.**

School Counseling To Close the Achievement Gap: A Social Justice Framework for Success by Cheryl Holcomb-McCoy should be considered required reading for all practitioners—school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers—and school administrators working in K-12 settings. The wisdom shared by the author, an award-winning, national scholar and counselor educator, former teacher, and elementary school counselor, provides the necessary awareness, knowledge, and skills associated with increasing the probability of academic and life success for all students. The concisely written and well-organized text is an easy read. It includes a literature review of the traditional practices in the schools that have been linked with persisting higher rates of academic failure among racial-ethnic minority students and a compilation of assessments to guide readers' evaluations of their settings. The author's expertise in multicultural counseling is most apparent in the presence of strategically placed questions throughout the chapters that facilitate readers' introspection and personal reflection. Responding to these questions will guarantee the identification of any rift between their current thinking and practices that may reinforce pre-existing inequities in educational outcomes. In each case, the author provides operational and feasible strategies that specially address the problem of academic failure in a more comprehensive manner.

As alluded to in the title, the underlying premise in the book is that social justice theory, which is influenced by positive education and psychology trends and multicultural counseling theories, post-modern theory, strengths- based counseling, empowerment-based counseling, and ethnic identity development counseling, is one means to make sense of the achievement gap and, therefore, can serve as a guide to school counselors in the mission of educational reform. Based on this approach, the achievement gap that exists for some student populations is not a phenomenon mainly determined by genetic factors, family factors or previous education, which are not easily corrected by school staff, if at all. Instead, the author views the achievement gap as being influenced by school systems and the limited availability of social resources, which can be improved by the efforts of school counselors. The social justice approach redefines the role of school

counselors to serve as coordinator between the student, school, family, and community to balance the inequality of resource availability in society and includes objectives of both remediation and prevention.

The book presents data supporting the existence of achievement gaps—standardized tests, course-taking patterns, rate of identification of special education, rate of college education enrollment, educational continuum from preschool. Factors that may influence those gaps, such as inequalities in teacher experience and expectations, lack of cultural competence, inequalities in resource availability, community and home factors, peer pressure, and identity issues, are presented and discussed (Chapters 1 and 2). Unlike many of the articles and textbooks which stop at this point, this book proceeds to specifically identify what the school counselor can do to actualize educational reforms that will benefit all.

The author purports four primary shifts in the traditional role of school counselors: the importance of the periodic assessment of each school setting culture through local, ongoing, data collection and analysis; the development of empirically-supported service delivery (Chapters 5 and 6); extending the scope of practice beyond the boundaries of the school setting to family and community (Chapter 5); and, advocacy in correcting inequities in educational outcomes (Chapter 8). Although the author's recommendations are imbedded within the American School Counselors Association National Model's Management System categories of competencies (i.e., Advisory Council and Use of Data) and Delivery System (Responsive Services), this textbook magnifies the importance of highlighting these activities and provides the theoretical rationale for doing so.

However, as in the case of all noteworthy works that have the potential to make a positive difference in educational outcomes, there are possible limitations in the author's proposal that readers must consider. First, although research within the local school setting is important, data can be deceptive in some situations. The value of data depends on the measures selected and their reliability and validity, the method of data collection, and the research and statistical competence of the practitioner.

Second, the author's emphasis on indicators of academic achievement only ignores the importance of the role of school counselors in the psycho-socio- emotional development of children and adolescents. There is evidence in the literature of students who are academically prepared in terms of standardized test scores and GPA, but who are emotionally unprepared to assume to the role of fully-functioning young adults within general society.

Third, the cross-group comparisons in indicators of academic success may be problematic in that within group differences are ignored or minimized. Such statistical comparisons may highlight false "collectives," and reinforce faulty assumptions about the needs of specific racial-ethnic groups. Some outcomes may not be related to race, but other points of diversity, such as socio-economic status, gender, individual academically related variables, etc., which may be masked by a researchers'/practitioners' hyper-vigilance about issues of race.

Fourth, although the book encourages school counselors' active involvement in educational reform, which is typically spearheaded by administrators, teacher educators, and teachers, no guidance about how to do so is provided. Circumventing barriers associated with systemic change in light of the prevalence of expected traditional practices is a major challenge for practitioners with the best intentions and assistance in this area would have been invaluable.

Fifth, the literature review is skewed in the direction of highlighting "the problem" and variables that contribute to the inequities in achievement, instead of an indepth presentation and discussion of the literature that supports the author's recommendations, which would have required a lengthier text. Additional reading is required for increased awareness of the empirical research that support the authors' recommendations.

Finally, the manner in which the author attends to the achievement gap may inadvertently reinforce the use of one group's performance level as THE standard toward which all others should aspire. In fact, strategies advocated in the book may also be effective in promoting the academic excellence of all students in the school setting. This may be even more important from the global perspective in which selected other country's student populations are excelling beyond that of our populace in the USA. The utility of the social justice perspective and associated strategies may prove beneficial to all students if the services are extended accordingly.

Reviewed by Robbie Steward professor and Director of the MA Counseling Program, and Kaiyao Ni, MA student, Michigan State University.

Jensen, Eric. (2008). *Fierce Teaching: Purpose, Passion, and What Matters Most.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Pages: 120   Price: $23.95   ISBN: 9781412963305

An interesting balance between research and practicality, *Fierce Teaching* provides a new look at instructional strategies for K-12 classroom teachers. Jensen, a noted brain expert, connects relevant research with highly effective teaching strategies. This book delves into the process and content of effective teaching. The author identifies specific techniques that are easy to learn and implement. He includes brain research on memory and its relationship to student learning. He attempts to convey these details in a reader-friendly way. Each chapter focuses on a different strategy within the acronym of BE FIERCE.

BE – Body and emotional connections

F – Feedback and error correction
I – Input to output ratio
E – Elaboration for depth
R – Recall and memory management
C – Content coherence
E – Environmental management

The author asserts that when used effectively, these seven principles will create positive results for students and teachers. He argues that teachers can engage students in deeper learning when they move from simple learning to more complex, integrated knowledge. Within the text, he describes the need to develop emotional connections within students. He focuses on the responsibility of the teacher to influence and build this within each child.

Jensen acknowledges that these strategies take time and energy on the part of the teacher. His suggestions are manageable and range from minor adaptations to existing practices to more involved activities that may require some planning. He provides practical strategies for giving feedback to students, including 21 ready-to-implement activities.

Jensen describes the student brain and the process of learning. He makes recommendations for optimal learning through limiting information that students must process at one time, allowing time for breaks in instruction and getting enough sleep. He argues that while there isn't enough time in the school day, we might better serve our students if we took time to pause and reflect throughout our instruction. The author also touches on information overload, a very relevant topic in this ever-changing digital world. The author explains that teachers must guide students to explore topics in depth, not just surface learning. The practical suggestions section within each chapter offers valuable ideas to classroom teachers.

The ideas that Jensen presents can be used for all grades and subject areas. He provides examples that address both elementary and secondary classrooms. *Fierce Teaching* easily connects to differentiation through student learning styles and readiness. The text shows teachers ways that they can incorporate positive teaching using these brain-based teaching methods.

While many suggestions aren't brand new ideas, they are presented in conjunction with a brain-based strategy supporting its use, which sets this book apart from others. Text boxes and diagrams support the overall purpose of the book. However, the inclusion of multiple cartoons often detracts from the text rather than supporting and extending it. The brief chapters conclude with short summaries of the content which helps to wrap up and reinforce the BE FIERCE strategy that was presented.

This text provides tools for teachers to self-assess and improve their own practice and is a resource for school leaders, as well. Ultimately, Jensen urges teachers to use a multi-sensory, multi-modal, multiple intelligence approach to teaching. The research presented connects the processes of the brain to practical classroom teaching techniques. This book will serve as a unique resource for classroom teachers looking to increase student engagement, as well as improve teaching and learning.

Reviewed by Jacie Maslyk, M. Ed., Principal, Crafton Elementary School, Pittsburgh, PA. and a doctoral candidate in Curriculum and Instruction at Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

Kress, Jacqueline E. (2008). *The ESL/ELL Teacher's Book of Lists.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Pages: 384   Price: $32.95   ISBN: 978-0-470-22267-6

The ESL/ELL Teacher's Book of Lists is an easy to use, practical guide to teaching English as a second language (ESL). This book is an ideal companion that all ESL teachers in the United States should keep on their desks. Jacqueline Kress presents a creative way to process lots of information in the area of ESL. She provides a variety of teaching tips and lists, making it easier to look for resources and references on various ESL topics: culture, linguistics, pronunciation, idioms, vocabulary, assessment, grammar, teaching, etc.

The book uses brief introductions at the beginning of each list, containing a summary and suggestions to ESL educators on how to use the list provided. While at times the lists may clutter the page, they also breathe life into difficult subject matter such as the various aspects of grammar. The author's enthusiasm for the topic is obvious throughout the book. Additional activities on how to use the lists could help lighten the amount of material presented. This does not diminish the credibility of the lists nor the excellence of this book.

This book is unique in that it seeks to expand the ELS student's vocabulary by including culture, on-line resources, and reproducible response activities that make it easier to teach a large amount of information. Having such information in one book is great for both experienced and inexperienced teachers. Kress presents a broad list of ESL resources that focuses on easy to find teaching content, as opposed to having to look in many books that single out just a few.

The book is divided into ten sections. Each section represents a series of lists on a specific subject. Section one introduces tips for organizing instruction, providing a list of realia, manipulatives, school routines, and students' language background. Section two provides readers with a series of vocabulary lists that will help students with daily life skills: weather, colors, family relations, money, safety, etc. Section three provides a list of ideas to help the student with pronunciation such as: sounds, vowel production, beginning and end clusters, tongue twisters, etc. Section four has a great variety of lists

containing cognates, synonyms, and so on, while section five deals with parts of speech.

The book has a list for everyone involved. For those who teach any of the content areas, there are lists of vocabulary words in the different content areas in section six. Proverbs, holidays, and/or government are in section seven. Section eight has a great variety of lists for teaching strategies, but if you want to prepare students with test taking skills and to understand the different kinds of assessment then go to section nine. Section ten is a helpful resource for anyone in the ESL area. It provides the different websites, references, and a glossary of language learning terms.

The book's purpose is to expand effective instruction for English language learners. This is accomplished by providing basic background knowledge and awareness that will facilitate teachers in the classroom. *The ESL/ELL Teacher's Book of Lists* will make lesson planning easier with content and teaching suggestions found throughout the book. This book is an excellent companion.

Review by Cristina P. Valentino, ESOL Coordinator at Jacksonville University, Jacksonville, FL.

Leaf, Ronald; McEachin, John & Taubman, Mitchell (2008). *Sense and Nonsense in the Behavioral Treatment of Autism: It Has to Be Said.* **New York: DRL Books.**

Pages: 254   Price: $39.95   ISBN: 978-0-9755859-2-4

The authors state in the preface of their book that they are "mad as hell." They note that every day seems to bring a new purported cure for autism, speculation on its cause, a new regulation or requirement that makes no sense, or a new treatment designed primarily to conform to the financial dictates of some bureaucracy. They comment with compassion on the victimization of parents and the confusion of professionals (p. xv). The authors are well-positioned to know what is occurring in a field that they have worked in for many years.

The passion expressed in the preface rather abruptly shifts to a more academic tone in the first chapter, which defines and explains the use of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). The first four chapters, or roughly a fourth of the book, are devoted to promoting the use of ABA, describing the Young Autism Project at UCLA where the authors worked, a discussion of an ABA tool called the Discrete Trial Technique, and a critical look at a recent credential, the Board Certified Behavior Analyst.

Perhaps the most interesting part of the book starts with chapter six, "Alternative Treatments for Autism Spectrum Disorders: What Is the Science?" This chapter first defines CAMs (Complementary and Alternative Medicine strategies) and presents charts which indicate what the alternative treatment is supposed to accomplish with a statement about the research data to support the claim. Some of the biologically based CAMs included are vitamins, gluten-free diet, aloe vera, magnet therapy, and traditional Chinese Medicine. Among the non-biological CAM treatments covered are music therapy, massage therapy, child centered play therapy, Doman/Delacato patterning, facilitated communication, animal-assisted therapy, and art therapy. According to the text, none of the treatments examined are solidly grounded in research.

The charts are interesting and easy to read; they appear to provide the type of information that both parents and professionals need. However, the authors appear to be asking readers to trust them. The charts do not include any indication of what studies were examined, and the reader is left to search through the list of references provided at the end of the chapter. I had difficulty matching the citations to the treatments that were included in the charts, and I seriously question whether the authors included a reasonable number of the studies available. I checked the Cochrane Library and compared citations for two areas. The review in Cochrane related to music therapy for autistic spectrum disorder (Gold, Wigram & Elefant, 2006) lists 48 citations under the categories of "References to studies included in this review" and "References to studies excluded from this review." I was only able to locate two of these studies at the end of the chapter. There were nineteen citations in Cochrane for the same categories related to combined vitamin B6-magnesium treatment (Nye & Brice, 2005), with only two of those studies cited at the end of the book chapter. Admittedly, Cochrane is comprehensive and includes studies from the 1970s and 1980s while the book focuses on newer studies, but the difference in numbers is still worth noting. Despite this difference, the conclusions reached by the authors of the Cochrane reviews were similar to the conclusions in this chapter.

When I checked Web of Science to examine the citation for one of the studies cited at the end of the chapter, I discovered that it had been cited fifteen times. None of the citing articles showed up in the list of references, although several looked extremely relevant. This is troubling since the authors of the book emphasize the importance of critically reviewing research and being skeptical of claims. Again, however, despite what may appear to be incomplete research, the authors' conclusions are not out of line with mainstream thinking. "At the present time there are no alternative and complementary medical interventions that meet the most rigorous standard for adoption. Even those that appear promising are plagued by insufficient evidence that discourages widespread adoption, while the vast majority lack any evidence of efficacy or are potentially dangerous" (Umbarger, 2007).

The remainder of the book covers such topics as how to interpret research, a comparison of treatment approaches, the "home vs. school" controversy, goal setting, and expectations of progress. The final chapter discusses inclusion and the concept of least restrictive environment. Along the way, the authors indicate what they see as sense and nonsense. Ideas showing "sense" include the notions that even the best school program does not replace intervention at home, and that even the best home program does not replace intervention at school. Among the statements categorized as "nonsense" is the belief that exposure to typically developing children is all it takes to remedy social skills. Many of the observations the authors make about "sense" and "nonsense" seem reasonable.

What will probably not seem reasonable to most readers are the authors' conclusions about ABA. The authors make the rather startling claim that "Currently, the only treatment whose efficacy has been demonstrated in well-designed, scientific studies is an individualized program based on the principles of applied behavior analysis" (p. 94). The most they are willing to concede is that some interventions (notably the Picture Exchange Communication System and TEACCH) are "promising" (p. 93). This is not the place, nor does this reviewer have the expertise, to review the state of research related to various autism treatments, but it is probably safe to say that there will be many researchers who strongly disagree with this conclusion.

I also think that there appears to be at least the appearance of a conflict of interest here. Are researchers who are admittedly strong advocates of one approach really in the best position to make judgments about other treatments? The authors certainly make no secret of their background and their views, but it does raise questions about bias. I also think that the title of the book is problematic. In the last half of the book, the authors do note what they view as "sense" and "nonsense" but they primarily use the book as a vehicle to promote the use of ABA.

The most controversial element of the book, however, will be the authors' assertion that parents and professionals should use ABA to the exclusion of other treatments. When discussing an eclectic approach to intervention, the authors note that they view a treatment program which contains a blend of elements from diverse intervention approaches as a mistake (p. 58). They counter the argument that there is no harm in trying alternative treatments by noting that there may be possible side-effects that have not been adequately investigated, and that a waste of time, energy, and money are frequently part of the pursuit of ineffective treatments at the expense of mainstream, helpful approaches (p. 108). However, a recent study of Board Certified Behavior Analysts revealed that even they use a variety of treatments (Schreck & Mazur, 2008). I spoke with two colleagues who had recently heard Ronald Leaf speak at a professional conference. They shared with me that his presentation had not been well-received by the audience and that many of the attendees had been truly offended by some of his comments. Although my colleagues promote the use of ABA and are familiar with and respect some of Leaf and McEachin's previous work, they were clearly troubled by Leaf's promotion of the exclusive use of ABA and do not support what they view as his current extreme position.

I was not familiar with the publisher, DRL Books, and discovered that it is a division of Different Roads to Learning, a web site that sells products supporting an ABA approach to the treatment of autism. My sense is that the site primarily targets parents. Although the authors do not make their target audience clear, the promotions on the publisher's web site indicate that it is "an ideal resource for parents navigating through the maze of current Autism Spectrum Disorder therapies." One of the same colleagues who heard Leaf speak at a professional conference indicated that he was selling copies of the book there, and her impression is that his intent is to reach both lay and professional audiences. I do not think that either audience is well-served by this approach. As was indicated previously in this review, academics rightly expect a more thorough examination and review of the available research than was presented in this book.

Although parents undoubtedly need to be informed, I do not think that it is reasonable to expect them to be able to understand the nuances of academic research or the subtleties involved in assessing various methodologies. The authors provide information about research design and multiple interpretations in chapter 7, but reading a twenty page chapter hardly prepares a one for dealing with a myriad of confusing and conflicting studies. Although the authors admit to and address some of the specific criticisms of ABA, I do not think they really present a clear picture. The literature reveals claims, counterclaims, and dueling methodologies (Eikeseth, 2001; Gresham & MacMillan, 1998; Howlin, 1997; Jordan & Jones, 1999; Kates-McElrath & Axelrod, 2006).

The frustration of parents, of practitioners, and of researchers is understandable. Parents are desperately seeking treatments for their children, and current research is confusing and contradictory and does not provide the straightforward answers they want. Practitioners are left looking for the evidence-based-practices being required by current public policy, and the requirement of being evidence-based is also an extremely important issue because of funding. One of the authors' statements of "nonsense," that funding agencies support sensory integration, yet they will not fund ABA because it is "ineffective" and "experimental" (p. 139) may well be a source of some of their indignation. Researchers are rightly frustrated by the fact that parents have been very influenced by unsubstantiated claims, many of which are made on commercial Internet sites. Over half of the families of autistic children surveyed in a recent study reported using at least one form of CAM during the past year (Wong & Smith, 2006).

There is without question a need for parents of children with autism to have access to valid non-commercial information about the efficacy of different treatments (Green, 2007). Unfortunately, I do not think that this book meets that need.

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Reviewed by Sharon Naylor, Illinois State University.

Neuman, Susan B., Editor. (2008). *Educating the Other America: Top Experts Tackle Poverty, Literacy, and Achievement in Our Schools.* **Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.**

Pages: 356   Price: $39.95   ISBN: 978-1-55766-906-3

When my six-year-old daughter saw me reading *Educating the Other America*, she asked what schools are like in South America; however, the other America referred to by the title is the collective group of more than 13.4 million children living in poverty, many of whom are on the bottom end of the achievement gap. This book is designed to explain the extent of poverty in the United States; the effects of poverty on children and their learning, specifically their literacy learning; instructional interventions designed to address the academic needs of impoverished children; and technological supports that can make a difference for children's academic learning. The seventeen chapters are edited by Susan Neuman and written by experts in the fields of education, social work, developmental psychology, and sociology. The overarching goal of the book is to help educators and researchers come to an understanding of why poor children do not achieve academically so that they may, in turn, begin working towards viable solutions.

The first section of *Educating the Other America* conquers the issue of poverty and the damage it incurs on children's academic achievement. Chapters in this section describe who the children living in poverty are, failed policies that have addressed poverty amelioration, the effects that such circumstances have on academic achievement, and possible solutions for closing the achievement gap in schools. The essays are quite informative and together help to achieve Neuman's first goal of making sense of the academic lag of poor children. Several chapters simply examine the current playing field and report surprising findings. For example, Mary Corcoran's analysis of race differences in poverty reveals that African American children are not only much more likely to be poor, but that even when "raised in similar economic conditions as white children, they are less likely than whites to be upwardly mobile and more likely to be downwardly mobile" (p. 48). Other chapters look at possible solutions for closing the achievement gap. McCloyd and Purtell consider policy solutions and conclude that welfare programs which increase parental income are most effective at raising the cognitive functioning of the children in those families. Parkinson and Rowan look to educational fixes and propose that the reading achievement of poor children can be advanced to levels of average students only through the joint solution of both early intervention programs and improved school quality efforts.

Section two focuses on instructional interventions that show promise for raising the achievement, both in reading and overall, for children of poverty. Highlights of this section are the two chapters dealing with language issues and the acceleration of language development. Goldenberg summarizes the key research findings for English language learners and offers a basic framework to guide the instruction of ELLs. Holly K. Craig closely examines the black-white achievement gap and concludes that reading outcomes of African-American children are shaped much more by oral language deficits than by poverty.

The final section of *Educating the Other America* considers the contribution that technological supports can bring to the academic achievement of poor children. The chapters in this section work together to hammer home the point that technology and technological innovations can not replace quality education but can be integrated with good teaching to accelerate learning. Considered in these chapters are living books, voice recognition software, children's television, and the formal features used in television and music. Kirkorian and Anderson's chapter is especially enlightening to skeptics who view television use as a mindless venture. Rather, educational television viewing is beneficial to the academic achievement of low-income children who would not otherwise have exposure to many of the concepts and skills necessary for school success.

The concluding chapter "The Benefits of Going Green," urges educators to design the physical space of the classroom in a manner that promotes "deep learning." While this topic is quite interesting and Kathleen Roskos makes a great case for

giving considerable thought to the places where learning takes place, the chapter does not tie in well with the theme of the book nor does it lend support for the main purpose.

Educating the Other America is a useful resource for researchers looking to develop interventions for closing the achievement gap. Though the intended audience is educators in general, likely few active teachers nor administrators will have the time or desire to tackle such a comprehensive book. On the other hand, this is a perfect book for use in an urban education teacher preparation program.

Reviewed by Maria C. Cahill, doctoral student in literacy studies at The University of Tennessee.

Opitz, Michael F. & Rasinksi, Timothy V. (2008). *Good-Bye Round Robin: 25 Effective Oral Reading Strategies.* **Updated edition. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.**

Pages: 160   Price: $18.50   ISBN: : 978-0-325-02580-3

The mere mention of the term *round robin reading* conjures up painful memories for countless readers. Students in my teacher preparation courses often recall unpleasant feelings associated with reading aloud in class. Teachers may want to shy away from oral reading for these reasons, yet research tells us that oral reading is an effective means of building reading proficiency (National Institute of Child Health, 2000), and many commonly used assessments include assessment of oral reading accuracy and fluency. In *Good-bye Round Robin*, authors Michael Opitz and Timothy Rasinski offer twenty-five strategies for oral reading that provide support for students, are engaging, and develop reading skills.

The text is user friendly. Information is often presented in list form, and summary charts make it easy for the reader to identify and locate individual strategies. The strategies are grouped into three main categories: those that develop comprehension, strategies that build fluency and prosody, and those specifically designed to support struggling readers. Additional chapters lay the groundwork for the role of oral reading in instruction, the use of oral reading as an assessment, and ways to involve parents in the process.

Strategies are presented in a consistent format throughout the text. Each strategy is described and step by step teaching directions are provided. Lists of suggested books to use with the strategy are included which and referenced by grade level. These lists have been updates to include selections published since the 1998 edition with additional titles offered in an appendix. In addition, stories of how a teacher used the strategy in his/her classroom are provided. These descriptions of authentic applications help readers envision how the strategy might be implemented in their own practice. Additionally, a final section offers extensions, tips, and connections that provide helpful information.

One of the most useful additions to this revised version can be found in the preface and should not be overlooked. With the increasing number of ELL students in American classrooms, teachers will find the section on oral reading with second language learners very useful. This information is summarized in an easy to read chart format. First, a chart is provided that describes the stages of language acquisition and the implications of each stage on oral reading. The twenty-five strategies are then coordinated with five stages, allowing teachers to select strategies that best match the current language proficiency level of their ELL students.

Assessing oral reading is much more than simply calculating accuracy and words per minute. In order for assessment to be meaningful and inform instruction, the authors provide a useful framework based on three questions: (1) What do I want to know? (2) Why do I want to know it? (3) How can I best discover it? (p. 86). The framework links assessment to theoretical underpinnings by asking teachers to consider not only what information they seek to obtain about students' oral reading, but why this information is important to reading proficiency. Thoughtful consideration of these guiding questions will assist teachers in selecting an oral reading assessment strategy aligned with their goals.

This concise volume provides valuable instructional support to in-service teachers. Novice teachers will find the format and jargon free language user- friendly. Unfamiliar strategies are described in sufficient detail that teachers with little experience should find them easy to implement. Veteran teachers may find little new in this text, but will still benefit from a reminder of a range of strategies that may not have been worked into their teaching repertoire. The summary charts are a time-saving tool in identifying a strategy to use for a particular instructional purpose.

Good-bye Round Robin is a useful reference that deserves a place in the library of any teacher of reading.

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Reviewed by Karen J. Kindle, Ed.D., Assistant Professor of Literacy and Reading Education, University of Missouri-Kansas City.

Portner, Hal (2008). *Mentoring New Teachers.* **Third edition. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press.**

Mentoring New Teachers is a text designed to support teachers who are already serving as mentors, and teachers who are interested in becoming mentors. The author intends to provide useful and practical tools for the mentor. The book contains a series of exercises and resources to develop a comprehensive mentoring program for school leaders. The ultimate goal is for the reader to construct his/her own understanding of what is an "effective mentor" and how to become effective. The book was easy to read. Having read other materials about mentoring, I found fresh ideas within these pages.

The author lays the foundation for the book by creating an initial awareness of the conditions that support the development of a mentoring program within a school. If there are a large number of new teachers entering the profession, supporting teachers through mentoring becomes a priority. Another consideration Portner cites is the increase in the rate of attrition among new teachers. This comes at a great cost to schools. Both elements are supported by the literature.

Portner contrasts the role of a mentor and an evaluator by saying that elements like trust and confidentiality are key elements present in mentoring. This places the mentor role as a collegial relationship with a new teacher, not as a performance evaluator. However, the mentor also can act as a performance evaluator who constructively gives feedback on the mentee's performance when requested.

Furthermore, experienced teachers grow from this mentoring experience and become accomplished mentors only by training and design. The author is realistic and notes that good intentions and teaching experience are not enough to do a good job as a mentor. To foster high quality mentoring there should be an intentional plan and formal guidelines.

The author organizes the major parts of the book on four functions and responsibilities of mentoring as a complex induction process; specifically he notes Relating, Assessing, Coaching, and Guiding. The text goes on to describe involvement in the teacher's induction process as the mentors primary role.

Relating refers to the importance of establishing trust with the mentee. Here Portner provides practical samples of exercises to build trust with the mentee, as well as exercises related to paying attention to thoughts and feelings to provide depth in the relationship.

In discussing Assessing the author provides samples of exercises regarding the possible scenarios of the mentee's particular needs such as different modes of communication, specific and generic needs of new and non-traditional teachers, and the use of learning style inventories. It conceptually situates the mentee as an individual with varied backgrounds and the role of the mentor in assessing those needs to successfully determine and anticipate the kind of support needed. In this regard, the preferred learning inventory adds to this chapter in providing a real tool for practitioners. However, the chapter lacks consideration of the concept of diversity and its role in the mentoring process. This is a significant oversight, particularly given the emphasis that contemporary educators place on diversity and its role in the educational process.

The third function focuses on Coaching behaviors that help the mentee to reflect on his/her behaviors to improve decision-making in the future and consequently the results of those decisions. Here the author helps the mentor with a series of stages to make classroom observations and post observations conferences effective; he clearly notes the importance of posing the right questions to guide the mentee.

The fourth function is about systematically Guiding the mentee to become a self-reliant practitioner less dependent on the mentor. At the same time, the author wants the mentor to determine the level of the mentee's motivation and his/her ability to address issues she/he may be experiencing. Portner talks about motivation as something that cannot be forced. Here the mentee has to be able to articulate his/her problems and share them with the mentor. The author offers options to help the moderately willing mentee, such as coaching strategies and relating strategies, but again he fails to address the concept of diversity among teachers and how it may impact the relationship. Diverse faculty present varied backgrounds and different perspectives. For example, in some cultures, if teachers share their daily challenges with other teachers, it may make them look unprepared or unprofessional. This is why attention to diversity is important here and why its lack is conspicuous

The book concludes by describing the legacy of being a mentor and tips and observations regarding the mentoring process, which includes Teacher Mentor Standards. Being a mentor provides an avenue for professional development where teachers take ownership of their professional growth. The standards provided are based on core propositions related to the Context, Content, Process, Adjustment, Collaboration, and Contribution to the education process.

It is undeniable that the book offers lots of useful resources to help new teachers in the profession and make effective the role of a mentor through a comprehensive mentoring program. It lacks help for teachers who already have had years of experience and come to work in a new school. Teachers who may have decided to move from the public sector to the private sector or vice-versa, or international teachers who have come to teach in an American school from another country may not benefit as much from this text. In addition, all the craft knowledge that these experienced teachers bring to a established school requires a more experienced mentor who has experience working with diverse groups.

Reviewed by Ruth P. Arias, 2nd Grade Teacher, Spanish Language Immersion, The International School.

Pransky, Ken (2008). *Beneath the Surface: The Hidden Realities of Teaching Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Young Learners K-6.* **Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.**

Beneath the Surface: The Hidden Realities of Teaching Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Young Learners K-6 clearly demonstrates author Ken PranskyÕs knowledge and understanding of, as well as sensitivity toward issues concerning how the titled student population learn. The book is relevant for language and content area teachers of K-6 English Language Learners (ELL), and possibly, more so, for teachers who come from dominant-culture groups but who teach students from culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) groups. At the outset, Pransky broadens the definition of who might be included in the CLD group. Commonly, these are students whose dominant or native language is one other than English and who have less than native fluency in English; however, Pransky recognizes and includes another type of student: one "whose dominant or first language is English as a second language or some combination of English and their parents' first language(s)"(p. xv). Pransky rightly argues that students in the latter group usually do not qualify for typical ELL services, but that in fact, they too are second language learners and may be needier of ELL services over the long term.

In the first three chapters, the author sets out a framework to guide discussion and reflection on CLD students' learning and their teachers' instruction. In Chapter 1, Pransky presents the CLD classroom as a cultural base for learning and learning itself as a cultural process. He gives due attention to the importance of acknowledging, validating, and using those expectations of teaching and learning which are culturally based. In Chapter 2, Pransky examines the nature of second language learning and the factors affecting it. He refers deftly to concepts that are common and important in bilingual education: the difference between basic interpersonal skills (BICS) in a language and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) needed to master content areas; the need for comprehensible input; teachers' use of sheltered instruction for ELL; the need to understand CLD students' "silent periods" and affective filters, etc. He raises the issue of language diversity as a step toward deconstructing classroom language and environment. This is a pertinent point, given the scope of validating and contrasting both the home language (even if it is ESL) and standard dialects. Pransky emphasizes here the importance of teachers themselves understanding English well, for example, knowing how to use instructional vocabulary appropriate for CLD students. Chapter 3 explores how CLD students learn. Pransky insists on teachers' setting clear academic goals and utilizing CLD students' prior knowledge of content area which, in fact, may be culturally defined. He points out the need to discriminate between quantity (the what of learning or the content material) and quality (the how and why of learning which includes cultural norms) in learning for CLD students. All of these concepts are applied in the following three chapters dealing primarily with teaching and learning reading and math in CLD classrooms.

The layout of the book is creative and consistent. In the first three chapters, the author raises relevant questions and answers them with guiding Principles, which are applied in the latter half of the book. The chapters begin with interesting anecdotes, which lead the reader into reflection on the issue under discussion. Pransky provides figures and tables to present information graphically and several "side-bar" elaborations of related concepts and resources. These definitely add to the overall appeal of the book.

Pransky's understanding of CLD learners and their classrooms is affirmed by his personal interaction and professional experience, together with research- based propositions. In order to further strengthen his definition of culturally and linguistically diverse young learners, he may consider corroborating it with current statistics, showing not only current numbers of such populations, but also their projected growth. Further, the author could illustrate, with examples, the typical language of the CLD student whose first/dominant language is a non-standard variety of English, and offer suggestions for teachers to confirm the place of all dialects in a linguistic community.

The author's honest, passionate, and knowledgeable voice throughout the book makes it appealing to all those who believe in a culturally, linguistically, and thereby, socially responsive approach to educating English Language Learners.

Reviewed by Jaya S. Goswami, Ph. D., Assistant Professor, Department of Bilingual Education, Texas A&M University-Kingsville, Kingsville, TX. E- mail: jaya.goswami@tamuk.edu

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Rozema, Robert & Webb, Allen (2008). *Literature and the Web: Reading and Responding with New Technologies.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Today's teenagers and young adults are web-savvy, of that there is no doubt. These learners often feel more at home while texting and blogging than they do while completing pen and paper tasks. How then, does an English teacher tackle the perhaps overwhelming challenge of using new online tools to reach and inspire these types of students? That is the question addressed by Robert Rozema and Allen Webb in their new book, *Literature and the Web: Reading and Responding with New Technologies.*

The authors, both English teachers, approach the challenge from the viewpoint of the educator. This person may be much less comfortable than today's students are in the use of these new technologies; he or she may also have limited resources or support for the choice to utilize the web in literature classes; he or she may simply sigh in frustration, saying, "There is so much out there! Where should I start?"

The book rests on the premise that by starting to use the authors' strategies to use the power of computers, over time, the web can become the teacher's "ally." It provides four paths that can help the teacher to guide students to find deeper meanings in what they are studying. It looks at how computer technologies can bring students into the "worlds" of the stories they are reading. It discusses the ways in which web resources can help students to develop the ability to read more

closely, by guiding them to make careful examinations of textual meaning. In addition, websites and discussion boards can also showcase the broader historical and social contexts of what the students are studying. Finally, the book touches on the possibilities of using tools such as podcasts and virtual reality sites to provide students with fun ways in which to respond to stories and poetry in a more personal way.

Literature and the Web: Reading and Responding with New Technologies is suitable for literature instructors at the secondary and tertiary levels, as well as for teacher educators who wish to inspire novice teachers to channel the power of the web in their own classrooms. Given the lengthy list of up-to- date online resources contained at the end of each chapter, teachers can use this book as a guide to consult for present-day tools throughout the academic year. They may also choose to research some of the new, up-and-coming technologies that the authors have noted. Even educators who have scarce computer resources should find the book useful, if they follow the tips provided for accommodating the applications for use in less ideal situations.

Reviewed by Mary Shaughnessy who works with student teachers at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario.

Rush, Leslie S., Eakle, A. Jonathan & Berger, Allen, Editors. (2007). *Secondary School Literacy: What Research Reveals for Classroom Practice.* **Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English..**

Pages: 323   Price: $38.95   ISBN: 978-0-8141-4293-6

With all the discussion in education and business circles about meeting the needs of students in the new millennium—particularly on the subject of literacy—it is important that teachers and administrators have resources that will assist them in making sound judgments regarding the types of literacy instruction students will need to meet the demands of a global society. This is relevant because adolescents who leave high school without the literacy skills needed to be successful in college or the workplace will lack opportunities that their literacy-skilled counterparts will have. *Secondary School Literacy: What Research Reveals for Classroom Practice* is a book for educators that will help them shape teaching and learning in the twenty-first century. The primary purpose of this book is to inform teachers and administrators about secondary literacy research and practice. Many of the chapters focus on the "new literacies" (p. xiv), which are discussed later in this review. They also include research-based practices that have a long history of effectiveness. Even though the volume is grounded in research and theory, the authors of each chapter have provided easy access to the information in user-friendly writing styles.

Secondary School Literacy: What Research Reveals for Classroom Practice is organized into 13 chapters including an introduction that outlines the history and purpose of the volume. In addition, the editors provide a brief synopsis of each of the chapters in the introduction to assist the reader in selecting chapters to read. The editors asked the authors to address two questions in their chapters: (a) What research findings are available in relation to aspects of secondary school literacy? (b) What do these findings mean for best practices in secondary school literacy? The book concludes with an epilogue by Eakle that points out the learning theorists, such as Vygotsky and Dewey, who have had an impact on literacy education in that they respectively promoted constructivist and inquiry-based learning as progressive forms of education. He also emphasizes the importance of taking literacy seriously in the digital age and paying particular attention to the multiple literacies that secondary students will negotiate in their complex world.

The editors are all vested in the topic of literacy education. Eakle is a teacher development and leadership assistant professor and the reading director at John Hopkins University. Rush is an English education adolescent literacy associate professor at the University of Wyoming. Berger was professor emeritus of reading and writing at Miami University. Their agenda in this volume is to promote secondary literacy best practices. The authors of each chapter are also well-known in secondary literacy. Pioneers in the field of secondary literacy, such as Donna Alvermann, Kathleen Hinchman, and Alfred Tatum, provide practices based on research they have conducted.

Many of the chapters' subjects are grounded in a Vygotskyan approach. Authors discuss the situated and sociocultural aspects of teaching adolescent literacy. For example, in Chapter 1, Alvermann and McClean highlight the work of Gee (1990) and Street (1984), and claim that literacy is a "social practice that varies across cultures and contexts" (p. 4). Alvermann and McClean advocate for participatory instruction, allowing for students to be active participants in their literacy learning by choosing relevant reading materials, monitoring progress on goals, and providing opportunities for discussions. They contend that this is important because literacy is not considered to be just in the form of text any longer. Artwork, digital texts, hypertext media, etc. are also attached to literacy learning. Their chapter illustrates "the impact of texts of all kinds (visual, print, digital, sound, multimodal, performance) on young people's identity-making practices and, especially, on how text mediates young people's perceptions of themselves as literate beings" (p. 15).

Hinchman's chapter, titled "I Want to Learn to Read Before I Graduate: How Sociocultural Research on Adolescents' Literacy Struggles Can Help Shape Classroom Practice," addresses the complexity of teenagers' lives and the social identities they weave into their literacy development. She believes teachers can provide instruction that allows students to "work in more familiar contexts" (p. 122), meaning topics that students are interested in and that show authenticity (real-world tasks) will enhance their literacy skills. Moje, Overby, Tysvaer, and Morris (2008) found similar results in a study they conducted that showed how students read texts that are embedded in social networks and how those social networks can possibly produce positive academic outcomes.

Likewise, Leander and Zacher in their chapter, "Literacy, Identity, and the Changing Social Spaces of Teaching and

Learning," focus on identity and how it is related to interactions in English classrooms. They conceive identity as an "individual or group's sense of self that is constructed through social interaction" (p. 138). For literacy learning, they believe that social practices within the classroom create identities. They take social identity construction a step further and build on Bakhtin's (1981) notion of "heteroglossia" or "multivoicedness." "This notion assumes language-in-use, or discourse, is always shaped by people who have used it in the past, by their purposes, and by their histories" (p. 140). This idea can be compared to Friere's (1970/1973) work in that he, too, believed that bringing people together through their histories and words could change people and their situation. The implications for this work are important for teachers because it challenges them to engage curriculum with students' real lives. In Gutierrez, Rymes, and Larson (1995), the students bring their literacies into a school context in which teachers engage these literacies in a "third space" which is not school nor student life, but a space where both come into contact that is not mutually exclusive. Thus, the power relations between student and teacher are modified and "authoritative voices are coming into contact with discourses that are more internally persuasive to the lives of youths" (p. 147). Leander and Zacher extend the idea of third space to out-of-school literacies, encouraging teachers to look beyond the school curriculum and allow students to bring in their home literacies and community literacies to engage in the concepts related to the curriculum. The implication of this they contend is that students will be more engaged in the content and in their learning. The more student engagement, the more successful students will be, especially students from marginalized groups.

Different contexts related to adolescent literacy are examined in Damico, Campano, and Harste's chapter, "From Contexts to Contextualizing and Recontextualizing: The Work of Teaching." They see students as cultural beings and workers who view reading as social and cultural work. They also consider students as complex literate beings who possess situated literacy skills. Like Alvermann and McClean, they believe that students should bring their outside literacies to school and teachers should recognize and embrace them. Finally, Damico et al. discuss linguistic contexts that teachers must recognize to meet the needs of diverse individuals who bring multiple cultural experiences to the classroom. The authors provide an example of a boy who is drawing a picture of a low-rider car. They claim that some teachers might dismiss this act as doodling, whereas, it might be "a sophisticated form of visual literacy that is intimately tied to youth culture and identity" (p. 203)

The editors include chapters that focus specifically on work with diverse literacy learners. Jimenez and Teague identify the academic, linguistic, and social needs of English language learners in the chapter "Legitimacy, Recognition, and Access to Language and Literacy: English Language Learners at the Secondary Level." They propose to bring attention to the large number of minority dropouts that lack literacy skills and what teachers and parents can do to provide students the skills and support needed to earn their diploma. They base their idea of "legitimacy" on the work of Bourdieu "who argued that only certain groups and their ways of speaking are granted respect and authority by society" (p. 165). Their concern is that ELLs are consolidated as one group, whereas, they come from an array of different experiences. "This generic outlook deprives students of legitimacy as individuals and strips them of their relevant cultural, linguistic, and social capital." In their literature review, Jimenez and Teague discuss educators and ELLs, the linguistic needs of ELL students, the importance of learning content, and a need for collaboration. They also discuss student needs and what the literature indicates about ELL parents and their contributions. The implications of Jimenez and Teague's study show educators that collaboration needs to occur among students, teachers, and parents so that ELL students can experience an equitable place within the school and within society where they are legitimate members.

In addition to ELL students needing extra literacy attention, Tatum introduces a somber view of African American males and their achievement in schools in his piece titled "Literacy Development of African American Adolescent Males." He illustrates the need for "meaningful reading/writing opportunities in classroom environments with high-quality literacy teaching [that] can lead to a constructive human transformation of the African American adolescent male" (p. 186). His concern is that too many students are not being challenged, especially in low-performing schools. He exemplifies this point by including a comparison of two ninth-grade assignments: one that is high level and one that is low level, emphasizing that African-American males need high-level instruction that is contextualized and paced appropriately to maintain their interest. The high-level assignment asks the students to write a comparison/contrast paper between Homer's epic poem, *The Odyssey* and the film *O Brother, Where Art Thou*. The low-level assignment places students in three groups. One group will design a brochure of places Odysseus visited, the second group will draw pictures of the adventure, and the third group will take the names of the characters and the gods and goddesses in the story and then design a crossword puzzle.

This topic is especially important because of the number of African American males who are not achieving in literacy compared to their Caucasian counterparts. If the educational system does not address the valid points and recommendations Tatum sets out, individuals—as well as society—will pay the price. Reaching out to all learners is not just a responsibility of educators, parents, and community members; it is a moral obligation to assure equitable treatment to all individuals in a democratic society so they can become productive citizens.

Other authors also provide practical and relevant practices in their chapters, e.g., "Adopting Reader and Writer Stances in Understanding and Producing Texts," by Beach and O'Brien and "Using Scaffolding in Teaching Core Literature," by Richison, Hernandez, and Carter. Beach and O'Brien discuss instructional strategies for engagement in purposeful classroom activities that involve socially-situated contexts. In their chapter on scaffolding, Richison, et al. highlight the importance of scaffolding, especially for ELL students. They provide instructional scaffolding practices, such as modeling, bridging, schema building, contextualization, metacognition, text representation, and verbal scaffolding. They also suggest materials to use for scaffolding and provide ideas for theme sets.

As a former high school English teacher and now a doctoral student with aspirations of becoming a secondary administrator who puts school-wide literacy at the top my educational agenda, this volume provides a framework grounded in research and theory for potential professional development opportunities and for teacher practice. The editors have selected a variety of

topics that mirror the demographics and the changing literacies of the twenty-first century. They have expanded on the recommendations that Biancarosa and Snow make in *Reading Next—A Vision for Action and Research in Middle School and High School Literacy* (2006). *Secondary School Literacy* also provides practices for teachers that align with sociocultural and situated approaches to instruction that are increasingly relevant for learners in today's world. Because students today are engaged in literacy learning that extends beyond the classroom, the editors have succeeded in bringing the subject of literacy learning and the many intricacies involved together in this book so that teachers and administrators can begin a dialogue of best literacy practices to reach all learners. This volume has added to the literature on adolescent literacy and ways to engage students in literacy practices that will allow them to graduate from high school with the literacy skills needed to be a successful in post-secondary life and in the workplace.

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Reviewed by Monica Zucker, a doctoral student at the University of Colorado Denver.

Serafini, Frank & Youngs, Suzette (2008). *More (Advanced) Lessons in Comprehension: Expanding Students' Understanding of All Types of Texts.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Pages: 183   Price: $22.50   ISBN: 978-0-325-01121-9

Good things happen when theory and practice come together. Such is the case where, Frank Serafini brings his theoretical and foundational knowledge together with the seasoned, practical knowledge of Suzette Youngs to write *More (Advanced) Lessons in Comprehension: Expanding Students' Understanding of All Types of Texts*. The result of this brother and sister collaboration is a sound theoretical, pedagogical and practical menu of possibilities to foster exploration and opportunities of teacher's thinking and instructional repertoire for developing student reading comprehension.

As they draw upon the work of Rosenblatt, Smith, Pearson, McCormick, Luke, and Scholes, the authors situate the reader with in the active, fluid nature of understanding and teaching reading comprehension. In this text reading comprehension is clearly viewed as a verb. The authors remind us that they have explicitly utilized the "plural meanings to suggest that the meanings constructed by readers are temporary, multiple, and open to revision" (p. 1).

Organized under eight strands Serafini and Youngs present the content lessons for the reading workshop:

1. Getting Beyond Traditional Responses to Literature
2. Expanding Interpretive Repertoires
3. Reconsidering Teacher Talk and Classroom Interactions
4. Reading Across Genres
5. Comprehending Novels and Extended Texts
6. Critical Reading in the Social Sciences
7. Comprehending Visual Images
8. Interpreting Texts Through Literary Theories

The overall framework of Serafini and Youngs' reflective view of working with student reading comprehension provides a foundational place for both new and seasoned teachers to develop and challenge students' comprehension in reading. Importantly, these authors remind teachers that these lessons are offered as starting points. Building upon many effective comprehension strategies these authors offer responsive adaptations, ways to expand lesson formats, and lists of children's literature and other applicable resources. Many teachers will appreciate the reflective nature of these lessons and will quickly recognize ways in which they may work in whole, or in part, to support their work in developing and fostering reading comprehension with their students. Teachers working alone or in collegial groups will find the conversational format of these lessons as places to answer back, see how their students might be challenged, identify instructional trajectories which fit with their students' needs and engage in a kind of reflective dialogue with the authors.

Serafini and Youngs prove that good things do result when years of theoretical knowledge and pedagogical knowledge are blended together and refined into an effective teacher resource. This resource, as Pearson noted in the introduction to a previous Serafini text (2004), continues Serafini's work of creating possibility and opportunity for both students and teachers alike. It is further extended beyond the text of the book's pages to his website, www.frankserafini.com. This book is a must have for teachers who want to continue to develop the reading workshop classroom experience for their students.

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Reviewed by Janice E. Blake, a doctoral student in Literacy Studies in the Department of Theory and Practice at The University of Tennessee.

Snyder, Kurt; Gur, Raquel E. & Andrews, Linda Wasmer (2007). *Me, Myself, and Them: A Firsthand Account of One Young Person's Experience with Schizophrenia.* **Oxford: Oxford University Press.**

Pages: 164   Price: $9.95   ISBN: 978-0-19-531122-8

Me, Myself, and Them by Kurt Snyder with Raquel E. Gur, M.D., P.H.D, and Linda Wasmer Andrews was created specifically to educate adolescents with schizophrenia about their disease, common misconceptions, and treatment through a series of real life accounts and medical facts. This book is part of a series from the Adolescent Mental Health Initiative created by the Annenberg Foundation which is striving to inform young people diagnosed mental illness that there is hope and many treatment options to alleviate symptoms. In this title, the collaboration of authors, which includes one who lives with the disease, a professor of psychiatry, neurology, and radiology, and a freelance health and psychology writer, results in a personal account that provides an in-depth understanding of the symptomology and many faces of schizophrenia. The outcome is a life story that detail the debilitating challenges and effective treatment and life-style strategies that will bring both respect for the severity of the symptoms and optimism to readers who are having the experience as well as family members and friends. Because the overarching message of this easy read is hope in spite of a diagnosis that is typically assumed to be completely debilitating, I believe that undergraduate and beginning graduate level trainees in mental health professions would benefit from having this book as an important casebook in their libraries. This is also a must-read for high school counseling staff and university student affairs staff responsible for freshmen orientation given the unique stressors associated with transition from high school to college and/or the world of work which may serve as triggers for the onset of this serious, mental health diagnosis.

The book primarily focuses on the life story of the author Kurt Snyder and his experience with the disease, schizophrenia. Snyder is currently a database administrator for the state of Maryland and President of his local volunteer fire department. His current life represents the best of the good news for those who experience schizophrenia directly or indirectly. Snyder, who wasn't correctly diagnosed with schizophrenia until years after the onset of the first symptoms, writes a first person account of his experience over a 14-year period, which began with his transition from high school to college. The crux of the content is a story depicting psychological episodes and his persisting struggle to discern reality from the "story-line" of paranoid ideation that his mind created. Snyder's descriptions starkly portray the slow and creeping way schizophrenia entered his life as an uneasy anxiety and progressed to acute paranoia and memory loss with full-blown psychotic episodes. Readers are pulled into the initially isolated and frightening world of his disorder. The story ends on a road to increased self-awareness, heightened cognizance of the importance of self-care, and eventual recovery.

The storyline is further enriched through the infusion of mini-stories that show the multi-faceted nature of the disease through cases having subtly different presentations of the standard symptoms. The glossary defines important terms and phrases to help readers understand communication with professionals and assist them in the use of appropriate language in constructing questions about assessment, treatment, and service delivery. The content provides descriptions of life experiences are written in language that is an easy-to-read with a step-by-step guide to understanding how the disease "feels," the types of schizophrenia (for example: Paranoid, Disorganized, Catatonic), the symptoms associated with it (such as delusions, hallucinations, disorganized thoughts and speech, disorganized behavior, catatonic behavior, flat affect, alogia, avolition, and anhedonia), the most effective professional treatment (perhaps including psychological an behavior therapy, hospitalization, antipsychotic medication, psychosocial rehabilitation programs) and relevant self-management skills (including talk about problems, alter how "change" is perceived, exercise, relaxation).

The book is a must-read for not only high school students, but also novice mental health professionals and other members of the general populace who wish to better understand the schizophrenia. After reading this book, high school counseling staff and university student affairs orientation staff will be cognizant of the importance of providing more comprehensive guidance to all students as they move toward the major developmental shift from late adolescence to early adulthood. Parents and students will be more aware of normal transition experiences and resources to assist them when the experiences become debilitating or create major, negative, changes in personality and interpersonal relationships. This book undermines the unsubstantiated beliefs that are the underpinnings of the stigma too often attached to schizophrenia. Instead, the authors' stories reinforce the concept of not only surviving the disease, but the hope of thriving toward optimal levels of life success in spite of the diagnosis.

Although the book is highly recommended as a means to gather insight about schizophrenia and is to be considered an

excellent casebook, there are some limitations to be considered. The content shifts back and forth between a poignant life story description and the presentation of the basic literature addressing the disease without explanation. With the special client cases and additional resource information highlighted in gray boxes periodically intermingled within the sudden shifts in focus, the content flow is not always easy to follow or integrate. The inserted drawings and artwork may or may not provide readers with some sense of the perceptual distortions that are associated with those with the disease; there is no narrative to describe the artists. The ambiguity of the artwork's association with schizophrenia (p. 78a), raises questions about the authors' reason for its inclusion in this text. In addition, the authors chose to insert schizoaffective disorder (p. 16) as a point to consider, when this diagnosis is distinctively different from schizophrenia and its discussion here may lead readers to believe otherwise. The rationale for the organization is clearly indicated in the chapter titles; however, readers must be cautioned to anticipate the necessary transitions in thinking to integrate the information provided.

Reviewed by Robbie Steward professor and Director of the MA Counseling Program, and Astin D. Steward, a student affairs staff member (athletic coach) at Manchester College in North Manchester, IN.

Stover, Lois Thomas (2007). *Teaching the Selected Works of Katherine Paterson.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Pages: 87   Price: $15.00   ISBN: 978-0-325-00791-5

It has been years since I read *Bridge to Terabithia*, Katherine Paterson's Newbery Award winning novel for children and young adults. Yet, I found myself crying as I read Lois Stover's description of the book and its themes. Such is the power of this novel to evoke strong emotion in its readers. This is some of what Stover tries to address in her new book, *Teaching the Selected Works of Katherine Paterson*. She argues that many teachers know the book, but fear teaching it because of its powerful and emotional content (given the weeping that I was doing just reading a book about the book, I have to admit I would teach this book with a certain amount of anxiety). Yet, according to Stover, there is so much of value in what Paterson has written, *Bridge to Terabithia* in particular, but other books as well, that teachers must be given the support and resources they need to confidently tackle this work with their students. Providing such support is what Stover sets out to do in her book.

The book is short, but Stover manages to cover a fair size bit of territory. She begins with her own history and longtime interest in the works of Katherine Paterson. Following the introductory/overview chapter, Stover devotes four chapters to four different topics: teaching *Bridge to Terabithia;* using an array of Paterson's novels in a literature circles project; a father-son book group's reading of one Paterson novel; and looking at the genre of historical fiction (within the larger context of American Literature) through two Paterson novels.

This book succeeds on many levels, just a few of which I want to mention here. First, I appreciate how practical it is. Whether you are a middle/high school classroom teacher or a teacher educator, this book has much to offer. In the chapter devoted to discussion of *Bridge to Terabithia*, Stover provides a great deal of information about how she uses the book with preservice teachers in a course focused on Children's and Young Adult Literature. Her goal is to equip them to feel comfortable teaching this book in their own classrooms. It is clear from reading this chapter that, as a teacher educator, Stover believes in the pedagogical practice of modeling the strategies and activities that she wants her preservice candidates to in turn use with their own students. Second, while much of what she offers are strategies specifically designed for *Bridge to Terabithia*, some of the activities could certainly be used with other books, even beyond those of Paterson, making this an even more useful resource.

Third, I really appreciate how honest Stover is about the challenges teachers face as they try to integrate quality works of literature into their classroom practice. Stover acknowledges that this is an increasingly hard thing to do, particularly in the chapter in which she documents the work of two teachers engaging their students in literature circles which have them reading various Paterson novels. More and more state and national assessment programs are putting pressures on schools, which in turn are mandating teachers' curricular and instructional choices. Yet, the teachers Stover profiles persist in finding a way to weave both the instructional practice of literature circles, and the particular Paterson titles they want to use into their classrooms. Stover celebrates their efforts as well as the outcomes for students, emphasizing how valuable it is to engage students with quality literature in these ways, even if it does take extra effort and is accompanied by the typical problems teachers face when they try new things.

Finally, woven throughout the entire book are excerpts from speeches Katherine Paterson has delivered and autobiographical pieces she has written. I read these with interest as throughout the book, Stover spends time talking not just about the books Paterson wrote, but about her life and how who she was as a person influenced her writing. It was not until I was near the end of the book that I had an "aha" moment, and realized that it was much more than a book to support teachers in their efforts to teach Paterson's novels. This book is also a tribute to Katherine Paterson as an author *and* as a person, and to the overall contribution she has made to several generations of readers. For me, this realization made an already enjoyable book that much more of a pleasure to read.

Reviewed by Clarissa Thompson, an assistant professor in the Department of Secondary and Middle Education at the University of Maine at Farmington, where she teaches English/Language Arts Methods and Content Literacy courses.