



Brief Reviews for August 2010

Adelman, Howard S., & Taylor, Linda. (2010). *Mental Health in Schools: Engaging Learners, Preventing Problems, and Improving Schools*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Pages: 310 ISBN: 978-1-4129-7538-4

In *Mental Health in Schools: Engaging Learners, Preventing Problems, and Improving Schools*, Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor take on an issue of great import, and succeed in tackling it thoroughly. Regardless of whether or not the reader agrees with the premise of this book – that mental health care should be integrated into school systems in order to give children (and thus society) a better (psychological, social, and academic) future – one cannot deny that the authors make a strong case for their contentions, and provide solid support for their premise.

Adelman and Taylor argue that schools are primary resources for the overall well-being of our children and not simply edifices to which we send children to learn the 3 R's. However, the authors also recognize that the responsibility of providing mental health care to children cannot and should not lay solely on the school systems, and even that such care cannot be optimized without the support of the community. As such, the authors offer this book as a solid resource that provides relatively specific suggestions and strategies on how community members and education administrators can successfully integrate a mental health agenda into the schools.

Even as early on as in the title of this book, the authors make clear that the most successful, and certainly the most comprehensive, approach to students' mental health may in fact be a tripartite approach. Throughout the book, Adelman and Taylor describe each of these three prongs in detail, including suggestions about how we as a society – and individually as parents, teachers, administrators, etc – can go about solving these problems for our children and for their children. In particular, the authors open readers' eyes to the fact that improved academic performance is oftentimes a natural outgrowth of tending to students' mental health needs. Thus, they indicate that the two are intertwined; thereby preempting any criticism that such psychological care is outside the realm of the schools.

The book is written in an appealing format that is easy to follow. The text is organized logically and

is periodically interspersed with sketches of particular situations or encounters in the educational system to which many readers should be able to relate. While one might initially think that such sketches may add unnecessary – and in fact inappropriate – levity to the nature of the text, they are in fact so tastefully and skillfully done that they manage to express entire educational sentiments or problems in one or two sentences of interaction between two characters. Many of us have seen these situations time and time again, and can readily relate.

The text is also further supported by logical and clear graphics, flow charts, and diagrams about appropriate strategies. The authors consistently raise thought-provoking questions and concerns, followed by discussion of possible solutions or plans. In combination, these two strategies ensure that the reader is actively engaged in the book and can visualize the process through which schools can design and implement such plans, and can readily consider how a variety of strategies may (or may not) work for their own school system.

Adelman and Taylor should also be commended for their apparent genuine mission to provide the reader with as much information and as many resources as possible on this issue. Unlike some authors who seem to believe that their book is a stand-alone, be-all-and-end-all reference for readers, Adelman and Taylor provide readers with references for further reading which might be of use to readers.

Despite the authors' acknowledgement that other resources are available on the subject, this book appears to be the culmination of many years of research in this area by both Adelman and Taylor. A quick scan of the journal-based literature in the area reveals many such articles by the two. It can reasonably be assumed that each of these articles is a more in-depth examination of the issue at hand, as each is more targeted at specific elements of the issue. However, this book gives the reader a solid overarching understanding of such material in one convenient and easy-to-read location.

Ideal for the educational administrator or even for the concerned parent looking to motivate a school system, this book is written clearly enough to be both understandable and useful to the layperson, while also providing much of the sustenance that might be required by readers more in touch with the educational system. Further, it even provides suggestions as to how policy-makers can keep this ever-important issue in mind, and how their actions – whether by laws or standards themselves, or by further supporting research in this area – can indeed lead to large-scale changes for schools, and ultimately for students.

Nevertheless, one area in which the book seemed to be lacking was in regard to a discussion of the history of mental health in school systems. While a short section does indeed touch upon this subject, I felt it warranted a deeper review. At the very least, I would have liked to have seen it go further back in history, given that society has been formally schooling children for hundreds of years – and that issues of mental health, while subverted and overlooked for some time, also have more of an extensive history than is covered in this book. Such coverage seems warranted because, as the ever-popular saying goes, we cannot move forward without looking toward the past to recount the errors of our ways, and using them to guide us in our future plans. However, while I do feel as though this issue could have been more comprehensively covered, one could also easily argue that it

is less important to cover the past than the future plans.

In essence, this book can be seen not only as an instructional manual of sorts, but also as a “call to action,” for those of us involved in educating society’s youth, and for those of us interested in further supporting a solid foundation upon which these children can grow into flourishing and successful adults. It certainly provides any reader with a solid foundation for both knowledge in the subject matter, and also sufficiently guides the reader in his or her action plans of change. The authors should be commended for their efforts, and educational administrators should be advised to read this book, taking from it strategies and plans to suit their own students and district.

Reviewed by Maura J. Mills, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Psychology at Hofstra University in Hempstead, New York.



Armstrong, Denise E. (2009). *Administrative Passages: Navigating the Transition from Teacher to Assistant Principal*. Dordrecht, NY: Springer.

Pages: 151 ISBN: 978-1-4020-5268-2

Denise Armstrong has been able to bring together, in a highly readable way, recent insights of successful leadership within the role of vice-principal. The term vice-principal is common in Canada yet has been changed to assistant principal in order to, I believe, relate to an international audience. *Administrative Passages* begins with a foreword by Professor W. D. Greenfield and follows with a functional preface that includes the traditional overview, book focus, and structure and organization which sets the reader up for the introduction and various perspectives on transitioning from the classroom to the role of administrator. The framework and orientation is well-designed and brings out key points. The writing strategy which is authentic, and grounded in the literature of our era. This material will pique the reader’s curiosity and tap into the reader’s pre-understanding of administration.

My highlighter pen became active as I read through the material on understanding administrative passages which touched on the socioeconomic, political, and cultural factors impacting change, such as large scale government reforms which have been ongoing in Ontario for the past 20 years (Majhanovich, 2002). One lasting memory of this reformation continues to be the school board consolidations which erased the identity of many regions such as the Muskoka Board of Education, as three Boards came together to form one new one over a vast geographical area. This reduced top administration but strained and alienated many educators who now had to oversee jurisdictions where they had little insight. Within a few pages, Armstrong proceeds to cover teacher union contact amendments, shifting social and economic climates and demographics which made the assistant principal’s position less attractive in Ontario as they could no longer remain connected to the powerful teacher unions and instead were directed by government to form their own organization

with few members and an uncertain future.

This text is about a transition from one level (teacher) to another (administrator) and how this impacts the person within the role of assistant principal and how the role can be viewed in many ways. For instance, Armstrong (2009) notes,

A large part of the adjustment challenges that new assistant principals experience can be directly traced to the fact the assistant principalship role lacks clear professional boundaries and policy definitions unprepared for the amorphous nature of their new administrative role and the variety of conflicting expectations and tasks that surround it. Newcomers experience the assistant principalship as mentally and physically challenging, and many have difficulty adjusting (p. 5).

The role is quite frankly portrayed much like an ambush complete with physical, mental and spiritual challenges as the new assistant joins the front lines of education and leaves the enclosed protected area of the classroom. Armstrong adds, “their middle management status also positions them . . . where they are more publically visible and accountable to the whole community” (p. 6). This text illuminates a void and puts forward a viewpoint on administrative practice which is often lacking in many current books. The text depicts the socio-emotional expedition from classroom to the office via the perspectives of eight recently selected secondary school assistant principals. The copious citations anchor the assertions within the literature and provide credibility to the words and insights. For example, “assistant principals . . . are portrayed as antiheroes, e.g., bad cops, hatchet men, and/or firefighters, although they fulfill a wide range of instructional leadership and personnel management roles that are integral to daily school operations (Kwan & Walker, 2008; Olson, 2000; Simpson, 2000)” (p. 7).

Part one sets the stage delving into psychological, sociological and transitional research that relates to the progression of a teacher from the classroom to the office of a school. The pages dealing with transition point out that each stage can be labelled, identified, examined and discussed. Armstrong has both citation depth from the early 70’s and breadth in describing the transitioning. Later in the first section all of the emotional turmoil is presented one emotion at a time via two pages of detailed, well supported narrative accounts. One such emotion is anger:

The second stage occurs when new administrators’ and teachers’ opinions differ. Anger surfaces as a result of these conflicts and it may be accompanied by the blaming of others. New administrators often use anger as a way of masking the fear and sadness that they feel (p. 20).

The phenomenology of the human transition is captured by addressing the authentic emotions that all of us experience from time to time. It is as if a new porthole into the personal domain of the educator is revealed using emotional content as a conduit. This links role-taking and -making as material to illustrate commonplaces that the reader may have experienced. The book is refreshing as each line of text is chock-full of common sense and authenticity that makes the reading highly rewarding and agreeable.

The text gives the perspectives of eight recently selected secondary school assistant principals. The reader is informed that the best way to examine this assistant principal role is via narrative research. The narratives unwrap in Part II of the book via quotes from such scholars as Clandinin and Connelly, Goffman, Radnor, Meijers and Young and Collin. The stories are rather short at just four or five pages yet this is also strength as the reader is propelled from one lived experience to another as if free samples were being handed out at a community event. For instance, Michael's narrative within a 1600 student, 100 teacher large suburban school was that of a reluctant leader, whose assumption of the position revealed the inherent weak structure of the promotion process,

because of poor communication between superintendents, his name was omitted from the official promotion list that was published by the school district. Additional confusion was also created by his inability to get concrete information from the sending and receiving superintendent or his principal regarding his new placement (p. 33).

This part of the story is then followed by an excerpt from an interview to add both credibility and evidence to the point being made which enhances the quality of the text. Further along in Michael's story we are told "he connected some of these negative incidents to some of the staff's comments about his youth and minority status and as a result, he felt additional pressure to prove himself" (p. 34). Still later we are told "he used the analogy of a tornado to capture the turbulence of his transition experiences" (p. 34). Education can often morph into an unfamiliar backdrop of illogicality and emotion especially when common sense is wanting and political decisions fall from above as is the case when directors, superintendents and principals act autocratically with abundant individualism. The wedge of middle management, which is what an assistant principal is, surfaces often in the text.

Generally all the stories come from large suburban schools. Hence the facts can blend and be synthesized, as the stories reveal concealed restrictions and rituals described as "paradoxical" (p. 44). The realism in the lines of text is what educators look for however; there is a need to see some positives as the book is very dark in places. Karen's narrative "described long days which were consumed by paperwork and problem solving and evenings which were dedicated to reading emails at home" (p. 47). To be fair, most assistant principals became positive about some aspects of their job eventually and yet many had "reservations about the possibility of effecting change due to the size of her school and on-going issues" (p. 47). As the reader leaves chapter three and turns to the next chapter the book returns to more theory charting the administrative passage.

Most "new administrators experience separation rites, such as shunning and polite silences from former colleagues when the promotion is made public" (p. 55). Unwanted "humour tests that humiliate new administrators . . . first school assembly . . . first suspension . . . and dealing with criticism from different community stakeholders" (p. 55), shape administrators' newly formed work lives in profound ways. Armstrong lays out the stakeholders both visually within figure 4.1 and in text suggesting that all stakeholders, such as the community, the Board, other teachers and administrators and students lean on the new assistant principals. The new assistant principals may feel they are working deep under water with its extreme pressure and darkness impairing vision.

Chapter five deals with the first region of the epicycle entitled “Entry-Exit” and the reader is introduced to reasons for becoming an assistant principal. The trail is described as a spiraling pathway made up of surprising twists and turns. Anyone who has covered this path knows just how true this is and those who have yet to will be able to incorporate this into their pre-understanding of the process. The path, we are told, has “threshold rights” which amount to the construction of sociograms that link you, the potential administrator, to key people who can ‘tap you on the shoulder’ and provide key information. GASing we are told is “Getting the Attention of Superiors,” (p. 68) something we see happening in staff meetings and school events. Much of the latter half of chapter five is full of snippets of personal stories from the eight narratives where candidates followed a trail that was unique to them. Some were rejected many times before getting the call and one suggested “she was disenchanted by the cronyism on the part of senior officers who contradicted her district’s espoused commitment to equitable hiring practices” (p. 72).

The conceptual framework of epicycles is further explained in the section entitled “Immersion-Emmersion,” as the emotional and cognitive upheaval is described as an illness or infection that changes your perception of life. Perhaps Armstrong is providing an analogy here and not something unique within the transition. Such an illness may require isolation to ensure others do not become infected and yet this is how the assistant principals often report feeling, as though they have been isolated. It is a case of “narrow delineation of physical and social boundaries further reducing the newcomer’s sphere of interaction and increased their feelings of loss and isolation” p. (82).

The role of assistant principal is multifaceted as they become all things to all people and “are pressured to be planners, problem solvers, mediators, and buffers between a wide range organizational stakeholders inside and outside the school” (p. 85). This really seems no different than a teacher, however not all teachers are created from one mould or assigned to modest roles. Still, it is administration that deals first hand with bomb threats, chemical leaks, drug abuse and the like. We are told that the role is stressful, physically and mentally and most people who have any understanding of the role are in for a surprise. The new assistant principal needs to let go of the past and build a new present and future while balancing the negatives and positives. Armstrong concludes,

Over time, these ongoing conflicts and dilemmas, combined with the realization that their teaching pathway was closed, pushed the assistant principals deeper into the disintegration cycle, and they reported having to reach inward in order to determine how they could accommodate to their role (p. 94).

The usefulness of this candour is that it is real, authentic and cautionary for those either deep in the role or pondering a flight down this pathway. It is a useful text full of honest narratives from real people who have found their way not only up the ladder but forward. Forward is the last part of the book. It is a menu of what to study and how to learn from the existing literature. The reader encounters themes of change, reconceptualising, transitioning, reconfiguring, support, and recommendation. From within this last chapter the reader can enter self-study and locate practical resources to move forward. The text is a tool that can be used repeatedly as the landscape changes overtly and covertly within the individual reader. For some this journey is a mere dream at present yet

with this book and its resources a person can skilfully turn onto the assistant principal pathway and in times of uncertainty look within this book for evidence that confirms and labels what they are sensing.

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Reviewed by Thomas G. Ryan, Associate Professor, Nipissing University.



Balzer, William K. (2010). *Lean Higher Education: Increasing the Value and Performance of University Processes*. New York, NY: Productivity Press.

Pages: 292 ISBN 978-1-4398146-5-9

William Balzer's *Lean Higher Education: Increasing the Value and Performance of University Processes* provides insight into how institutions of higher education are able to employ Lean techniques to decrease the number of non value-added processes in order to better serve students and other key stakeholders. The Lean approach is described "as a carefully designed and highly successful system for organizational change and improvement that incorporates organizational culture, guiding principles, and a practical set of methods and tools" (p.13). The techniques discussed in this book are capable of increasing the productivity of processes while decreasing unnecessary and costly steps during this time of decreased economic resources and increased student enrollment. Balzer provides

frameworks for implementing the Lean process, originally designed by Toyota to help make production processes more efficient, in higher education settings.

Lean Higher Education (LHE) reinforces the importance of defining the value of organizational processes from the beneficiaries' perspective. Balzer designed this book to help administrators understand how to identify steps of the processes that do not directly impact the beneficiaries' needs. These unnecessary and usually costly steps are referred to as waste. Waste that exists in most systems causes frustration for all individuals involved, especially the individuals who are meant to benefit from the system. When the Lean process is used to remove waste from the system the beneficiaries are more satisfied with the process, and the providers, workers, expend less time and energy to produce better results. Balzer introduces the systematic Lean process in a clear and concise manner using many relevant implementation examples that are applicable to common higher education processes.

Chapter one provides a rationale for eliminating waste in systems of higher education through a discussion of three scenarios in which the reader can clearly identify waste from the beneficiaries' perspective. The chapter continues to discuss how implementing Lean principals in higher education can have an institution-wide impact and radically change processes to become more efficient where each step adds value to the process.

Balzer uses a case study to introduce the process of applying Lean principles through a detailed description of a hypothetical freshman move-in day. This case study provides the reader with a clear picture of how Lean principles work to improve a process within higher education. Chapter three, "Proof of Concept: Examples of the Successful Application of LHE," expands the number of examples used to highlight successful applications of LHE at institutions of higher education. This chapter includes snapshots of the processes that several schools were attempting to improve. It also provides a report on how the implementation of LHE principles improved varying parts of the process. These two chapters helped to prepare the reader for Chapters four through eight which break down each of the steps in LHE. Balzer relies on the reader's knowledge of the examples discussed in chapters two and three to bring together the more compact information in the subsequent chapters.

Chapters four through eight provide a detailed discussion of each LHE implementation steps. These chapters begin with providing the reader with ways to know when and how to launch an LHE initiative and guide the reader through the execution phase of each of the steps. In these chapters Balzer emphasizes the necessity of viewing the process from the beneficiaries' perspective. If a step in the current process does not provide value to the beneficiary of the process then it is waste and needs to be eliminated. Balzer discusses the need for a well documented map of the current state of the process a number of times over these chapters. According to Balzer the current state map provides plentiful information such as the "... flow of activity through the process, flow of information that supports the process, common visual format for representing the steps, activities and flow of the process, and listing of performance metrics identified as important for evaluating the process." (p. 158) These chapters provide the reader with the substance of the book by walking the reader through the Lean process in a step-by-step manner.

In the closing chapter, Balzer reviews the emphasizing points of the book. The author then presents and discusses challenges that present themselves during implementation of the LHE process. Balzer also provides the reader with directions on how to navigate through some of the more complicated decisions.

Lean Higher Education was thoughtfully organized to provide maximum benefit to the reader, much like the LHE process that is discussed. Balzer effectively uses graphs, tables, and diagrams to explain important concepts. The examples that are offered in chapters one through three are referred to during the more detailed process chapters later in the book which provides the reader with a firm understanding of how to implement the LHE steps in a real-life situation. Overall LHE provides an in-depth and relevant introduction to applying lean principles in higher education.

Upon reading *Lean Higher Education*, the reader should be able to identify waste within a process and be comfortable applying the Lean frameworks to rid the system of said waste and improve the flow of processes. The resulting system will allow all employees to be more efficient at serving those who benefit from the process, and producing outcomes more tightly aligned to the mission of the organization.

Reviewed by Erin T. LeGrand, Human Resource Development Instructor Catawba Valley Community College in North Carolina. She is also an Ed.D. student at North Carolina State University.



Calabrese, Raymond L. (2009). *The Dissertation Desk Reference: The Doctoral Student's Manual to Writing the Dissertation*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Education.

Pages: 187 ISBN 978-1-60709-473-9

The Dissertation Desk Reference, by Raymond L. Calabrese, is a reference handbook for writing a doctoral dissertation. Written in a dictionary-style format, it explains the 150 components of a dissertation that are most consistently used by students when writing a dissertation.

Calabrese, a professor of educational administration and higher education at the School of Educational Policy and Leadership at Ohio State University, is the author of eight books. He pens this new book as a follow-up to his 2006 book, *The Elements of an Effective Dissertation and Thesis: A Step-by-Step Guide to Getting it Right the First Time*. Calabrese acknowledges in the introduction that his new book was written in response to the question, "What is the next phase beyond *The Elements of an*

Effective Dissertation that would simplify the dissertation-writing process?” (p. x). His previous book provided a systematic approach for completing an effective doctoral dissertation or a master’s thesis, while this new volume simplifies the dissertation writing process by providing a quick reference for the various dissertation components.

The Dissertation Desk Reference separates the different components/terms of the dissertation (e.g., introduction, data collection, literature review) and arranges them alphabetically as individual entries. Calabrese provides a clear explanation of each component followed by a note specifying the dissertation chapter that usually contains that term. For the purpose of putting these terms in the context of an actual dissertation, he cites an example for each of these components directly from a dissertation. In addition to the explanations and examples, there is also a checklist provided about what should be included within each of these components. Throughout the book, the author cites various concepts and ideas of other researchers to support his explanations.

In a dissertation, the components may be identified by a number of alternate terms (e.g., resume or vita/vitae). The author tackles this issue by including all the terms in the book, defining one of them, and then directing readers to the other terms related to the defined entry. Since the background of the author is in education, most of the examples in the book are from this field. Nevertheless, they are effective in providing a general idea about each of the terms. The book is very user-friendly and helps doctoral students in organizing their thoughts and research into a written document.

The components considered in this book are based on traditional five-chapter dissertation format as did the author’s previous book. Students and faculty advisors can use this framework initially for guidance and then alter it, if necessary, according to their own dissertation requirements.

The explanation of desired terms are organized alphabetically making them convenient to find. However, the absence of a comprehensive glossary of all the terms makes it difficult to locate a term if the reader doesn’t know the exact one he or she is seeking. Also, the term “Chapter” has a useful list of all the sub-sections within each of the five chapters, but it gets lost as a part of the letter “C” entries. Providing such information upfront just after the introduction chapter would have been a more effective strategy, since that section could have then acted as a search guide for students.

Overall, *The Dissertation Desk Reference* serves as a very helpful, comprehensive guide for the terms that are used in dissertation research. Calabrese has provided us with a book that should find its place in the personal libraries of every faculty adviser and doctoral student.

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Reviewed by Sagar M. Shah, a doctoral student at University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH.

Folbre, Nancy. (2010). *Saving State U: Why We Must Fix Public Higher Education*. New York: The New Press.

Pp. 193 ISBN 978-1-59558-065-8.

When Nancy Folbre speaks about the urgent need for the United States to reaffirm its commitment to public higher education, she writes not only as a first-rate nationally known economist and consultant to the United Nations and World Bank, but more importantly from her extensive first-hand experience as an economics professor at the state University of Massachusetts at Amherst for the last twenty-eight years. Substantiating her position with extensive statistics and references from a variety of fields, Folbre argues convincingly in this slim volume that "saving public higher education can help us sustain the social contract on which a competitive market economy must be based" (p. 1). Her sober depiction of the wide-ranging societal and economic consequences of our divestment in public higher education is all the more urgent, as she points out, in our current precarious environment of emaciated state budgets, rising tuition costs and faculty furloughs, where public higher education has seemingly become discretionary and confidence in the very notion of commonwealth appears shaken. By laying bare many of the facts, ironies and intricacies of current educational policies and practices at public and private institutions on the state, federal and, to some extent, global levels, this book not only provides educators, consumers and taxpayers much deeper insight into the plight of higher education, but also underscores the profound significance of creating human capital and the personal benefit inherent in supporting collective gain.

Folbre points out that producing more knowledgeable citizens is not only intrinsically worthwhile, but is also extremely cost-effective. Not only are university graduates healthier, more politically engaged citizens, who make better parents, are more likely to volunteer, less inclined to be incarcerated and more inclined to stay in stable marital relationships; as higher wage earners, they ensure a more competitive national economy and higher gross national product. This study explores why, despite these significant social and economic benefits, public higher education today does not enjoy the kind of support it had in its heyday during the Progressive Era (1890-1920). Investments in public higher education continued to gain momentum for decades after the creation of state land grant universities, whose missions supported local economies and agriculture. Steady economic growth and increased tax revenues in the prosperous 60s and early 70s boosted education budgets and provided more financial aid to lower-income students, while the civil rights movement, the GI bill and Pell grants assured fairer access and more diverse student bodies. Folbre expresses nostalgia for this era of generous funding and broader cognizance of the value of higher education, a time when "state universities were considered noble and grand" (p. 42), one she aptly contrasts with our current situation where politicians who raise taxes are punished at the polls. Squeezed by slow growth of the 80s and 90s and looming deficits from tax cuts, states are now even further burdened by expensive federal mandates, such as No Child Left Behind, Homeland Security, stiffer prison sentences and the costly monitoring of voting machines - a cost shift to the states of approximately \$100 billion between 2003-07.

The resulting divestment in higher education, according to Folbre, has not only diminished international stature and left huge neighborhood problems, it has also further widened social gaps

and increased inequality as well. The financial aid system, originally created to encourage upward mobility, no longer works as intended, and, in fact, along with the decline in need-based aid, often exacerbates economic segregation. Despite their higher price tags, private colleges are now often, ironically a better deal than less-costly publics, since their students can receive support both from public financial aid as well as from their tax-free endowments. Taxpayers have been subsidizing private schools by contributing student aid packages and exempting their income from taxation much like charities. For-profit student loans, like those in the sub-prime mortgage market, also made large profits off these lower-income students. Such dynamics have contributed to the conspicuous underrepresentation of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds on campuses and perpetuated an educational elite.

Folbre also questions the efficacy of applying the "business model" to educational institutions, which gained popularity in 2003. Adopting the notion of producing and maximizing profit meant expanding academic departments' missions to include cutting costs and increasing revenues. However, as Folbre points out, questions of human motivation and quality control function differently in educational settings, where the consumers are also the producers and where the correlation between numbers of customers and quality of product is misleading. Students are not like an inferior shipment of blueberries we can ship back (p. 103). Cost cutting strategies in education, such as heavier reliance on ad hoc faculty and the creation of commercial colleges and for-profit diploma mills, often lower quality; but unlike in industry, which produces visible products consumers can measure, such diminished standards go largely unnoticed or are even encouraged by the consumer. Even when quality controls are put in place, these safeguards have mostly encouraged perverse disincentives, teaching to the test or pandering to student evaluations. The business model drives costs up further by excessive spending on branding and marketing slogans, designed to attract more customers in order to increase the ratio of admitted to rejected applicants and thus improve the school's ranking. Advocates maintain that professors are not correctly incentivized to increase productivity, that is, they are not sufficiently motivated to improve outputs, since they are paid regardless of their outcomes. Folbre insists to the contrary that what actually is keeping the price of higher education affordable are faculty ideals -- their commitment to excellence and refusal to "sell out" or be "bought out." Should their standards be compromised, the value of the "product" is forced downward and students are left holding paper instead of a diploma. Folbre agrees that higher education can indeed learn some things from business, for example, that good management requires teamwork, that different businesses require different models and that short-run profits rarely lead to long-term success. If education is a business, it's one whose product is enhanced human capabilities, not increased revenues.

As if an illuminating discussion of both the origins and paradoxes surrounding public higher education policy were not sufficient, *Saving State U* also briefly reviews current federal attempts to rectify the problem and provides recommendations, among them: making public service required for all college grads, reinstating the original GI bill, expanding AmeriCorps, placing greater emphasis on achievement instead of test scores, expanding access to community colleges and high quality online programs, eliminating reliance on ad hoc faculty, junking the old business model, and, perhaps most controversial, reinstating higher state taxes on the wealthy. Folbre believes that free public higher education is a viable goal and espouses extending the educational promise beyond the current 6-18

years of age. For inspiration, she points to the state of Georgia, where all high school students with a B average are entitled to go to college, providing that they maintain that GPA in college. While not all readers will agree with Folbre's prescriptions, and others may be disappointed in her somewhat cursory recommendations, this insightful well-researched volume is sobering yet nuanced and should be essential reading for all citizens, especially politicians, college administrators, academics and taxpayers responsible for the fate of higher education and democracy in this country.

Reviewed by Jennifer Ham, Associate Professor of German at the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay. She teaches in the Humanistic Studies program and is researching turn of the century education philosophy and pedagogies in Germany.



Helman, Lori. (Ed). (2009). *Literacy Development with English Language Learners: Research-Based Instruction in Grade K-6*. Guilford Publications.

Pp. 271 ISBN 9781606232422

Literacy Development with English Language Learners: Research-based Instruction in Grade K-6, edited by Lori Helman, provides highly useful teaching resources. This reader-friendly book invites scholars and educators in the field of language and literacy education, especially teachers of young English language learners (ELLs), to reflect on the complexity and possibilities of literacy development and instruction. Lori Helman brings together the voices of numerous literacy practitioners and researchers striving to best assist struggling young learners from diverse walks of sociocultural, linguistic, psychological, and educational paths. This succinctly written book explores diverse instructional approaches to literacy development for young ELLs in various learning contexts by presenting the research base for the approaches as well as further implications for teaching and research.

This practical, teacher-friendly book is composed of thirteen chapters. Each chapter delves into a range of feasible pedagogical approaches based on research that fosters the growth of ELLs facing challenges in their academic and linguistic endeavors. The authors all share a conviction that it is critical for literacy teachers working with ELLs to become more reflective about their dispositions and teaching approaches, to be sensitive to their learners' backgrounds and needs, and to be informed in research-based pedagogy involving the integration of skills and meaning-making.

The book begins by discussing the significant factors in literacy development for young English learners (sociocultural, psychological, linguistic, and educational). The following chapters highlight the importance of being responsive and sensitive to learners' cultural backgrounds as well as the pedagogical tools that structure explicit literacy learning opportunities so students may experience different aspects of language and learn to use language meaningfully.

Chapter 6 furthers the discussion of the early emergent literacy developmental stages of ELLs by providing a number of specific and useful instructional approaches enriching literacy activities. The chapter also outlines a model literacy curriculum for kindergarteners and integrates meaning and language together for more efficient, language rich literacy learning experiences. Chapter 7 discusses the importance of systematic, explicit, and meaningful phonics instruction that extends phonics teaching from a rote activity to a meaning making practice.

Later chapters include useful, informative statistics on the increasing population of ELLs in English speaking environments including North America and Australia, and focus on fluency development issues in literacy for ELLs in addition to research-based instructional considerations and implications to promote fluency in literacy for struggling readers. Chapter 9 reports on a collaborative, reflective research study by three teachers on their reading comprehension lessons as a result of their teacher study group encompassing the analysis of video-taped instruction and the discussions of their scholarly readings. Lori Helman closes the book with two concluding chapters by further elaborating on specific effective literacy instructional practices tailored for ELLs and related research findings presented throughout the book.

Over all, the book is highly readable and informative, and can be of interest to any educators striving to improve literacy teaching practices and explore challenges and possibilities of various research-based instructional approaches or strategies to support ELLs. In addition, it helps readers understand and recognize not only what challenges young English learners may face in their language and literacy journey, but also what teachers can do to accommodate the linguistic, educational, and cultural needs and challenges of their learners in multi-linguistic and cultural classrooms. *Literacy Development with English Language Learners* achieves its purpose effectively through a critical discussion about what the research literature has found and how the authors in the volume (most of whom are classroom teachers) have responded to pedagogical challenges with their ELLs, and, importantly, through the rich illustration of foundational principles and practical applications in diverse classroom settings. Despite the fact that theoretical lenses or underpinnings are absent at times in the discussion of classroom approaches and that a rather linear or static view of language and literacy development seems to underlie some suggested approaches while treating learners as somewhat passive actors, the highly accessible language and useful instructional resources will be appreciated particularly by undergraduate and graduate students as well as practitioners. All in all, this engaging book will certainly be a welcome addition to growing scholarly and pedagogical discussions in the field of language and literacy development of English language learners.

Won Kim is a doctoral student in the Department of Language & Literacy Education at the University of British Columbia. His research interests are Classroom discourse, literacy engagement, L2 pedagogy, narrative inquiry and discourse analysis.



Ito, M. (2009). *Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out: Kids Living and Learning with New Media* London: The MIT Press.

Pages: 432 ISBN: 978-0-262-013369-0

Today, education occurs in a sociocultural context that is influenced to great degree by rapidly evolving information and computer technology (ICT). One of the challenges this poses for educators is the differences between young people's relationships with ICT and adults' relationships with ICT. These challenges are exacerbated by the manner in which the popular media reports on these relationships and differences. This book reports on a three-year ethnography exploring the influences of ICT on young people that was supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and conducted at the University of California, Berkeley, and the University of Southern California. Multiple researchers contributed chapters to the book.

As an ethnography, the project collected data, especially qualitative data, from diverse populations of young people. The data are used to support and explicate several themes that characterize the emerging media ecology in which today's young people live and grow.

The emerging media ecology is described as a highly social environment and the authors portray it as dominated by friendship-driven and interest-driven interactions. The way these interactions influence seven aspects of young people's lives and experiences are detailed in six topical chapters: friendship, intimacy, family, gaming, creative production, and work. In each chapter, young people's experiences as described in their own words while the authors interpret and frame these experiences to provide a view of the emerging media ecology that is available in neither the current peer-reviewed literature nor the popular media. Additionally, the book includes an introductory chapter introducing ecology as a metaphor describing the current role of ICT in society, a summary chapter, appendices detailing the research project, and an expansive bibliography.

The authors conclude that any pedagogical initiatives in the 21st century must recognize and be designed to proceed in the reality created by the emerging media ecology. Although the details of the implications of this media ecology for curriculum and instruction are left to practitioners, the authors do provide an excellent and insightful overview of the ICT-rich reality of today's young people.

Reviewed by Gary L. Ackerman, PhD in education and who has extensive K-12 experience.



Janks, Hillary. (2010). *Literacy and Power*. New York: Routledge Press.

Pages: 245 ISBN: 978-0-415-99963-2

Literacy and Power (2010) by Hilary Janks, is an excellent resource for individuals, educators, and administrators who wish to explore practical issues of fostering critical literacy in education. The book is divided into 9 chapters, during which the author establishes a relationship between literacy and questions of power; fostering awareness that the way educators teach literacy is highly political. Janks begins by exploring the definition of literacy and the language hierarchy that exists across a range of practices. We are introduced to the 11-language policy tensions in Janks' South Africa, and the danger of English becoming the country's dominant colonial language of power and access. Although the recognition of 11 official languages is unique to South Africa, the idea of many different languages co-existing in large areas is one that is common to large urban centers and surrounding suburbs. One can readily recognize the similarities between the literacy social injustices of the Afrikaans in South Africa, and those of Latino populations within cities such as Chicago or Los Angeles. This chapter lays the groundwork of what is meant by critical literacy – the analysis of text that aims at uncovering the focus of power and social interests at work by asking the underlying questions: What is at stake? Who benefits? Who is disadvantaged (Freire, 1972)?

Chapter 2 examines four different orientations teachers can take when working with critical literacy to help students pose problems and act on solutions that can promote an unbiased world. The first, orientation of dominance, addresses how language maintains and propagates relations of power and inequitable social relations. The access orientation uncovers who is able to access the dominant forms of language, and who is marginalized. Orientations to diversity attend to the different ways students speak, read, write, think, and value (Gee, 1990, p. 142). The orientation to design encompasses a variety of systems across diverse languages and cultures to foster discourse. This chapter also introduces a model for critical literacy in education that incorporates the different orientations with each other across multiliteracies.

Chapters 3-8 delve more deeply into each of the orientations and the nature of the interrelationships between them. The book presents the argument that all texts are purposefully constructed by authors, who try to persuade readers to think or feel a certain way about something. Often this persuasive writing is slanted in a bias: gender, race, class, religion, or socioeconomic differences. Janks promotes a thoughtful deconstruction of texts by consumers in a way that can be summed as “reading against texts.” Readers work through a series of critical reading exercises using a variety of lenses that are commonly used to get to the bottom of what may be subversive in an author's text. On several instances, Janks supplies an advertisement or newspaper text then assists the reader with a methodical examination of the textual discourse (voice, lexicalization, quoted speech, mood, tense, syntax, etc.) and image (race, gender, age, action of the subject, lighting, pose, dress, etc); using tools designed to analyze text, image and text features. After each example, the reader gains a greater understanding of the many factors at work in critical literacy, and is better equipped to independently read against a text in a more familiar context.

Throughout *Literacy and Power*, Janks offers opportunities for the reader to independently apply the new critical literacy tools to real life practice. One example of this is a prompt that encourages the reader to independently find and examine an offensive a piece of text within his/her own culture and question if the affront was linked to the reader's identity investments in relation to elitism, racism, sexism, homophobia or some other associations. In addition, Janks suggests activities teachers can use to encourage students to engage in gathering and critically analyzing literacy artifacts from their own communities.

The conclusion presents effective ways the model has been used while stressing the importance of critical literacy in education. The reader is introduced to several international projects and activities that utilize the Interdependent Model for Critical Literacy to redesign, write and produce multimodal texts that are tolerant and do not marginalize others. In our world of social injustice, Janks passionately advocates for the use of critical literacy with transformative redesign and social action that values diversity, offers equitable access and balanced power that is used to benefit all. If we consider working toward a richly, diverse world that is peaceful and equitable, as a journey worth taking; then this book is the roadmap for individuals and educators alike.

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Reviewed by Tammy Oberg De La Garza, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Language and Literacy in the College of Education at Roosevelt University in Chicago, Illinois.



Pryle, Marilyn Bogusch. (2010). *Easy & Effective Writing Lessons for English Language Learners: Scaffolded Writing Assignments that Help ELLs Succeed in the Mainstream Classroom*. New York: Scholastic.

Pages: 128 ISBN: 0545108772

Easy & Effective Writing Lessons for English Language Learners provides writers workshop lessons and activities for teachers of students in grades 5 and up. Each chapter focuses on a different topic or genre, and early chapters cover simpler topics meant to scaffold more advanced writing in later chapters.

The author lays out lessons and activities for ten types of writing: Setting Sketch, Character Sketch, Ode, Autobiographical Incident, Retelling of a Legend, Children's Book, Friendly Letter, Compare and Contrast Essay, Travel Brochure, and Letter to the Principal. Within each chapter, the outlines

for two multi-level (i.e., beginning, intermediate, advanced) mini-lessons, focusing on topics such as theme and voice, are given. The mini-lessons include a variety of suggestions for prewriting games that can be played in small or large groups. These games offer ideal opportunities for English language learners (ELLs) to meaningfully interact with one another using both the speaking and listening modalities, which are important to language development but often overlooked in favor of the more heavily tested reading and writing modalities.

Once the teacher has led students through the mini-lessons, the author provides the following blackline masters: a checklist and rubric for students to follow in order to complete the first draft of the writing, a sample of a final copy of the writing, and a pre-writing worksheet. Each handout is available for beginning/intermediate and for intermediate/advanced levels. These handouts are a good start in scaffolding the writing process for ELLs. However when working with beginning and intermediate students, it would likely be necessary for a teacher to create his or her own intermediary graphic organizer to help a student turn the ideas she has generated on the pre-writing worksheet into sentences and then paragraphs. The prewriting worksheet by itself does not offer enough structure to allow students to independently extrapolate the process required to turn the words and phrases he or she has jotted down into cohesive pieces of writing.

Each chapter provides helpful suggestions on grammar conventions that are especially pertinent to the style of writing being taught. It is suggested that these conventions be taught in mini-lessons as the students are working on drafting. Teachers may find themselves wishing for a sample timeline in order to better understand how to implement the various mini-lessons and activities, as well as time for student writing. The author provides teachers with the fundamental topics that should be covered to help students produce successful pieces of writing, but it is always nice to see specific examples of the timeline a teacher uses in her own classroom. It would also be useful to learn how the author pre-assesses her students to determine which grammar conventions to teach explicitly.

While more detail would have been useful to best understand how to implement these writing assignments, this book is a great starting point for the many ELL teachers who are asked to implement a writing program despite receiving little guidance and no curriculum. This book could be used as the framework for a quarter-, semester-, or year-long writing class as a teacher could conceivably stretch or repeat lessons based on the needs and interests of his or her students. The variety of writing topics in *Easy & Effective Writing Lessons for English Language* allow teachers to guide students to produce work from different genres while experimenting with a variety of voices, structures, and grammatical conventions. The topics the author has chosen allow teachers to align their lessons to a variety of standards and objectives. These topics also lend themselves to instruction from a social justice perspective when coupled with creativity and foresight on the part of the teacher.

Reviewed by Amanda Phillips, Teacher of English Language Learners, South Washington County Schools, Cottage Grove, MN.

Puga, Marcos W. (2009). *My Years in High School: How to Keep Your Sanity While Teaching High School*. Durham, CT: Eloquent Books.

Pages: 72 ISBN 978-1-60911-090-1

My Years in High School: How to Keep Your Sanity While Teaching High School leads you to believe that wisdom on teaching during these challenging years will be imparted to the reader. While the author shares some entertaining stories, he doesn't really describe how to maintain one's sanity. In fact, he doesn't provide much guidance at all.

Some stories are touching, describing a meaningful connection with students. Some stories are funny; others uninteresting. Most chapters are one or two pages. Some readers might glean a valuable nugget of knowledge from this brief book, while others may be left wanting more.

One snippet about looking into the future with your students provides some insight into the instructional practice. A few other sections subtly address classroom management issues and maintaining student engagement. Practical tips and ideas for classroom use are not the focus of this book. Rather, the author discusses issues common to teenagers, peer relationships, motivation, excuses and the future within some of his stories. The 2-page appendix does include weekly puzzles that are described in one chapter. More of these and other classroom resources might have contributed to this book being more valuable to educators.

Pugo writes in a conversational style which does make the book an easy read. If you are looking for a light-hearted look into one man's experience teaching at the secondary level, then *My Years in High School: How to Keep Your Sanity While Teaching High School* will meet your needs. However, this reviewer was left feeling frustrated and wanting more.

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.



Smith, J. D., Wenger, E., & White, N. (2009). *Digital Habitats: Stewarding Technology for Communities*. Portland, OR: Cpsquare.

Pages: 227 ISBN: 9780982503607

Regardless of an individual educators' attitude towards information and computer technology (ICT), schools are becoming increasingly ICT-rich environments. Despite the expectation that ICT be used to create meaningful learning environments (Gilbert, 2007; Wan, Fang, & Neufield, 2007), there is

evidence that educators continue to struggle to use ICT effectively (Halverson & Smith, 2009). In the book, Smith, Wenger, and White propose the concept of technology stewards to support educational communities that seek to address struggles in ICT integration. Although not specifically for education audiences, the book outlines the rationale for technology stewardship, recommends practices for technology stewards, and considers the future of technology stewardship.

In the first section, technology stewards are defined as those individuals who function as a mediator between a community and the ICT it uses to facilitate communication and interaction. One of the authors (Wenger) is well-known for promoting the concept of communities of practice (CoP) as a model for practitioners within a domain forming a mutually supportive group of learners. That work is briefly reviewed and interpreted in light of the ICT that can support CoP. This section also makes clear the purpose of technology stewardship is to support learners, not necessarily to install and maintain the ICT, but to understand the CoP and the ICT at a sufficient level to ensure the goals and purposes of the group are fulfilled through ICT-mediated interaction.

In the second section (which is comprised of seven chapters collected in two parts), the theoretical frameworks useful for technology stewardship and the practices of effective technology stewards are described and illustrated with examples that are presented as vignettes. The authors explicitly state the book is not designed to be a recipe, and that is accurate. Implicitly the authors suggest the ICT needed depends on the available technology landscape and the orientation of the organization, and that effective technology stewardship is created for each community. With the ideas in this book, technology stewards can initiate effective planning and implementation of ICT to support communities and begin to assess the effectiveness of their stewardship.

In the final section, Smith, Wenger, and White identify general ICT trends and conclude new ICT will continue to emerge and affect how technology stewards support the members of their organizations. Also, the authors suggest the effects that effective technology stewardship can have on increasing and expanding the support communities can provide their members.

As ICT becomes a stronger influence in society, the expectation that educators meet the challenge of using it to support all aspects of education will grow stronger as well. Despite decades of effort to provide access to ICT, curriculum materials for ICT-rich instruction, and professional development; many educators ignore ICT in their classrooms. For school and technology leaders who seek to increase and expand the use of ICT in their school, this book provides the theoretical framework that will be essential for success and the practical advice that will support and sustain their efforts.

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Reviewed by Gary L. Ackerman, PhD in education and who has extensive K-12 experience.

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Brief Reviews Editor
Melissa Cast-Brede
cast-brede@edrev.info

Editor for English
Gene V Glass
glass@edrev.info

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