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Brief Reviews for July 2010

Catterall, James S. (2009). *Doing Well and Doing Good By Doing Art: The Long-Term Effects of Sustained Involvement in the Visual and Performing Arts During High School.* Los Angeles, CA: Imagination Group.

Pages: 158 ISBN: 978-1-61623-479-9

In *Doing Well and Doing Good by Doing Art,* Catterall describes a twelve-year national study of more than 12,000 students who were tracked into early adulthood. The asks "do the arts matter, just how, and for whom" and further, "is it engagement *in the arts* that matters, or is engagement *per se"* that is the key factor in student success?

Catterall has divided this book into five chapters beginning with a description of the initial study that culminated with the 1999 Champions of Change Report—a document that was the springboard for the current study. In the current study, 25,000 students in American secondary schools were followed for four years, with a primary focus on learners in instrumental music and theatre arts. This bulk of this chapter is used to delineate the key findings from the initial report: 1) children engaged in the arts showed positive academic developments, 2) students with high levels of involvement in instrumental music throughout their secondary school years show higher levels of mathematics proficiency by grade 12, and 3) students in sustained involvement in theatre arts had associative outcomes related to gains in reading proficiency, gains in self-concept and motivation, and higher levels of empathy for others (p. 2).

In chapter 2, "Arts-Involved Students: Doing Well and Doing Good through Age 26," Catterall shares the analysis and findings from the data drawn from 12,000 students with data collected at ages 20 and 26. Here, Catterall argues that engagement in the arts may contribute to academic and social benefits in six areas:

1) direct curriculum effects,

2) educationally relevant neurological development and transfer,

3) learning motivation,

4) student access to knowledge and expressive capacity,

5) social skills and self-understanding, and

6) using play to understand the real world and consider possibilities (pp. 35-37).

Next, Catterall includes the needed balance of questions and findings for this look at the role of the arts in schools. In chapter 3, he explores the issue of "Is it the arts? Would high school sports have the same effects?" That the arts do matter is a notion that all arts educators advocate—that engagement with the arts is engagement with the world, with venues to make meaning in a way that only the arts can provide (Eisner, 2002; Reimer, 2003). Later, in chapter 4, the issue of arts-rich versus arts-poor schools is considered, "testing ideas that ethos and belief within cohesive arts-focused schools make a difference" (p. 105). In chapter 5, Catterall offers a brief analysis of the data used to consider the effects of arts-rich versus arts-poor school environments with students for whom English is their second language.

Catterall offers the two central arguments of this study in chapter Six, titled "Reflective learning, the autonomous brain, and the case for effect." Catterall notes that the longitudinal nature of the study and the large number of subjects add weight to the findings which suggest a strong connection between engagement in the arts (in schools) and their positive effect on academic performance and enhanced social values years later. Here, Catterall turns to learning theory citing Bruner, Lave, and Vygotsky to support the ways that engagement in the arts creates opportunities for learners to have "conscious inner and social conversation and unconscious brain restructuring" (p. 131). He also notes possibilities for these artistic ways of thinking to transfer to other areas of cognitive and emotional development, and urges teachers to infuse reflective thinking, which he describes as inner and social conversations, into teaching and learning environments.

The connection to learning theory enables the reader to connect the "what" of statistical data to the "why" of these findings, and the "how" this might be accomplished purposefully in schools is commended. However, this section is insufficiently cited, with works by Elliot Eisner and Maxine Greene the most apparent omissions.

This book explores a longitudinal study of the arts, with a focus on the central finding that arts-rich school environments play an important role in the achievements and values of students. For the readers in the educational research community, this text offers additional secondary benefits. For example, quantitative researchers will appreciate the extensive data that is provided, including the nature of the database and how indicators were developed including the statistical framework that supported analysis. In addition, administrators and policy professionals will find information regarding the funding of the research.

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Cooper, S. (2009). *Making History Mine: Meaningful Connections for Grades 5-9*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers.

Pp. 300 ISBN 978-1571107657

Making History Mine begins with a great way to begin the new school year instead of the normal activities and get to know me games, and builds up from there to guide teachers in engaging students in history. Chapter one gives teachers an overview of what will be taught and what standards can be covered, and then discusses different ways of connecting relevant history information to the lives of everyday students. I like the way that Cooper begins this chapter with the poem by Bertolt Brecht and the questions that she uses to induce critical thinking about the poem. She differentiates instruction during this activity (as she allows students the opportunity to question terms and write down the words that they do not understand). She gets them physical, up and moving, and this tends to keep students on task because they're wondering what they will be doing next. They read the poem in unison with directions such as, "read slow," and " do not shout." Directions are given which is awesome!

Incorporates the poem in her first day of school activities seems to be an effective method of getting those academic juices flowing on the first day of school, and getting the students interested in learning. Furthermore, Cooper makes relevant connections of real life to her standards for the students as she asks them to make connections with the literature through scaffolding.

In Chapter two, the author demonstrates how she relates the topic of "Analyzing Point of View" to her standards and how she applies this to classroom teaching. In this chapter, she uses some levels of Bloom's Taxonomy in order to demonstrate understanding. She begins the chapter by having students bring in sources (that told something about them) and place them on their desks. Then, students had to go around, observe, and guess why these artifacts may be important to them. She used this activity to help students decide on how to determine what is important in life based on day to day situations. It allows the students to put themselves in other people's shoes so that they can imagine how they would have felt and relate that to the feelings of the people who conquered or were destroyed in that particular time in life.

Chapter three discusses rhetoric, reasoning, and the role of language in history. In this chapter she continues to deal with primary sources, but she refers to them as "firecrackers" or "sparklers" because through the use of sources, they "fuse" open up understanding to other things. In this chapter, she analyzes speeches, proclamations, and witness statements. She looks at historical characters and has students examine what they are saying, how it's said, and what point are they trying to get across. The students are afforded opportunities to examine famous speeches such as the one included by Ben Franklin and Figure 3.1 on page 47 of the book which displays a chart of students connecting to speeches by Ben Franklin.

Chapter four identifies more strategies. The strategies in this chapter include inferring, drawing a freehand map, taking notes, creating a time line, constructing a mind map, and group instruction. I like the way that she uses the text for extension activities and the way that she uses a Connections Paragraph Model (figure 4.1). In this model, she lists events in and specific information about the events. Students then take the information that has been listed, and create a paragraph connecting this information using approximately 50 words.

This was a great writing strategy that demonstrates whether students are grasping the information being disseminated to them.

Chapter five discusses cause and effect, logical argumentation, analyical writing, and synthesis of facts. Cooper uses essay questions to have students bring their own opinions and understanding into their essay responses. I like this strategy because it promotes critical thinking and relative connections.

In chapter six, the author explores connecting past and present. Cooper stresses using current events in this subject to have students make relevant connections to their lives and what's going on around them. They have the opportunity to explore how these things impact their lives. She weaves the past and present together in this chapter and provides guiding questions for the current event discussions. These questions are needed to serve as a navigational tool for the students.

On "Current Event Fridays," students bring in current events ranging from relevance to their lives, music and audio files, "wow" articles, etc. This is a good strategy to as students will have the opportunity to go outside of the norm and present ideas based on interests.

Sarah Cooper really focuses on the research process in chapter seven. The strategies used include locating print and online sources, learning bibliographic format, defining research topics, writing a thesis statement, composing and organizing note cards, paraphrasing information, synthesizing multiple sources, citing sources, and questioning ethics of power. This chapter basically teaches the research process beginning with owning the thesis statement. She gives examples of thesis statements, tells how to find books relevant to your reseach topic, finding note cards, paraphrasing, integrating information, and making research appealing. This was a good chapter teaching research strategies.

In the final chapter of this book, the author demonstrates strategies of how students can evaluate ethics and solve problems. I really believe this chapter deals with moral development as well as the transition from heteronomy to autonomy. It discusses values and how they fit into history curriculum. One of the lessons in this chapter involved asking students about the rules they need to follow at school, home, or both. They also had to discuss the reasons behind the rules. A list was created on the board and compared to the Benedictine Code (rules for the most famous medieval monasteries). This activity was a compare and contrast activity. The chapter continued to go through and list different topics such as Values and Rationale, and lessons to accompany them. Then, connections to the real world were made. This type of activity allows students to discuss and debate issues according to how they feel morally about current events going on in local, national, etc.

She goes on to discuss the Model United Nations and field trips. These are opportunities for middle school and high school where "students can address real-world problems with their own imaginative solutions through well-established forums; Model United Nations conferences and speech and debate tournaments" (p. 178). I was a part of Model United Nations when I was in high school and I agree that this is a great opportunity for students to become aware of what is going on in their world, and debate these issues in a mock forum.

Overall, this is a great book to keep in every social science class K-12.

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

Culham, Ruth & Jachles, Libby (2010). *Using Benchmark Papers to Teach Writing with the Traits, Grades K-2*. New York; Scholastic.

Pages: 96 ISBN: 978-0-545-13839-0

Culham, Ruth; Freborg, Mike, & McCarty, Pat (2010). *Using Benchmark Papers to Teach Writing with the Traits, Grades 3-5*. New York: Scholastic.

Pages: 96 ISBN: 978-0-545-13841-3

Have your tried teaching the six traits without a collection of benchmark papers? If so, it is good to remember that students do learn through examples. With this in mind, authors Culham and Jachles present two books with collections of benchmark papers for teachers to access very painlessly. The authors wrote these two books in response to teachers across the country asking for just such a compilation of student work.

"Benchmark" is defined by Webster's Dictionary as a "standard or point of reference in measuring or judging quality, value, etc." The authors provide five papers ranging in competency from high to low in each of the six traits (ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions). These 30 papers are more than enough to start sharing with your students as you supplement the collection with your own classroom work. A one-page analysis of each paper is also included so you, as a teacher, know exactly why the paper received the rating it did. Each paper also includes positive comments to the student, which can be used outright or, perhaps, jog your mind to think of other edifying and constructive comments.

Both books come with CDs. If your classroom has an electronic projection system, you will be able to perform some eye-catching graphics. One is to highlight the trait used or misused right in front of your students' eyes. Then with another click, you can revise and edit the writing with the class. There is also a teacher comment to begin classroom discussion along with "Think Abouts" (Grades 3-5 only). This way, students will know "…why some papers are scored lower and what to do to make them stronger." (p. 28) There are easy-to-follow directions on how to use the interactive PDFs with Interactive Whiteboards as well as with an Elmo or the traditional overhead projector.

The books come with student-friendly scoring guides for each trait, teacher scoring guides for each trait, and model lessons for a large group, a small group, and a one-on-one conference. There is one strong suggestion that the authors make that can only benefit the teacher and student. The suggestion is for the teacher to score the benchmark papers before learning the authors' scores. In that way, the teacher becomes adept at recognizing the traits or lack of them.

The two books reviewed here are designed for use in conjunction with other material on the Six Traits. Ruth Culham has recently published two books through Scholastic that would complement these. They are both entitled *Getting Started with the Traits: Writing Lessons, Activities, Scoring Guides, and More for Successfully Launching Trait-Based Instruction in Your Classroom*. Similar to the two books being reviewed here, there are two editions – Grades K-2 and Grades 3-5.

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Culham, Ruth & Coutu, Raymond. (2009). *Getting started with the traits: writing lessons, activities, scoring guides, and more for successfully launching trait-based instruction in your classroom, grades K-2*. New York: Scholastic.

Culham, Ruth & Coutu, Raymond. (2009). *Getting started with the traits: writing lessons, activities, scoring guides, and more for successfully launching trait-based instruction in your classroom, grades 3-5*. New York: Scholastic.

Reviewed by Carol Brooks, Eastside Christian School, Bellevue, Washington. She currently uses her Masters degree in Curriculum and Instruction from Seattle Pacific University to teach second grade.

Espenshade, Thomas J. and Radford, Alexandria Walton. (2009). *No Longer Separate Not Yet Equal: Race and Class in Elite College Admission and Campus Life*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Pages 547 ISBN 978-0-691-14160-2

No Longer Separate Not Yet Equal: Race and Class in Elite College Admission and Campus Life is an analysis of the data collected from a longitudinal study, National Survey of College Experience, which was conducted throughout the 1980s and 1990s. There are three stated goals for the book: to examine the role of race and social class in the admission process (p. 2), to determine how affirmative action is used to diversify college campuses (p. 4) and to study campus life for students on a diverse campus (p. 5). Each chapter of the book chronicles differences in student experiences according to race and class in applying for college; getting accepted; arriving on campus; socializing with peers; attending class; and what happens after graduation. One of the book's strengths is its use of statistics to support its arguments especially some of the more controversial findings. However, parental and student motives behind their actions remain unknown due to the lack of qualitative data.

Gender is not a major focus of the study. The reasons given were that it would lengthen the study to do so, women currently outnumber men on college campuses, and that class is more controversial (p. 9). I believe that this is a weakness in the book because past research indicates that when gender is factored out of statistical data the findings on racial and ethnic groups are altered in significant ways (Robinson, 2004). The data is between 20 and 30 years old as it was gathered in the 1980s and 1990s, but women did not outnumber men on college campuses until 2004 (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Therefore, the argument that women currently outnumber men on college campuses is not a compelling reason for excluding gender from the discussion. In fact, data from the 1988-2000 National Education Longitudinal Study suggests that class is a factor in women outnumbering men on college campuses. Females from families with low-educated or absent fathers tend to have an advantage over their male siblings (Buchmann & DiPrete, 2006, p. 527). Buchmann and DiPrete (2006) also recommend more research on the female advantage in college completion rates using women from different races as the data mainly demonstrates advantages that white women possess (pp. 532-533). Using gender as one of the factors in *No Longer Separate Not Yet Equal* would have contributed to the research literature on both race and class in college admission and campus life.

Parents of high school students will find chapter 2 "Preparing for College" and chapter 3 "What Counts in Being Admitted" useful. These chapters evaluate admission enhancing strategies and determine their effectiveness. It also points out which races favor a certain type of strategy over another. Parents can use the chapter to supplement their efforts to help their child's application stand out and avoid wasting their time on seemingly ineffective approaches. One eye opening statistic revealed that some parents were willing to pay up to $29,000 for private consultants to assist their children in applying for college which demonstrates a class difference which gives middle and upper

income students an advantage (p. 14). Other evidence such as the type of high school attended appeared to reflect an advantage for lower income students. Espenshade and Radford maintain that high achieving students in mediocre schools are more likely than good students in elite high schools to apply for admission to elite universities (p. 18). However, the number and type of advantages that higher income students have outweigh any slight advantage that a high achieving lower income student may have but middle income students are the most disadvantaged (pp. 19-21, 61).

However, I found chapters 8 and 9 which discussed affirmative action especially intriguing. There was a challenge in February 2010 to California's Proposition 209 which banned using race or gender as factors in college admissions (Oppenheim, 2010). Parents alleged that Latinos, Blacks, and Native Americans remain underrepresented in University of California system. Chapter 8 examined the idea that being exposed to diversity helped students learn about differences and led to a more integrated society. Espenshade and Radford found that white students were the most racially isolated and felt as though they learned the least from other races while Hispanic students were the most integrated and reported that they learned the most from non –Hispanic students (pp. 309-310, 313-314). Although universities can provide opportunities for interactions across racial lines, the students themselves had to be open to taking advantage of the opportunities to interact with others outside of the their race. I think that finding has serious implications for college campuses which stress diversity as measured by the enrollment of students from various racial and ethnic groups and not the quality and/or frequency of inter-ethnic or inter-racial interactions. The findings could be interpreted as increasing exposure to other racial and ethnic groups does not necessarily make a difference in regards to improving race relations.

No Longer Separate Not Yet Equal: Race and Class in Elite College Admission and Campus Life would be an interesting read for education administrators and policy makers as well. Because the book could appeal to a wider audience than most books written for academic audiences, I think the book would make a great addition to the library of anyone who is interested in learning about race and class on college campuses. I mentioned a few of the issues that are discussed in the book. There is a wealth of topics mentioned in the book that would undoubtedly promote some very thought provoking discussions.

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Reviewed by Stephanie Nicole Robinson, PhD, faculty, Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership, Walden University, Baltimore, Maryland.

Honig, Alice. (2010). *Little Kids Big Worries: Stress Busting Tips for Early Childhood Classrooms.* Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.

Pages: 170 ISBN 978-1-59857-061-8.

Little Kids Big Worries: Stress Busting Tips for Early Childhood Classrooms is an easy-to-read and practical guide for preschool teachers. Developmental psychologist Dr. Honig is professor emeritus at Syracuse University. She has served children and their families for 40 years. Her areas of expertise include cognitive and language development, parenting and quality care-giving for infants and toddlers. She has done extensive research on child development in the U.S. and abroad. Dr. Honig is a prolific writer. The author encapsulates the thesis of the book by declaring "Stress-busting requires that we consider with ingenuity *all* the ways that we can enhance children's readiness for early learning as a way to ensure their emotional and social well-being as well as cognitive competence" (p. 126).

Little Kids Big Worries is divided into nine chapters. Chapters 1-4 establish the foundation of the book. First, Honig begins with a definition; "*stress* is when a person shows, by difficulties in personal relationships and worrisome bodily responses, that he or she is having a struggle and cannot cope with felt or perceived difficulties" (p. 3). Second, sources and signs of stress are addressed, such as attachment issues and temperament. Third, the author encourages teachers to reframe and reflect. When a child is overly active and curious, the teacher can reframe that behavior by understanding that developmentally children are explorers. Resourceful teachers are both reflective and "seasoned child observers" (p. 53). These qualities enable teachers to brain-storm and problem-solve more effectively.

Chapters 5-7 are the heart of the book. In chapter five, Honig presents a cornucopia of ideas on how to ameliorate the effects of stress on children by creating peaceful classrooms. Teachers' keen observations enable them to personalize these strategies knowing that "no one stress technique works every time in every situation with every child" (p. 53). The author has observed that children respond well to soothing massages with lotion, soft voices and the sound of their names. Her effectiveness in communicating these strategies rests on the gentle yet specific suggestions she offers. For example she encourages teachers to buy lotion with colorful sparkles. This turns regular lotion

into magic lotion which children love. During nap time children seek comfort and security. Honig therefore endorses the use of a favorite blanket or *lovie*, even though many teachers might believe that preschoolers have outgrown this need. Teachers are encouraged to create cozy retreats in the classroom as well as reduce clutter. Others suggestions include using diversions instead of reprimands, spending one-on-on time with children and offering generous praise whenever children are helpful.

Chapter six provides stress- reducing strategies for groups of children. Honig suggests calling group assemblies to address behavior issues such an aggression. The author emphasizes the need to become an emotional coach to children, an emphasis that cannot be overstated. She encourages the use of scripted emotional curriculum and discussions about feelings. Relaxation games, dance, silly songs, breathing exercises and vigorous movement are also endorsed. Simple yet effective tips such as celebrating rituals (birthdays), feeding the children on time, creating soothing nap times, encouraging imagination, praising self-control and preparing children for change are provided. Chapter seven introduces the reader to bibliotherapy, "the act of reading a story to a child about another child who was helped during a stressful and sad time" (p. 103). In this chapter Honig inspires teachers to hone their storytelling skills, learn to personalize stories for individual children and choose books that address negative feelings proactively. She describes several books she suggests and provides a bibliography at the end of the book.

Little Kids Big Worries ends with suggestions to reduce adult-stress in the workplace and personally. The author provides helpful tips on how to deal with disgruntled parents kindly. She also addresses home visits and how to handle uncomfortable situations with grace. Honig provides 28 excellent strategies for teachers on how to reduce stress, personally. She entices teachers to keep a journal, read poetry, talk to a friend, commit random acts of kindness, listen to soothing music, forgive offenses and let go of perfectionism. The sensitivity with which the author communicates gives testament to her many years of experience collaborating with preschool teachers. Honig empathizes with the physical, mental and emotional demands that preschool teachers face.

Little Kids Big Worries is a must-read for preschool teachers, directors and parents. Honig succeeds at displaying her expertise and scholarship with admirable ease and compassion. Her passion for the well-being of children is evident, as well as her deep respect for parents and teachers. With gentleness and a priceless collection of personal stories, Honig presents an inspiring and accessible guide. *Little Kids Big Worries* is a treasure!

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Jorgenson, Cheryl M., McSheehan, Michael, & Sonnenmeier, Rae M. (2010). *The Beyond Access Model: Promoting Membership, Participation, and Learning for Students with Disabilities in the General Education Classroom*. Baltimore, Maryland: Paul H. Brookes.

Pages: 243 ISBN 1-55766-717-9

The reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA) emphasized general education access for all children. As a result, professionals have been looking for ways to effectively include students with disabilities who were traditionally not granted access to the general education curriculum. This search for effective methods has sparked much research on what is truly considered access to the general education curriculum (Soukop, Wehmeyer, & Bashinski, 2007). Of particular concern is the inclusion of students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). While some professionals feel that full-time placement in the grade-appropriate general education classroom with supports is the true definition of inclusion, others feel that providing access to the general education curriculum in a separate setting is sufficient. Some studies provide convincing cases of individual and district academic success for students with IDD when full access to the general education curriculum is provided in the general education classroom (Ryndak, Morrison, & Sommerstein, 1999; Ryndak, Reardon, Benner, & Ward, 2007).

Researchers have found that inclusion in the general education classroom is an important forecaster of the amount of access a student with IDD has to the general education curriculum (Soukop, Wehmeyer, & Bashinski, 2007). Student and teacher variables (i.e., student response, teacher focus, teacher behavior) are predictors of general education curriculum access for students with IDD at the classroom level (Lee, Soukop, Little, & Wehmeyer, 2009). School change will require all levels of education professionals to be prepared and trained to include a student population that has historically been segregated from the general education classroom. Through their practical guide, Jorgenson, McSheehan, and Sonnenmeier provide school staff with essential knowledge to effectively include students with IDD in the general education classroom.

The *Beyond Access (BA) Model* was designed to merge research with current classroom practices to achieve the goal of students with IDD having access to the general education curriculum in an inclusive environment. Through this text, Jorgenson, McSheehan, and Sonnenmeier present a model for inclusion that has been implemented and evaluated. The authors seek to take students with IDD beyond simply gaining access to general education and propel them to build age appropriate membership, participation, communication, and learning.

The book includes a foreword by Pat Mirenda, a well-known researcher in the area of autism and developmental disabilities, and an afterword from Laurie Lambert, a BA facilitator. Both the foreword and afterword provide reflection and experiences meant to strengthen the reader's interest and hope in the BA model. There are three major sections of the book which are well organized and include a preview of what will be discussed at the beginning of the chapter and a brief summary at the end of each chapter. In chapter 2, the authors suggest alternative ways of reading the text based on the reader's experience and expertise with inclusion.

Section 1, "Introducing the Beyond Access Model" presents an array of information and begins with a real-world example of a student with IDD whose team must make the decision on the appropriateness and benefit of the student's continued education in the general education classroom. A brief description of the student's team's implementation and success with the BA model is provided. Chapter 2 offers foundational information on communication barriers, IDEA, the potential of students with IDD, and introduces the debate concerning teaching academic versus functional skills. The chapter then discusses who should use BA, how BA differs from other inclusion models, the best practices of BA, and gives a brief introduction to the four phases of the BA model.

In section 2, "Foundations of the Beyond Access Model" present a more thorough explanation of the BA model and its implementation by the BA team, which is comprised of various school professionals and the student's parents/guardians. In chapter 3, the presumption of competence and the least dangerous assumption are presented and discussed through the use of two scenarios showing how presumption of competence can only help, not hinder, students. At the end of this chapter, the authors propose a paradigm shift toward the promotion of inclusion, achievement, and high quality of life for those with IDD. Chapter 4 gives the authors' definitions and examples of membership, participation, and learning. In addition to describing the importance of these three constructs, strategies and indicators are discussed. Chapter 5 presents the various aspects of collaborative teaming. In this chapter, topics include team member roles and responsibilities, team member skills and dispositions, team meeting structures, and team processes—including resolving conflict, and setting and maintaining group norms.

Section 3, "Using the Beyond Access Model," discusses the four phases of the BA model and the role and responsibilities of both the BA team and the administrative leadership team (ALT), which includes the principal, building and/or district-level special education administrator, the special education teacher, and the BA facilitator. During this phase one of BA model, the Comprehensive Assessment of Student and Team Supports are completed. Necessary team and facilitator dispositions as well as outcomes and activities for this phase are thoroughly discussed. In addition, possible delays to success and strategies for dealing with change are provided. Chapter 7 discusses phase 2 of the model—explore and describe student and team supports. Similar to phase 1, team dispositions, activities, possible delays, and strategies for dealing with change are provided. Phase three covers implementing and documenting supports. The fidelity of implementation and efficacy are defined and examples are provided. This chapter discusses potential delays to success and strategies for dealing with change. Chapter 9 provides information on phase 4 of the BA model—review and sustain student and team supports. An example of a phase 4 implementation starts off the chapter followed by necessary dispositions, phase 4 outcomes and activities, challenges to success, and how to deal with change. The administrative leadership team (ALT) is discussed in chapter 10. Individuals who are typically placed on the ALT are presented, along with essential characteristics for successful team members. The ALT team's responsibilities and activities are also included.

Throughout the book, appendices provide the reader with examples of forms used in each phase of the model such as, surveys, meeting agendas, and assessments. Some chapters present examples of

these forms in the narrative, and others include them as an appendix at the end of the chapter. These sheets are also available on a CD so the reader can print and use the sheets as needed.

Overall, this book provides a practical, unambiguous guide to inclusion for students with IDD. The support of school administration is vital for this model to be implemented effectively. Additionally, time and resources may be barriers to executing this program. These and other potential challenges are discussed openly in the text. It is clear that the authors want readers to take an unveiled look at the process of inclusion for students with IDD. The book provides those who are serious about having a truly inclusive school with the information to do so. I would recommend this text to parents, educators, administrators, and any other professionals with even the slightest interest in creating and promoting classrooms where membership, participation, and learning are a part of every child's daily educational experience.

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Ladson-Billings, Gloria (2009). *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children.* 2nd edition. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

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In the 2nd edition of *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children*, Gloria Ladson-Billings revisits the teaching practices of eight teachers who demonstrated academic success with African American children. Seventeen years have passed since the original eight teachers were studied, and Ladson-Billings uses the new edition to profile the next generation of "dreamkeepers", clearly illustrating how relevant the concept is still being used today as a reliable and valid instructional strategy for African American students. These are teachers she did not study, yet their achievements with African American children are documented academic successes. Ladson-Billings takes an apologetic tone as to why she could (did) not replicate the study. I see her point in pointing out her inability to be "unobtrusive" as she was in the original study and for not wanting to make comparisons. Instead she relies on the reader to be able to see the qualities of the original eight as models and challenges teachers to emulate those qualities even in today's legislative driven teaching. The expectation of the teacher today is to look at the stories, vignettes and interviews centered on the original eight and ask hard and reflective questions related to ones teaching or work that can significantly impact or improve your work. The real question becomes how can the work of these eight live on? I believe this edition answers that question, particularly with the new generation of dreamkeepers highlighted at the end of the book. Of note and importance, some of the new generations of "dreamkeepers" are former students of the original dreamkeepers.

Ladson-Billings first discusses in detail the selection process for the identifying teachers for the study, stressing its importance (a) for replication purposes (b) to give credibility to the study and (c) to control or alleviate author bias. Accordingly, the selection process begins with input from African American parents, and is followed by a cross check with principals and colleagues. If the names of a teacher ended up on both lists, he or she was considered a very good candidate for the study. Interestingly, in the final selection, all the participants were women: five African American, three White. Interestingly, there is nothing similar about these women in terms of educational background or where they matriculated. Aside from their pedagogical practices, Ladson- Billing contributes their success to two factors, experience and the transformational point in their lives, which forced them to reevaluate how they teach.

This qualitative research in practice gives the reader the ability to understand the phenomenon of culturally relevant teaching. Ladson-Billings defies research principles predicated upon concerns about author bias as she weaves her personal stories into the research. Her explanation for weaving personal stories is that it offers a backdrop for this particular practice, providing the reader with information on how schooling affected her and perhaps the reader as well in both a positive and negative manner. Her memories give context to current practices taking place within the classroom. The stories become a useful tool for the reader to understand the pedagogy being explained and studied. It gives the reader the ability to see the phenomenon of culturally relevant teaching from her schooling experiences. Ladson-Billings further explains the four lenses of which she uses to illustrate her point. She writes this book from the perspective of a researcher/scholar, an African American

teacher, a parent and a community member.

Ladson-Billings allows the reader to clearly see the common threads of successful teaching of African American students from eight teachers although their methodology may have been different. The results were the same and all focused on three key elements, student learning, cultural competences, and a sociopolitical awaking. All the teachers demonstrated success with African American students through culturally relevant teaching that did not separate school curriculum from their cultural background or disconnect school life from home or community.

In chapter one, "A Dream Deferred", Ladson-Billings offers a historical overview of the continued dissatisfaction with how African American children are educated and sets the stage for the study and the argument for separate schools. She cites the question W.E.B. DuBois asked in 1935: "Does the Negro need separate schools?" That question is still being posed today and explored because of new legislation in Title IX. In October, 2006 changes from the U.S. Department of Education were announced in regard to Title IX regulations. The opportunity to offer single-gender instruction in public schools was legal. Although the law provided no regulations to establish schools based on race, separate schools are forming and they are minority populated. In a recent news article, an all male, all African American high school in Chicago was applauded for all 107 senior class members being accepted into college. The issue of separate schools is a real option! The issue of separate black schools is a reality! She contends in her writing that African American children (people) have a distinct culture. She emphatically explains it is a culture that which is different from white children and the presumption that African American children are exactly alike, but needs extra help, is hindering them academically.

Hollins (1990) studied programs and strategies that demonstrated effectiveness with African American children. She placed those programs into three categories: (1) remediation without consideration for social/cultural needs, (2) resocialization with remediation and (3) learning/teaching that includes a student's social/cultural background. It is the third category in which this book speaks volumes. Cummins (1986) argues that students are less likely to fail in schools where they feel positive about their culture and are not alienated from their values. Ladson-Billings reiterate in this book, effective teaching and how students achieved academic success while maintaining a positive African American identity. This book is about pedagogy, teaching ideology and common behaviors.

Chapter two, "Does Culture Matter", provides detailed understanding as to what cultural relevant teaching is all about. It does in fact include the culture of the student. She provides for the reader how their experiences, values and community are all an integral part of the learning process and can produce academic excellence in African American children. The chapter provides several vignettes to help the reader understand more fully the process of culturally relevant teaching, along with additional literature on ways that schools can be more inclusive of the students' cultural background. It addresses the issue of the lack of literature on the experiences of African American students and suggests cultural relevant teaching as a way to address the gap in academic achievement. It addresses cultural relevant teaching practices not just for African American students but also for other historically underserved and marginalized cultural groups such as Native Americans and considers the impact it has had on student learning. Ladson-Billings discusses how teachers often see African

American students and how that perception can interfere with their ability to be effective teachers. She illustrates how Winfield's (1986) study on teacher expectations on student achievement shapes how students respond to learning. She makes it very clear that culturally relevant teaching is aimed at excellence, not maintaining status quo or improvement.

In chapter three, "Seeing Color, Seeing Culture," Ladson-Billing focuses on one of the three critical aspects of culturally relevant teaching: teachers' conceptions of themselves and how they see others. She uses vignettes and interviews to introduce the teachers individually and records classroom observations that illustrate their culturally relevant practices. Ladson-Billing implores the reader to understand the significance of race and culture when educating children. She illustrates the outcome that can result when educators fail to see or consider race and culture in the educational process. When teachers fail to acknowledge race/color and culture, planning for instruction is ignored. Teachers who do not see these differences do not see the total student, which limits their ability to meet their educational needs. This chapter allows the reader to vicariously relive their days as a student to see if these practices were prevalent during their matriculation period. Ladson-Billings describes in detail this first concept which allows the reader to vividly see this practice as one where teachers with culturally relevant teaching practices demonstrate high self esteem, not only for themselves but for others as well as for the community. She explains how appearance is important, including documented research conducted by Foster (1986) and how being a part of a community is necessary to academic connections.

Chapter four, "We are Family", discusses the second critical aspect of culturally relevant teaching: the construction of social relations within the classroom and within the community and explores how they connect. Once again, Ladson-Billings uses vignettes, interviews and observations to make pertinent points. She provides in detail excellent models of culturally relevant teaching practices centered on this theme. One of the key ingredients in these social relations is the connectedness demonstrated with all students, not just individual ones. The spirit of competition is downplayed and the teacher encourages a community of learners in an atmosphere in which everyone is responsible for each other. The entire chapter has many examples where social interactions in the classroom support individual students within the group context. It shows how students are encouraged academically and culturally.

In chapter five, "The Tree of Knowledge", the author discusses the third critical aspect of culturally relevant teaching, the teachers' conception of knowledge. Again, vignettes, interviews and observations are used to help the reader visualize this concept into practice. In the chapter, she provides ample examples of how this practice helps teachers and students confront, understand and create knowledge. She shows the reader how this practice helps both the teacher and student construct knowledge beyond the curriculum to achieve academic and cultural excellence. I think this chapter is so powerful in that it demonstrates how teacher and student are able to move beyond the fragmented pieces of lessons learned centered around themes to construct knowledge in a meaningful and relevant manner. It allows both student and teacher to build their knowledge, not just accepting and/or memorizing facts and dates. For example, students come to school with a knowledge bases and this practice brings that out of them. Knowledge is viewed critically. It is not accepted at face value or strictly from district issued textbooks, but can be questioned and examined.

Ladson-Billings lists and explains at least five characteristics of culturally relevant conceptions of knowledge and shows the reader in vivid detail how students make sense of knowledge that moves them toward academic achievement and cultural excellence.

In chapter six, "Culturally Relevant Teaching", Ladson-Billings explicates the phenomenon clearly. Juxtaposing the teaching practices of three teachers in the study, she highlights the teaching of mathematics and reading from a culturally relevant approach. She shows the reader how different instructional styles and the use of different materials produce similar results. Ladson-Billings take a didactic look at this practice and offers the reader practical application. This is an excellent chapter (tool) for the novice teacher, student teacher or anyone working directly with African American children (or as previously mentioned and demonstrated in chapter one, any minority student). The chapter reiterates that who people are, where they come from, their values, experiences and community are important and should be an integral part in obtaining academic excellence and while maintaining cultural excellence.

In the final chapter, "Making Dreams into Reality", two issues are addressed. First, Ladson-Billings addresses educators' power and personal responsibility to help African American children choose academic excellence while maintaining their cultural identities. This must become the rule and not the exception. Her list of suggestions read like a set of specific skills needed for a highly skilled position! Secondly, she concludes with an answer to the question presented at the beginning of the book by DuBois, specifically, *Does the Negro need a separate school?* Not only does she provide an answer, but a detailed answer with thick rich description. Ladson-Billings offers insight on improving academic performance and schooling experiences for African American children. She continues to question teaching practices and teacher preparation programs, yet provides suggestions to address the issues that hinder academic success for African American children. She does not suggest culturally relevant teaching practices as the only way to address the issue of academic failure in African American children. She presents the information as a viable pedagogical practice that can be replicated. Methodology and background information are included to help the reader understand how the study was approached and completed as well as helpful for those considering using this information for replicating the study.

Although the 2nd edition was written seventeen years after the original study, it is still relevant and applicable today. It is a detailed document designed to assist teachers in helping African American students achieve academic success while maintaining their cultural identity. Ladson-Billings new list of "dreamkeepers" are people who continue to seek academic excellence for children of color. They defy all attitudes and opposition! This is a must read for educators who are teaching children whose cultural identities are excluded from the learning process. This book offers insight, understanding and practical application for educating African American children from a culturally relevant framework.

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Reviewed by Carletta Griffis-Anderson, an educator and doctoral student in the College of Education at Ohio University.

Lemov, Doug. (2010). *Teach like a Champion: 49 Techniques that Put Students on the Path to College.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Pages: 332 ISBN 978-0-47055047-2.

The major premise in *Teach like a Champion: 49 Techniques that put Students on the Path to College,* by Doug Lemov (2010), is that teachers should do what works, even if what works is low-tech and unglamorous. Indeed, if Lemov's research is any indicator, most successful teaching techniques can be categorized in this way.

Lemov, whose background is a combination of education and business, has seen both sides of the educational coin: the classroom and administration. In his current position managing Uncommon Schools, he began to wonder why some teachers seemed to be able to move their students further along the progress scale than others. His position allowed him the flexibility to visit myriad classrooms repeatedly and he began anecdotally identifying successful teachers. Eventually, he went beyond anecdotes and identified teachers through a variety of standardized test results; he focused his research on teachers whose students improved the most over the course of one school year. What were those teachers doing in their classroom that was different? The general answers are well-known in the educational establishment: establish high standards, scaffold difficult content, maintain classroom order, teach the standards, and connect with students. As any veteran teacher can relate,

however, a wide gap exists between knowing these answers and being able to create a successful classroom in which students learn and grow. Lemov wanted to know: what, precisely, were these teachers doing to create these classrooms?

In the first section of his book, Lemov provides the answers in the form of 49 specific techniques that successful teachers use in their classrooms. These techniques are divided into seven specific categories:

- Setting High Academic Expectations
- Planning that Ensures Academic Achievement
- Structuring and Delivering your Lessons
- Engaging Students in your Lessons
- Creating a Strong Classroom Culture
- Setting and Maintaining High Behavioral Expectations
- Building Character and Trust.

Within each of these sections, Lemov offers half a dozen or more specific ways in which teachers can build their practice to help students succeed academically. Lemov stresses many times that successful teachers do not employ each of these techniques; instead, they employ the techniques which work for them and their students and they employ them consistently and predictably. For example, successful teachers only accept fully correct answers (Technique 2: Right is Right) and push their students to expand or change answers until they have them fully correct. Further, successful teachers consistently scaffold note-taking routines (Technique 14: Board = Paper) to help their students record and track their learning. Neither of these two techniques is "new" to education; what is new is tying these techniques so specifically to successful teachers, providing a step-by-step "how-to" for each of the techniques, and providing a video record of these techniques in action.

The step-by-step "how-to" and the video record are the most helpful aspects of this book. For each technique, Lemov clearly explains how he has witnessed teachers using it, including providing specific examples and transcripts of classroom interactions. In this way, theory is effectively translated to practice for both new teachers and veteran teachers employing or refining these techniques. Further, Lemov provides clips which show various teachers employing 25 of the 49 techniques. These video clips are a gold mine. While the application for credential programs is obvious, these clips can also easily be used in staff development situations or in small collaborative teacher groups. The video resource also shows quite clearly that these successful teachers are teaching in multi-cultural, heterogeneous classrooms, effectively stopping the "well,-I-can't-do-that-kind-of-thing-with-my-kids" argument of nay-sayers.

Lemov ends the first section of his book exploring how successful teachers maintain effective pacing in their classrooms as well as techniques they use for the ubiquitous question-answer sequence. The techniques in these last two parts of section one are not numbered and Lemov does not provide an explanation as to why they are not a part of the core 49 techniques, but it becomes clear when he begins to reference using the core 49 techniques to effectively pace or create question sequences.

In the last section of the book, Lemov shifts his focus from the specific techniques to the broader issue of reading across the curriculum. Lemov contends that reading is not only in the purview of English Language Arts teachers, but that all teachers, no matter the subject or level, must focus on explicitly teaching their students to effectively read and comprehend the content. He provides an overview of already established reading techniques, such as building schema, summary, connections, and questioning. He should refer readers of his book to other books as further reference, since his book offers a minimum overview. The techniques he offers for reading are important but they barely scratch the surface of reading support. In spite of this limitation, holding all teachers accountable for teaching reading is vital to the academic success of our students.

Lemov's book is an important contributor to the discussion of teaching and student success. From the beginning, he cautions that his book should not be seen as an exact recipe to be applied without thought to the context in which teachers and students learn and live; he encourages educators to focus on their strengths and incorporate or refine the techniques which fit them and their students most effectively. Further, he notes that all the teachers he observed were successful because they used these techniques as a support system for teaching assessed standards, using data to drive their curricular decisions, teaching rigorous curriculum and effective lesson planning. Lemov contends, rightly so, that teaching technique is but a drop of water in the wind without this solid foundation. Finally, Lemov notes that successful teachers invest in predictability and routine in their classrooms. They "steal" time from the school day by minimizing the things students do everyday: turning in papers, passing back books, transition activities, finding old work, and so on.

Lemov's focus on specifically translating theory into practice should be invigorating for veteran teachers stung again and again by vaguely explained reforms. More importantly, however, is that this kind of focus is vital for credential students and new teachers who have, for so many years, witnessed effective teaching without truly understanding, precisely and specifically, what goes on behind the scenes to make effective teaching appear so seamless and easy.

Reviewed by Shannon S. Moon, a doctoral candidate at Mills College as well as a high school English and AVID teacher. Shannon's research interests include curriculum, lesson planning, pedagogy, and English education.

Nevills, P., & Wolfe, P. (2009). *Building the Reading Brain, PreK-3* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA.: Corwin Press.

Pages: 215 ISBN: 9781412963268

The cover of *Building the Reading Brain PreK-3* depicts a little boy standing on a colorful alphabet rug wearing a large, spongy, red "R" as a hat. Feel free to predict the content of the book based on the playful image described, and await another lesson in judging a book by its cover. Behind the adorable blue eyes of the alphabetically surrounded child lies research—rigorous research in education, neuroscience, neurophysiology, and neurobiology is synthesized to produce concrete instructional recommendations (and cautions) in reading. The book embarks on an educational journey with the reading brain from the womb to third grade. If read aloud, some sections could only be narrated by a neuroscientist, while others are a perfect script for William Shatner.

Two authors of very different backgrounds collaborated on this book. The first author, Pamela Nevills, is described first as a teacher. This claim gives credit to the work, if only to say she has been there, done that. Her interest in the brain and reading are made clear in *Building the Reading Brain PreK-3*. Patricia Wolfe, the second author, has spent two decades studying the connection between neuroscience and learning. The two combine and make a refreshing claim: research on the brain can affirm and inform methods in reading instruction. While the claim is not new, the reader friendly and pragmatic discourse makes the information accessible to wider audiences, including researchers, teachers, and parents.

The authors state the main purpose of the book on page 91, "In this book, we look at instruction that is most appropriate to what is needed for children's brains to organize, and store information as needed for reading." It makes sense to learn about reading instruction through neurology as reading is a complex process that occurs in the brain. The book travels from language acquisition to proficient reading, as will this book review. The authors begin the journey at a mere 42 minutes after birth.

Infants have been observed mimicking adults within in an hour of entering the world. This phenomenon, although not connected explicitly in the book, could be the work of mirror neurons. During observation, mirror neurons fire similarly to the brain completing the task. Mirror neurons provide an answer to important questions regarding learning. These special neurons help drive learning, and could play a large role in language acquisition. Researchers have located mirror neurons in Broca's area, the speech center of the brain found in the inferior frontal gyrus.

The first section of *Building the Reading Brain PreK-3* deals with language acquisition in the home. Language acquisition begins before birth. The brain is hard-wired for language; fortunately, parental intuition fits nicely with early language acquisition—talking, talking, and more talking. Parents talk to their babies and children, which is exactly what the child needs to acquire language. Although the brain's plasticity allows for accelerated learning-- one new word every two hours--reading earlier is not better. The brain is hard-wired for language, not reading. Reading is an unnatural process, and must be taught, though not before the brain is ready. Early reading instruction, however, relies on early language skills. The next section of *Building the Reading Brain PreK-3* takes the reader to school as brains prepare to read.

Chapter 5 begins the discussion of rewiring the brain for reading. First, the brain must be primed for reading. Brains learn to pay attention, process rapidly, and begin to reshape for reading. It was

refreshing to see the spotlight on attention as it can sometimes be inadvertently neglected. Not only do children have to pay attention in order to read, they must be able to block out other stimuli, a necessary process conducted by inhibitory neurons. "Teaching may be the very act of directing concentration" (p. 79). However, as students focus, they should also be able to process quickly. Ways to increase processing are described on p. 165. Perhaps educators do not see attention as processing autonomous instructional objectives, but after reading *Building the Reading Brain PreK-3* this belief may change. The role of attention and processing has direct implications for instruction.

According to the authors, phonemic awareness plays an integral part in reshaping the brain for reading. Not only is the ability to hear and manipulate sounds a strong predictor of proficient reading, but necessary for the rewiring process in the brain. The authors assert that phonemic awareness comes before reading, while some believe it develops in tandem, and still others believe phonemic awareness is a byproduct of proficient reading, so perhaps neuroscience can help settle this debate. If, indeed, neural reading pathways are created by phonemic awareness, then researchers should conduct additional research to determine the validity of this claim.

So what happens in the brain when a child reads a word? Chapter 2 covers this in scientific detail and supports the reader with flow charts and diagrams. The flow charts follow neurological activity when producing speech, and when reading. A reader might infer combining the two processes would render a nice illustration of reading aloud, yet the authors do not mention this directly. In addition, drawings of the brain are labeled, and described in reference to language, literacy, and reading. The writing process is also described. This chapter is foundational in the book as many of the areas of the brain and processes are referenced throughout. Chapter 2 helps build the readers schemata for the technical portions in the book that describe the reading process.

In the second section of the book, the child has left home and is attending school. Hopefully, the teacher has read this book, and will know just where, when, and how to begin reading instruction. Nevills and Wolfe tell a familiar story about teaching phonics first and fast. Unfortunately, it sounds like they do not suggest explicit comprehension instruction until second grade, but this is most likely a misinterpretation by the reader, therefore take note of this error, and seek to mend it during your reading of *Building the Reading Brain PreK-3*.

The discussion of phonics is quite interesting. They speak of "Brain Compatible Phonics Instruction" (p. 104). This is where the authors make good on their claim to analyze instruction on brain compatibility. For example, they suggest a sound to letter approach, and recommend word walls separated by sounds instead of letters. They use brain research to support these recommendations, and encourage teachers to think about "confusion-free phonological development" (p. 107). The scary implication of this statement, however, is that certain types of phonics instruction that will confuse learners and do more harm than good. This, among many others, is a great reason to read this book thoroughly and apply it teachings in the classroom.

The authors are not afraid to take a stand. They rebuke the use of context clues for remembering words, and promote analyzing or anchoring as better strategies. Complaints are invariably followed by suggestions. The authors do this again when discussing vocabulary instruction. It is common to

hear that students learn most of their vocabulary through reading. On the contrary, research says that reading vocabularies do not exceed language vocabularies until around the eighth grade. This would indicate a strong need for vocabulary instruction prior to high school.

The discussion on comprehension is coupled with interest—another delightfully refreshing aspect of the book. The authors encourage teachers to involve the limbic system so students are more likely to recall and understand. As an extreme example, the authors suggest having class outside because people are more likely to remember when they are pleased with their environment. The previous statement is the direct positive result from studying the reading process from a neurological perspective. Rather than reiterating that students connect reading to their schema, a simple shift in environment is suggested to enhance comprehension.

As the authors discuss yet another "pillar" of reading, they explain an interesting perspective on fluency. Fluency is not how fast words can be read, that is more accurately described as word recognition automaticity. A true measure of fluency is the time is takes for a student to read and understand. Of course this deserves expounding, and certainly calls for further research. Could this little twist on fluency begin a new conversation on fluency's relationship with comprehension?

Thus far, the story of the reading brain has been told from language acquisition to fluency. What happens when students do not become fluent? The authors tackle this subject first. Chapter 1 explores biological and environmental reasons for struggling readers. If students are identified as at-risk, they urge teachers and parents to not delay in seeking intervention. Although no specific strategies for struggling readers were discussed, the indicators and reasons were described in detail.

Heretofore, this book review followed the somewhat linear (possibly reductionist) progression of reading from birth to proficiency; nevertheless, an unexpected bonus is found in chapter 7. In this reviewers opinion, Nevills and Wolfe provide the best explanation of the tier process in regards to RTI (Responsiveness to Intervention). This example illustrates the broad implications derived from *Building the Reading Brain PreK-3*.

The pragmatic nature of this text is worth exploring further. Some reading research has a tendency to be critical of national reports and federally funded research (Allington, 2002; Goodman, 2004), such as the report of the National Reading Panel (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000). Nevills and Wolfe cite these articles and reports throughout the book to justify certain educational practices in reading instruction. For example, the National Reading Panel's "five pillars of reading" are used to frame entire chapters and components of reading instruction. In addition, *Reading First* is cited to describe the varying approaches to classroom phonics instruction. This is clearly an example of researchers finding the good in federally funded research. Too often the federal government is condemned for their efforts; even so, the authors gamely give credit where credit is due, and use the research to support their cognitive study of reading research.

Nevills and Wolfe captured a vast amount of information in *Building the Reading Brain PreK-3*, and present it pragmatically to researchers, teachers, parents, or anyone who might be interested in expanding their knowledge of what the brain does when they read. The book possesses solid

research, and uncovers ways to increase reading efficiency of the brain through existing and new brain compatible methods. The jovial cover is just a "red herring." The book is truly intense, and highly recommended.

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Reviewed by Chase J. Young, Teacher, McKinney Independent School District, and doctoral student at the University of North Texas.

Poe, Catrina; Spagnola-Doyle, Carrie & Barrett, Stacy. (2009). *Power Up: A Practical Student's Guide to Online Learning*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Pages: 144 ISBN: 978-0135029336

Online students can be better retained, experience greater course satisfaction, and learn more in less time with greater ease and confidence when an online course is linked to an Academic Support System and is designed with activities and information that assist them to become a collegial group and to learn more effectively and efficiently. (Christ, 2002)

Registering for an online course was a very daunting experience for me as an International student. I did not know what to expect in this educational format, but thanks to *Power Up! A Practical Student's Guide to Online Learning*, I made it through. This book furnished me with information to help me succeed in this new mode of learning. The authors are educators with vast experience in teaching, developing, and taking part in online learning. Understanding that online learning is often the thief of precious time, Poe, Spagnola-Doyle and Barrett skillfully weave their experience into 14 rich, but concise chapters. It is a book that will keep you focused with a "Power Up" section at the beginning of each chapter, and a "More Power Up" section, with rich website resources closing each chapter.

In simple, jargon free English, Poe et al. address poor time management as one of the common obstacles online learners face. They point out that people get carried away because of the flexibility

of online learning, by either dedicating too little or too much time to a course. They suggest two basic approaches on how to pace yourself. First, they suggest "not to worry about how much time" you are spending on each item, but "to simply spend as much time as you need to absorb the information" (p. 80). The second approach is for students with time constraints to use a formula, for example, spend 5 hour on a paper worth 10% of the grades, or 10 hours on a paper worth 20% of the grades. This discussion of pacing oneself is very useful for both novice and experienced students in online learning environments.

I could relate to the experiences outlined in the various chapters. As a new online learner myself, I sometimes felt distraught, but the authors successfully boosted my confidence level and adjusted my attitude. The authors' use of an analogy of a foreign land particularly resonated with me. "Look at your introduction to online learning as you would your first visit to a foreign country" (p. 8). This analogy demonstrates the authors' understanding of how foreign this educational format is to the non-digital student.

The use of the comprehensive chapter opening illustration is appropriate for this book. I found the tips for journaling, goal setting, and Internet research very important tools for success in online learning. I give credit to the authors for considering a section on plagiarism (p. 73), and ergonomics (p. 94) as something we overlook for student success. I believe that the information in this guide can be used by faculty to consider the needs of international online students. Yet, the book successfully inspires an attitude for success for the new online student it lacks the strength of luring one to read it again, as it is just a guide book.

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Reviewed by Daurice K. Nyirongo, Virginia Tech University.

Popham. W. James. (2010). *Classroom Assessment: What Teachers Need to Know* (6th Edition). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Pages: 528 ISBN: 978-0137002337

Classroom assessment refers to the process used in the classroom by the teacher to obtain information about students' knowledge, skill, practice, behavior and performances on assessment tasks, either as a group or individually, using a wide range of assessment methods, to determine the extent to which students are achieving the target instructional outcomes (Gallagher, 1998; Gronlund,

1998). It involves various activities including, but are not limited to, developing assessment methods such as paper-pencil tests and performance measures; administering, scoring, and interpreting assessment results; developing grading procedures; communicating assessment results; and using them in making educational decisions (AFT, NCME, & NEA, 1990; Zhang & Burry-Stock, 2003).

For the most part, assessment methods can be classified as traditional or alternative based on the extent to which they simulate performance in the real world (i.e., realism of assessment tasks), the extent to which they measure higher learning outcomes and requires demonstration of multiple skills (i.e., complexity of tasks), the amount of time needed for the assessment, and the amount of judgment involved in scoring (Gronlund, 2006).

Traditional assessments such as multiple-choice, true-false, matching, completion, and short-answer items are often lower in realism and complexity of the tasks assessed, but require little time to administer and can be scored quickly and objectively (Gronlund, 2006). Alternative assessments such as portfolios, student self assessment, observations, and other performance-based assessments are higher in both realism and complexity of the tasks assessed, but require large amounts of time to use, and that scoring is judgmental and less objective than traditional assessments (Gronlund, 2006).

Over the past years, considerable amount of qualitative and quantitative research have examined classroom assessment practices of teachers across different subject areas and school levels.

McMillan, Myran and Workman (2002) found that teachers were mostly interested in assessing students' mastery or achievement and that performance assessment was used frequently. Morgan and Watson (2002) reported that most middle and high school teachers use teacher-constructed tests to assess students' achievement. In addition, Morgan and Watson found that most teachers view classroom assessment as an added requirement to their teaching job and not as a tool to improve their teaching.

There is enough evidence suggesting that in schools assessment mainly refers to tests, examinations and grading (Bezuk et al., 2001; Lissitz and Schafer, 2002; Van de Walle, 2001). School leaders have reached a point of believing that one cannot assess without assigning grades (Lissitz and Schafer, 2002). Although tests seem to be popular in schools, teachers seem to have different skills and views about tests. A study by Morgan and Watson (2002) revealed that different teachers interpreted similar students' work differently. McMillan (2001) studied the actual classroom assessment and grading practices of secondary school teachers in relation to specific class and determined whether meaningful relationships existed between teacher's assessment practices, grade level, subject matter, and ability levels of students. McMillan found that there was no meaningful relationship between teacher's assessment practices, grade level, subject matter and ability level.

The issues with classroom assessment can be addressed by providing efficient training for preservice and inservice teachers and the latest edition of *Classroom Assessment: What Teachers Need to Know* by W. James Popham is a timely, indispensable guide for this training.

This book contains necessary information to help teachers deal with the assessment concerns of

classroom teachers. The major theme is that classroom assessment should help teachers make better educational decisions. The organization of the book is well thought and chapters are separated along with the issues related to distance education. The book is divided into 16 chapters and an additional extended applications section.

The first five chapters discuss the fundamentals of classroom assessment providing information about why teachers need to know about assessment, what and how to assess, reliability, validity and absence of bias. The next six chapters focus on different traditional and alternative assessment techniques and provide detailed information on how one can apply to these techniques in a classroom setting. These include selected-response tests, constructed-response tests, performance assessment, portfolio assessment, affective assessment and formative and summative assessment.

The author continues the book with three chapters driving reader's attention to other important issues with classroom assessment and decision making based on assessment results. These include improving teacher-developed assessments, making sense out of standardized test scores, and appropriate and inappropriate test-preparation practices. The last two chapters divide the subject of grading to cover separately and in detail ways in which teachers can evaluate their own teaching and its impact on student progress and grades and how to grade students fairly and usefully. Finally "Extended Applications" appears at the end of the book and provides rich cases where students can apply what they've learned to authentic educational situations.

Each chapter contains several elements intended to foster mastery of its contents, including a summary of contents, a more succinct statement of what teachers really need to know about the chapter's contents, self-check exercises and a key, questions designed to promote thinking about the chapter's key concepts, and information about additional resources. Each chapter also contains a description of a fictitious teacher in a classroom situation related to one or more of the topics in the chapter. In addition to covering expertly the field of classroom assessment, this book also provides readers ample opportunities, in the "Decision Time" activities, to evaluate realistic classroom scenarios and to make informed decisions about testing and assessment based on what they've learned in each chapter. It also retains the highly regarded feature, "Parent Talk," so new teachers can learn effective ways to communicate with parents about their children's grades and educational progress.

Classroom Assessment: What Teachers Need to Know is well written, clearly explained, and relevant to all those who are interested in best practices in classroom assessment. It covers both contemporary classroom assessment issues, including No Child Left Behind, instructor accountability, and formative assessments, while also covering traditional assessment topics such as assessment validity and assessment reliability. Chapter by chapter, it takes the reader through the different kinds of classroom assessment techniques, how to plan them, how to implement them, how analyze the assessment data, and how to make decision based on the results. If you are involved in any aspect of classroom assessment as an educator, I would strongly recommend this book for a successful start.

One recommendation I personally can provide for improving this book is that in the next edition, the author focuses on the writing style by easing the informal tone a little bit. As it was noted in the

book description, the book has a "humorous tone" during the content presentation in an effort to reduce the complexity of content. However, in striking a humorous tone too frequently and sometimes doing it when it is not even necessary, the author is interrupting the flow of the text.

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