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Brief reviews for January 2010

Cloud, Nancy; Genesee, Fred & Hamayan, Else. (2009). *Literacy Instruction for English Language Learners: A Teacher's Guide to Research-Based Practices*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Pages: 248 Price: \$31.25 ISBN: 032502264X

Bridging the gap between research and practice can be challenging for researchers and teachers alike. *Literacy Instruction for English Language Learners: A Teacher's Guide to Research-Based Practices* addresses that challenge, synthesizing research findings regarding English language learner (ELL) literacy, in a format designed to directly inform practice. Written by practice-savvy researchers to promote research-savvy teaching, this book diminishes the gap between the two worlds. If anything, there may be insufficient discussion surrounding research findings; teachers looking for the relative advantages and disadvantages of various approaches may not be satisfied with the authors' somewhat didactic presentation of the research here.

Cloud, Genesee, and Hamayan organize their book into six chapters, each exploring an aspect of instructing or supporting ELL literacy in both ESL and mainstream classrooms. The first chapter entitled "Foundations," reviews basic information about ELL students and literacy, ensuring that the chapters that follow are accessible to all readers. The remainder of the book includes topics such as emergent literacy, biliteracy, first-to-second-language transfer, academic and social language proficiency, connecting reading and writing, and assessment. The book as a whole addresses all levels of ELL literacy, and each chapter provides a bevy of informative tools inserted throughout the text, including notes to administrators, ideas for teacher action research, relevant research findings, lists that review principles of the approaches discussed, step-by-step lists for integrating ideas into practice, examples of lesson and unit plans, and additional resources. This variety of supplemental information results in a true community resource, appropriate for all educators, and invaluable for those who have limited training or experience with ELL students.

Indeed, Cloud et al. explicitly note in the introduction that this book may be useful to all educators who are responsible for the education of ELLs. Although content-wise this is undoubtedly true, the cohesiveness of the book as a whole is at times compromised by the authors' overgeneralization of their audience. The inconsistency surrounding audience (e.g. ESL teachers verses mainstream teachers, administrators) proves distracting at times. Although some chapters acknowledge a specific teacher audience, the targeted audience generally remains nebulous. As much as the authors designed the *Literacy Instruction for English Language Learners* to apply to all educators, how it addresses its audience(s) varies, and at times the authors' agenda of placing the responsibility of ELL literacy on all educators is confounded by blanket suggestions that would be best directed at a specific investors in this cause.

It is only with respect to direction regarding curricular, in addition to instructional, decisions that the authors do not capitalize on research findings to advance discussion. Although the authors present examples both of themed units and content-area units, for use in ESL and mainstream classrooms respectively, they do not distinguish between the two regarding their impact on ELL literacy. Instead, the discussion centers on the relative demands of ELLs in these settings, and how to respond to those demands, which is relevant and helpful to teachers, yet lacking in empirical insight into how each approach might benefit ELL progress. Indeed, if there were more information here, teachers could be better equipped to create curriculum, in addition to preparing instruction to satisfy that curriculum. Similarly, this discussion may help to refine teacher appreciation of how and why themed units can benefit ELL students, as themed units in practice often have fairly arbitrary topics, and are focused on activities rather than objectives

Beyond the vast amount of information and advice on ELL literacy, I found the authors' consistency surrounding what ELLs require from their educators of great value. Cloud and colleagues advocate for the ELL population; to ensure that all teachers contribute to ELL progress, they urge educators to embrace and validate the community from which their ELL students come. From insisting upon the availability of books in students' first languages in the school library, to encouraging the use of students' first language to help them with English, to reminding teachers to "make sure that [ELL] identities are reflected and honored in the classroom in meaningful and significant ways," the portrayal of ELL students and their needs is holistic and dynamic (p. 105). In presenting us with this volume, Cloud et al. accomplish their title claim: They effectively

reduce the gap between research and practice, ultimately enabling all teachers to better serve their ELL population.

Reviewed by Sarah Jey Whitehead, University of Texas at Austin

Compton-Lilly, Catherine. (Ed.). (2009). *Breaking the Silence; Recognizing the Social and Cultural Resources Students Bring to the Classroom*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Pages: 158 Price: \$29.95 ISBN: 978-0-87207-466-8

Catherine Compton-Lilly, an Assistant Professor of Literacy at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, has gathered a collection of essays related to literacy in a socio-cultural context in her most recent work. The essays included are based in socio-cultural theories about learning and literacy, and support the belief that a child's learning does not occur separately from other aspects of their life. The essays, sandwiched between Compton-Lilly's own shared work over ten years with a student named Alicia, reflect the idea that learning is a social process within particular contexts, these contexts involve power, and is grounded in the histories of people. Furthermore, this collection contends learning is not separate from a child's identity and children learn messages about race, gender, and class from texts they read. Compton-Lilly believes that our current educational environment in the United States focuses only on surface skills of reading. By focusing on the surface, teaching and learning are isolated from social and cultural contexts. This focus negates the relevance of social and cultural diversity and simplifies teaching and learning to the simple transference of skills. By focusing on the surface, we ignore the fact that teaching and learning are human activities that involve unique individuals. This collection of essays reminds educators to look beyond the surface and to examine deep issues involved in teaching and learning. The essays are situated in classroom contexts and include recommendations for educators and classroom applications at the end of each. Though the emphasis is on learning taking place in today's classrooms and is appealing to classroom teachers, the information presented in each chapter is relevant to all those involved in educating children and preparing future classroom teachers. Each chapter concludes with a list of references cited and a recommendation for continued reading allowing the reader to further research each topic.

Breaking the Silence begins with an introduction to Compton-Lilly's former first grade student, Alicia. Alicia's story is a powerful lesson about the importance of socio-cultural understandings of literacy and learning. Events shared in Alicia's life serve to clarify three key concepts: historical precedence, literacy practices, and ideology. Alicia's journey as a reader and writer demonstrates how literacy and socio-cultural factors work together and become entangled. After meeting Alicia, the reader is introduced to the collection of writings in two parts. Part one discusses considerations for socio-cultural teaching including discussions on new literacy studies, critical race theory, cultural-historical approaches to teaching, and decontextualized language. Deborah Appleman, a professor at Carleton College, also contributes a cautionary consideration of classroom research and relates her own experiences in the dual role as both teacher and researcher. Her dilemmas of ethnographic research are well articulated and provide the reader with pertinent ideas to consider when conducting research in classrooms. Specifically, she discusses the issue of power in relationships developed between the researcher and the researched and the need for informed consent when both conducting research and sharing research findings.

Part two of *Breaking the Silence* provides the reader with essays on working with diverse students and families. This section of the book begins with an essay by Margaret Hawkins and Kathleen Nicoletti. Hawkins and Nicoletti present a very familiar scenario of a teacher describing participation in the science fair to a fourth grade class - heavily laden with scientific and procedural terminology. They then challenge the reader to view this fictional scenario through the eyes of an English-language learner (ELL), calling attention to the role of language in schooling. The authors further challenge the reader to examine the gap between what an ELL student brings to school and what is expected in school as just that- a gap. This challenges the idea that the ELL student is deficient and allows for the cultural experiences and rich language the ELL student brings to the classroom to have value. Part two continues with a discussion of culturally relevant pedagogy and ways to create partnerships that support learning between diverse families and schools.

Breaking the Silence concludes with a second look at Alicia within the context of a challenge to its readers. What would have changed for Alicia as a reader and student if her teachers had reflected carefully on their own attitudes toward race, class, and gender? Perhaps Alicia would have found something in the curriculum to inspire her in her quest for lifelong learning. This echoes the central theme of this book - what can teachers do in classrooms to help students of all races, genders, and classes feel valued and become engaged in the learning process? What is a teacher's responsibility to all of their students? Teachers must find ways to break the silence and create nurturing and inviting environments in their classrooms for all students to be successful students.

This collection of essays serves as a challenge to educators. In an age of accountability and testing demands, this book reminds us that students learn in social contexts within systems of power and privilege. Not only are readers provided with scenarios and challenges throughout the book that focus on the socio-cultural aspects of learning, they are also provided with concrete and practical suggestions for classroom use. The strength of this book is a balance between theory and practice. Teachers are provided with a theoretical framework for teaching in diverse classrooms and are then provided with classroom activities and further readings to implement change.

Compton-Lilly has assembled a well designed collection of essays examining the socio-cultural aspects of literacy education. At the same time, she has provided a socio-cultural lens for education in general. Much of what she addresses in literacy is applicable to all diverse classroom learning situations. By focusing on student learning and then on ways to engage families in schools, she provides practical suggestions for teachers working in diverse settings. She issues a challenge to teachers and provides them with a basic set of tools to get started. With the ideas suggested teachers can begin to break the silence in their classrooms and school communities.

Reviewed by Amy Spiker, doctoral student in Literacy Education at the University of Wyoming. She is also a member of the faculty at the University of Wyoming as an Academic Professional Lecturer, teaching methods courses in Elementary Literacy Education and supervising student teaching experiences. Prior to her university experiences she was a reading teacher and elementary classroom teacher for eighteen years.

James, Abigail Norfleet. (2009). *Teaching the Female Brain: How Girls Learn Math and Science*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Pages: 188 Price: \$33.95 ISBN: 978-1-4129-6710-5

Increasing girls' interest in math and science classes and helping to overcome the social perception of girls' inferiority in these subjects has been a goal of educators in recent years. James' contribution to this literature details the gender differences of the brain, explains the significance of these differences in terms of learning, and recommends strategies to improve math and science instruction for female students. While popular opinion has often held that gender differences in achievement rates for math and science is entirely a matter of socialization, brain science is pointing to measurable gender differences between male and female brains that may impact learning, and specifically math and science learning. The implication is not that girls are less capable than boys in these subject areas, but that different teaching techniques may be generally more effective for girls than for boys.

I say generally, because James is careful to point out that gender brain differences are differences between men and women as groups; the brain of any given female may be closer to that of the typical male brain, and vice versa. Thus, James' techniques are useful not just for educators teaching girls exclusively, but for any educator who wants to diversify teaching techniques so as to optimize learning opportunities for all students. Because girls, in general, exhibit strong verbal skills, James spends a significant portion of the book discussing verbal strategies for teaching math and science. Throughout the book blocks of text, set apart by background color, offer "Suggestions for Applying the Theory to Your Classroom." This gives the book a nice mix of theory and application, a most useful combination for teachers.

A frequent criticism of books applying brain science to teaching has been that the science is not always accurate as described. Although James does not reference the title, her descriptions of the female brain are consistent with those of the female psychiatrist Louann Brizendine in *The Female Brain* (2006). James' description of the uniquely female stress response in chapter 3, "Dealing with Stress," also compares favorably with the personal stress reaction described by actress, author, and mathematician Danica McKellar (Amazon Video, n.d.).

Teaching the Female Brain will be a useful tool for math and science educators, facilitating a diversity of instructional strategies. It is highly recommended.

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Brizendine, Louann. (2006). *The female brain*. New York: Morgan Road Books.

Amazon Video (Producer). (n.d.) *Danica McKellar on Amazon.com: Part 1, A girl learns to love math*. [Video file]. Retrieved from <http://www.amazon.com/gp/mpd/permalink/m295J7TFVIVLRE>

Reviewed by Christina Cicchetti, Reference/Education Librarian, University of California-Riverside.

Lei, Jing, Conway, Paul F., & Zhao, Yong. (2008). *The Digital Pencil: One-to-One Computing for Children*. New York: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Pages: 272 Price: \$80.00 ISBN: 0805860603

Jing Lei, Paul Conway and Yong Zhao have summarized, through a sequence of chapters, the background and issues to consider when teachers and administrators are considering the adoption of laptop computers (and other handheld digital devices) within schools and informal educational settings. The discussion of these issues is grounded in studies and descriptions of how private schools and school systems have encouraged teachers and students to use laptops for a variety of school tasks. Each author shares experiences from China, Ireland, or the United States. The details shared in this book can guide other educators' decisions to adopt or not to adopt; and if to adopt a laptop (or tablet or handheld) for each student in specific grade levels or schools, how to best employ this device so the students' experiences are appropriate and beneficial.

The Digital Pencil begins with a review of the history behind laptop use in schools. As laptops are gradually assuming the role of desktop computers in society, it becomes necessary to examine the role these devices have within the complex ecosystem that classrooms tend to be. Determining this role or niche, especially at the individual level, facilitates the laptop's perception as an innovative appliance. The laptop then facilitates innovative completion of instructional tasks in creative ways (often similar to the use of technology within the workplace). When used effectively, laptops, handhelds, and tablets have the capacity to equip all learners so subject expertise is distributed among many. In this way, subject expertise and social capital can be expanded to benefit more members of society due to students' enhanced communicative capacities. Each person's capacity to use technology effectively influences the level of access and the manner in which the individual will use the technology to communicate, create and investigate. These complex factors are to be recognized and understood so teachers and students use laptops (and all technology tools or devices) effectively.

The authors present six arguments for adopting one-to-one computing in schools: (a) the fear of being left behind; (b) using better tools often yields better outcomes for students' educational experiences; (c) using laptops (or other portable technology devices) increases instructional moments in multiple environments; (d) digital resources and field trips expand how teachers present instructional information; (e) equitable access can support societal needs; and (f) portable, wireless, technological devices are often aesthetic and durable in its design while appealing to or engaging students. Descriptions of documented and observed uses of laptops are shared as rationales for these arguments. Six key questions are posed for educators to consider.

- Do students and teachers have the prerequisite skills to meaningfully use Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)?
- Which circumstances support consistent access to technologies?
- Are users' experiences of appropriate quality to justify the expenditure and time investment?
- Will the expenditures of professional development, curricular planning and the development of personalized resources yield desirable outcomes?
- Are we considering the cost to society and individuals if we choose not to invest in laptops (and similar portable, digital devices) for students in classrooms?
- Do we have a good understanding of the connection between motivation and technology usage?

Policymakers' comments and examples from research literature guide us to pose these questions from time to time.

Chapter three explains the interacting and dependent conditions so school environments are conducive to consistent and appropriate one-to-one computer use in classrooms: (a) infrastructure; (b) management of resources; (c) technical support; (d) administrative leadership; (e) teachers', parents' and students' expectations; (f) characteristics of formal professional development; and (g) school culture and value ascribed to the uses of technology in daily life. It is critical to recognize that these six conditions are interdependent. Understanding how these conditions interact within a specific school environment can guide the manner in which portable, digital devices are introduced over time. Recognizing how these environmental characteristics and actions change over time can guide stakeholders and educators to successful outcomes. The text provides examples of how specific schools identified these conditions and made decisions to enhance their use of portable, digital devices.

The uses of tablet PCs, personal digital assistants (PDAs), graphing calculators, portable writing devices and interactive learning systems to support content area instruction are described through examples within school settings. Unfortunately, there are several challenges in using portable, digital devices. Discussion of these challenges, based on anecdotes collected by researchers, is shared in chapter five. Keeping the devices adequately charged and in good repair requires planning time and appropriate resources. Teachers have to invest time to uncover appropriate software and peripherals to provide content area instruction while encouraging students to use these portable, digital devices. The cost of providing and maintaining these digital devices and the associative costs of purchasing wireless connection fees can extend beyond the means of some school districts. Data-rich information may not be shared through a digital, portable device due to limited data storage capacity of these devices. Investing time to discuss these issues, learning about these features, and considering the impact of portable, digital technology within the complex ecosystem of classrooms are preliminary steps to maximize the benefit of portable, digital devices in classrooms.

Chapter six describes the changes within students' homes and for parents and the homebound when digital computing is introduced at school and at home. Computers can provide multimedia documentation and information as well as facilitate students in completing well-designed and organized evidence of their increased knowledge of a specific topic and skill development. Connecting parents, students and educators is often perceived as beneficial, especially when guidelines are disseminated and observed. Data collected by the NPR/Kaiser/Kennedy School of Government's 1999 Report and the U. S. Census Bureau's 2005 Report provides us evidence that increasing numbers of households provide computer and Internet access for their children. This evidence does reveal that access to computers and the Internet is not yet universal, despite the impression most children and adolescents have that technology is ubiquitous and necessary, as evidenced by data collected in the Pew Internet and American Life Project (collected since 2000 and ongoing). As educators, we have to accept these realities and create classrooms that support students' needs to use technology as seamlessly and for a range of tasks, as we learned to communicate using paper and pencil. This chapter also notes the tendency in many homes that digital media is central or the source of media consumption. Building on the message of two books from the 1980s, *The Early Window* and *The Plug-In Drug*, this chapter presents findings from a study completed between 1998 and 2000 in England and Wales, *ScreenPlay: Children and Computing in the Home*. This study revealed subtle clues to the nature of access to technology and the kinds of disparities that exist. Educators may need to seek out these signs of disparities and design classrooms and instructional activities to undermine these disparities in access to and use of technology, and guide parents to understand their role in managing their child's access to and use of technology beyond the school's walls.

To evaluate efforts in incorporating portable, digital devices in educational settings and the lessons gleaned from evaluation studies of one-to-one computing, the authors encourage educators and stakeholders to abide by four principles or standards of quality evaluations: utility, feasibility, propriety, and accuracy. Presentation of key details from specific evaluations of one-to-one computing initiatives serves as a vehicle for clarifying how future one-to-one computing initiatives could be implemented and evaluated to meet the goals and expectations often ascribed to such educational programs. The authors found merit in Zucker and McGhee's (2005) framework for evaluating one-to-one computing initiatives, due to its focus on noting the impact and presence of contextual distinctions of implementation and identifying interactions, intermediate and ultimate outcomes. Another key point is to consider that design and selection of technology devices are contextually sensitive, often yielding varying outcomes, in an attempt to incorporate innovative solutions to meet the needs of individual students. The use of technology is impacting the other elements of a classroom ecological system, as well as being shaped by these elements. Effective evaluation of one-to-one computing systems requires educators to consider how the use of technology is changing teaching practices and strategies of communication and consider why these changes are happening

at the pace they occur. Identifying these changes and determining how these changes impact the classroom ecological system can pinpoint beneficial practices, the scalability and further implementation of such technological innovations.

The final chapter describes the bi-directional changes and interaction between people and technology. During this interaction, individuals (teachers and students), the educational setting, technology use and learning practices evolve continuously. The increasing presence of Web 2.0, the expanding enrollments and use of e-learning, virtual classrooms or schools and mobile learning forums, and the degree to which our society has become dependent on networks to support human-computer interactions are provided as evidence for embracing digital citizenship and becoming pro-active in how educators choose to use technology and support students as they extend their skillful use of technology.

This book includes a thorough list of references, a list of sixteen ubiquitous computing projects and a list of thirty-one studies of the implementation of one-to-one computing initiatives prior to 2005 for further reading. For the educators among us who prefer to have a guide when they investigate new uses of technology for teaching and learning, this book serves as a source to understand the power and advantageous use of digital pencils, or portable, digital devices.

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Reviewed by Susan Farber, doctoral candidate in Curriculum and Instruction (with a focus on Instructional Design and Technology) at the College of Education, Criminal Justice and Human Services, the University of Cincinnati.

Manning, Maryann; Morrison, Gayle & Camp, Deborah. (2009). *Creating the Best Literacy Block Ever: A Framework for Successfully Managing, Teaching, and Assessing in an Extended Literacy Block, Grades K – 3*. New York: Scholastic.

Pages: 344 Price: \$33.99 ISBN: 978-0-545-05891-9

Creating the Best Literacy Block Ever by Maryann Manning, Gayle Morrison, and Deborah Camp is a book I will recommend to the new first grade teacher I am mentoring this year. This book will serve as a support to my protégée as she learns to develop the reading portion of her literacy block. The carefully thought out chapters detailing a variety of concerns associated with a literacy block are particularly helpful for new teachers. A sampling of some of the chapter titles – "Second Grade Literacy Block," "The Home-School Connection," "Students with Special Needs," and "The Theory that Informs Our Practice" – reveals the authors' attention to a global focus, rather than a narrow skills-based view of literacy teaching and learning.

In the section titled, "Photo Essay: Welcome to Gayle's Classroom," the authors briefly immerse the reader into what they have determined are the critical elements of an effective literacy block: community gathering, intentional instruction, independent engagement, peer interaction, and community sharing. Their clear explanations effectively scaffold learning for teachers new to the idea of a literacy block where reading and writing are equally important, at the same time that they emphasize that their structure was developed over time through trial and error. In other words, well-informed, knowledgeable teachers developed classroom structures that help readers develop a love of reading as they learn strategies for becoming better readers.

In eleven chapters, this book describes a variety of ways to effectively engage, teach, assess, and target the specific needs of all children, regardless of their current literacy development. The authors spend considerable time discussing assessment, home-school connections, and the importance of developing a philosophy of teaching and learning. Although this is not a political book, Manning, Morrison, and Camp make sure that the reader understands that what counts is for kids to choose books that they want to read and can understand, rather than being fed a steady diet of leveled books that are often bland and may have the unintended effect of turning kids off reading. And, of course, one way we can help students discover good books is by getting to know what they're interested in; this is why creating a safe classroom community by cultivating relationships among students and between teachers and students is critical to learning.

One of the chapters I found particularly helpful was "Literacy Development." Here the authors give a clear and concise

review of the four cueing systems – graphophonic, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic – and clearly identify their philosophy of teaching reading as espousing the sociopsycholinguistic view of the reading process. This is a good introduction for teachers new to these ideas and a great review for more experienced teachers.

Although I began this review stating that this book would be ideal for a new teacher, I must admit that I found myself making lots of notes in the margins as I thought of aspects in my own classroom that needed revising. This would make an ideal book, then for a teacher study group as well as a college course.

Reviewed by Elisa Waingort, Dalhousie Elementary School, Calgary, Alberta, Canada. She currently teaches second grade bilingual students and is a doctoral student at the University of South Australia, Adelaide.

Olson, Kristen. (2009). *Wounded by School: Recapturing the Joy in Learning and Standing Up to Old School Culture*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Pages: 222 Price: \$21.95 ISBN: 978-0-8077-4956-2

Many professional educators will be stunned when they read Olson's new book *Wounded by School*. While the ideas presented are intellectually stimulating, many results of her hundreds of interviews detailing people's school experiences are painful to read. Olson, an educational consultant who holds a doctorate from Harvard Graduate School, discusses school "wounds" ranging from those that stem from the institution of school itself to those that are more concrete and experienced by students, parents and even teachers. The wounds that Olson describes are far reaching and include everyday losses of pleasure in learning, school ingrained beliefs that we are not smart or competent, painful and burning memories of shaming experiences in school that produce anxiety and as result, shut down the learning process, as well as chronic anger at teachers or other authority figures for not being "seen" in school (p. 19). Olson maintains that the most under-identified wounded children in our schools are those frequently labeled "average," and as a result receive no special attention or instruction in schools, but rather just blend in and demand little of educators.

Many of the cited examples, including those related to creativity, compliance, underestimation and simply being labeled "average", are described via a narrative interview with someone who had such an experience. In this way, Olson not only describes the nature of the wound but puts a *face* on it through the narrative example. Over a ten year span, Olson interviewed individuals about their school experiences; people of all different ages, races and professions, from all types of schools, and from all walks of life. She maintains that these experiences often have a consequential impact on the learning pattern. Moreover, such "injuries" may be the cause for underperformance and/or disengagement of many students, thus elevating the underlying wound to unique importance, not only for the parent but also for educational leaders and teachers.

Organized into two parts (Part I: "Broken" and Part II: "Healing") and nine chapters, the book initially discusses the essence of what Olson refers to as school "wounds." For example, in chapter 1 we are introduced to Delmar. Now a successful student at a charter high school in Massachusetts, Delmar had been arrested by the local police outside of his previous high school. "Traditional high school was largely a place of frustration and negative feedback for Delmar, in spite of his academic promise" (p. 16). He was frequently suspended for being tardy, even though he had to work part time to support himself. He credits the small size of his new school along with the caring teachers and social workers at his charter school for helping him find balance and realize the importance of staying in school. Another subject, Marcus, now a successful architect outside of Chicago, readily relays shameful school experiences from decades ago. After spending nine elementary years in a school building that Marcus remembers looking like a "penitentiary" and struggling daily with his inability to read, Marcus recalls feeling "edgy and nervous" about school, feelings that to this day still bother him (p. 23). These are the types of school wounding experiences that Olson suggests can have lifetime consequences.

The compilation of stories speaks to what is not only wrong with America's schools, but also what teachers and parents can do to heal those who are truly wounded by their school experiences. She dares to raise daunting questions: What kind of schools does society need? If we are still using an outdated, agrarian style of schooling, what are we preparing our students for? Does this style of teaching engage most learners? If not, why are we so faithfully committed to maintaining the status quo? It is not necessarily the author's opinion that the entire system of schooling should be scrapped, but rather that we need to engage in meaningful and reflective discussion on some of its "more glaring warts and flaws" (p. 7).

Part II of the book is dedicated to healing the wounds often created and experienced in school. Chapters four through nine explore the stages of healing: self-blame, changes in self-definition, grieving for lost school experiences and finally, committing to re-engagement in the learning process. She follows this chapter with a lengthy discussion of how schools themselves are wounded. David Rose, cofounder of the Center for Applied Technology asks "Who is disabled? The learner or the school?" (p. 114). As before, we vicariously experience wounded instruction when Olson relays her observations of an 11th grade math class in which "there was little chance for students to explore, interact with the concepts, try out their own ideas, or talk with one another about what was going on" (p. 115). Instead, quietness, orderly conduct, following precise instructions and lack of movement was "prized" by the teacher. She bemoans the lack of student engagement and stifling of intellectual curiosity and reports that students said "they didn't really learn anything" and the class was "kind of a waste" (p. 115). She contrasts this with another class in the same building in which the class was engaged, busy, industrious, and not at all quiet.

Part II concludes with chapters dedicated to those who help wounded students heal and the important roles of parents, teachers and fellow students. Again, via narrative interviews, she conveys stories of the importance of teachers and how through their actions, they can either wound or heal. She notes that the "live connection between two human beings in the instructional environment—the emotional experience of this interaction—is the soul of educative practice" (p. 166). What

teachers do with this power ultimately determines their effectiveness and may leave a lasting and even lifelong impression regarding the learning process.

The book is thought provoking and will no doubt provide valuable insight to educators, parents and students alike. The detailed research and countless interviews all seem to support Olson's hypothesis that today's schools are not justly serving our students. According to Olson, "Being denied passion is no longer acceptable in learning situations—it produces institutional despair and unacceptable educational underperformance" (p. 6). This is difficult and somewhat controversial ideology for educators to hear; we in education view teaching as a altruistic profession. To read in Olson's book the startling number of students, past and present who reflect upon their school experiences as educationally stunting, emotionally harrowing or otherwise harmful makes one question teaching as a career choice.

Regardless, the author dares to address the question that plagues many parents, educators and even students today: Where is the joy in learning? Olson desires school experiences for students that enable them to be actively thinking, engaged students. Essentially, she wants them to experience a joy of learning, both in and out of school. She speaks of the profound paradigm shift in education which must take place to move the emphasis from teaching to one of learning (p. 131). With most schools fundamentally structured as they were over one hundred years ago, one wonders how to go about making this change. As David Rose states, "Our curriculum is broken...and most instruction today is like learning how to drive a stagecoach when kids really need to operate a Ferrari" (p. 117).

This book appeals to a wide variety of readers, including those students who experienced school wounds, parents whose children attended schools that left an undeniable and often negative mark as well as brave teachers and other educational leaders and reformists. It would stimulate discussion in any graduate education course or be an excellent pick for a teacher book club. Beyond the personal school wounding stories that Olson relays is a tremendous opportunity for readers to contemplate the direction our schools should take and ask ourselves the larger questions: If schools are wounded, how can they be healed? Upon whose shoulders does the responsibility for educational reform lie? How do well-intentioned teachers even begin to provide for the diverse learning needs in their classrooms? If indeed school wounds run deep and wide, how do we begin to change a system that is so ingrained in American history? Perhaps the best place to start is, as Olson suggests in her final paragraph, "to work to change the conditions of school that lacerate" (p. 202). By doing so, we will be taking active steps in creating educational institutions that will serve our students better.

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

O'Neill, Peggy; Moore, Cindy & Huot, Brian. (2009). *A Guide to College Writing Assessment*. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press.

Pages: 218 Price: \$30.00 ISBN: 978-0-87421-732-2

A Guide to College Writing Assessment provides theoretical and historical background in writing assessment for writing program administrators (WPAs) and instructors in composition in American colleges. In addition, the book provides practical tools for WPAs to create their own large-scale writing assessments.

The audience for this text is very clearly targeted, consisting of professionals with disciplinary backgrounds in English literature or composition/rhetoric who perhaps have had negative experiences with assessment. They may feel unsatisfied with how assessments are used in their program but feel they lack the tools to adequately critique them. They may even be resentful of the time they spend dedicated to implementing assessments that are usually imposed from above, trying to reconcile them with their own program goals. They may also feel that assessment is a separate activity unrelated to teaching and learning.

The authors know their audience well. Moore, O'Neill and Huot have long worked to bridge the gap between the two disciplinary traditions of composition/rhetoric and writing assessment. They emphasize here that assessment should be seen as an opportunity—not a threat imposed from outside bodies anathema to the business of writing development, but as an integrative part of the mandate of a WPA and a powerful force in enhancing teaching and learning:

Those who are successful with assessment are able to perceive it as integral to their work as teachers and scholars (and to help others see it this way), understand it within a larger historical and theoretical framework, and negotiate various aspects of the institutional, departmental, or programmatic situation (p. 8).

Following from the argument that WPAs need a historical perspective of writing assessment theory, in chapter 2 the authors undertake a critical historical overview of the field of writing assessment in the US, beginning with Harvard's admissions writing exams in 1874. In this chapter, they discuss the shortcomings of using tests to solve educational problems, and the unexamined confidence that society and government decision-makers have in test scores as indicators of student progress and proficiency (and the accompanying danger of devaluing other sources of information, such as teacher observations from the classroom). The authors here stress that these dangers are not inevitable in large-scale language assessment but can be managed with well-designed, locally produced and responsive assessments.

Chapter 3 covers theoretical considerations, synthesizing information from the fields that inform current writing assessment research: applied linguistics (which probably doesn't seem so foreign to composition specialists) and educational measurement (which probably does). Huot's basic principles for writing assessment are front and centre here, namely, that

assessments should be *site-based, locally controlled, context-sensitive, rhetorically-based, accessible, and theoretically consistent*.

Chapter 4 follows up on what it means here to have a context-sensitive assessment. It outlines the questions to ask and the data that needs to be collected on the stakeholders involved, the goals and values of the writing program and how these goals are supported and these values are represented. In this chapter is a warning against the creation of "context-poor" assessments that do not mirror the consideration of context in composition instruction and research.

The following two chapters deal with the two major ways in which writing programs are involved with large-scale assessment—placement and proficiency. Here various approaches are reviewed but no single one is recommended, as local conditions mean local decisions: "An assessment that doesn't respond to the local context can not only outlive its usefulness, but even worse, harm teaching and learning" (p. 108).

The final two chapters deal with the evaluation of writing programs themselves, and of writing instruction and writing instructors. Step-by-step guidelines here include the information to obtain to conduct program and instructor assessments that meet exterior accountability requirements and that apply the principles of valid assessment practice as previously discussed.

Extensive appendices to the main text include:

- a timeline which juxtaposes writing assessment history in the US with other notable events in US educational history;
- samples of scoring rubrics, scoring guides and other examples of outcomes-based scoring tools to be used as starting points to be modified by WPAs;
- the 2006 Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) Position Statement on Writing Assessment.

While the book itself is very reader-friendly, as I read the historical overview of validity considerations in chapter 2, I felt happy to have had a previous background in educational measurement. Terms such as content validity, construct validity, and criterion validity are used without extensive explanation, creating a complexity which Figure 1 addresses but does not successfully clarify. Validity is explained more fully, however, in the following chapter on theoretical considerations. There is a "chicken and egg" situation here. It makes sense to begin the text with an overarching historical overview, but if the historical overview is framed in terms of validity, the explanation of validity needs to come before it. However, the solution to the difficulty is simple. If chapter 2 becomes unwieldy, skip ahead and read chapter 3 first, then return to chapter 2.

I would strongly recommend this book for anyone involved with post-secondary writing instruction and administration. Its "insider view" of the disciplinary community of its target audience means that the authors are aware of the compromises among stakeholder needs that WPAs must manage while pursuing the ideal assessment, and these challenges are taken into account in the advice that is given. This book sends a powerful—and indeed even inspirational—message. Instead of relying on outside bodies to provide assessments that don't fit locally, and then endeavour to interpret the results of them for you, it is possible to obtain the knowledge you need to define what a valid assessment would be for your context, and to ask the right questions to make sure that the assessment is serving the needs of your program.

Therefore, this text can provide WPAs with the tools to create their own assessments and to defend them, to better articulate the benefits AND the limitations of them, or simply to more effectively put into words their doubts about an assessment in use. Finally, the authors make a strong argument for WPAs to embrace assessment as a driver: as a way of setting the agenda in terms of the types of writing, and indeed, of knowledge, to be valued.

Reviewed by Beverly A. Baker, McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Pastore, Laurie, & Allyn, Pam. (2008). *The Complete Year in Reading and Writing: Grade 4*. New York: Scholastic.

Pages: 240 Price: \$25.99 ISBN: 978-0-545-04638-1

The series, *The Complete 4*, created by literacy advocates Laurie Pastore and Pam Allyn, offers a comprehensive K-5 language arts program that provides grade specific curriculum to meet the needs of developing young readers and writers, with each text building upon previous learning from the prior year. *The Complete Year in Reading and Writing: Grade 4*, is a flexible and adaptive guide for the teaching of reading, writing, and English conventions. The material is presented in a straightforward manner that is easy to use in any fourth grade classroom. Each unit is written and developed with a clear understanding of the developmental needs of fourth grade students in mind and is precisely aligned to concrete educational standards for the fourth grade. The main focus of the textbook is creating a solid reading and writing community, where students can share ideas and build confidence in their own language abilities. The book encourages students to set independent and attainable goals for reading and writing throughout the school year, as each unit provides scaffolding through detailed and deliberate instruction.

As a first step toward instituting the series, *The Complete 4* includes a thorough DVD with a grade level guide for each title in the series which provides an overview of the series, answers to commonly asked questions, assessment rubrics, resource sheets, a link to technology for the reading and writing classroom, and some suggestions for possible professional growth opportunities. In the program overview, Pam Allyn presents the major components of the series and illustrates their effectiveness with actual classroom demonstrations. The video highlights the deep interaction and collaboration during the

reading and writing process. It is a quick and excellent resource for teachers using the program, along with answers to questions that may arise with the use of the series. Understanding the growing advantages to using technology in the language arts classroom, one particularly advantageous feature included on the DVD is the section, "The Complete 4 and Digital Publishing." Ideas for creating and sharing student written text are offered, as well as, a link to the Realebooks website, used for digital publishing. Also included on the disc are reproducible pages, resource sheets, and assessment rubrics, which are a helpful time-saver for busy teachers.

As a textbook, *The Complete Year in Reading and Writing: Grade 4* is highly organized with light tabbing for easy reference by the seasons of the year, making year long planning uncomplicated. Each of the four seasonal units is defined by theoretical framework, goals, materials, a daily planning guide, and assessment tools. Lessons are well planned and highly structured, with clear instructions for implementation. The units and the time commitment suggested may seem too lengthy in some situations, however, a major advantage of the series seems to be its adaptability. Teachers are reminded that they can alter the plans to fit any time schedule. Additionally, throughout the book, a multitude of resource sheets are offered to facilitate the learning process and save time.

The overall structure of *The Complete Year in Reading and Writing* focuses on four main ideas throughout the book: process, genre, strategy, and conventions. The book addresses *process* as it presents introductory material, referred to as ARCH: Assessment, Routines, Choice, and Healthy Community, designed to create a cohesive group experience for reading and writing from the very beginning of the school year. The two major goals suggested in ARCH are to establish roles and routines for the year and to assist every student in identifying as a reader and writer. Throughout the units, reading and writing are taught as interrelated disciplines. The recommended literature for each chapter encompasses a wide variety of *genre*, authors, and topics. Diversity of individuals is a well identified and explored issue throughout the literature. Students are encouraged and challenged to use their critical thinking skills and *strategies* across the literature to become inspired writers. Connections to themes and each other are the main focus of the writing instruction, as illustrated through discussions and conferencing. One significant distinction in *The Complete Year* is that it includes instruction and practice in English *conventions* throughout each unit, rather than teaching it in isolation. Research has proven integration of English skills within a complete literature classroom experience to be a best practice method.

Overall, *The Complete Year in Reading and Writing: Grade 4* is a solid and comprehensive guide for use in the fourth grade classroom. When used with the entire series, The Complete 4, from kindergarten through grade 5, the series offers a curriculum that is research based, interconnected, and carefully aligned for the elementary grades. Additionally, the series and each grade level guide provide an important technology component and a multitude of resources that should lead the reading and writing classroom to success each and every year.

Reviewed by Jennifer Rose-Woodward, doctoral student focused on the area of language arts at the College of Saint Mary. She has taught the fourth grade for many years. She has worked as adjunct faculty in the Teacher Education Department for the University of Nebraska at Omaha, teaching classes in Children's Literature and Language Arts. She begins dissertation work in the spring of 2010.

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

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

In his eloquent new collection of essays, *Why School?*, Mike Rose considers the compelling question of what has happened to public education in an era that is supposed to be all about reform and equal opportunity. What Rose argues across these essays is that the huge edifice of the accountability movement has done little to change the facts about schooling in poor and working class America. In fact, what Rose argues is the opposite: the wider accountability movement has in important ways made things worse for the sons and daughters of the working poor. Part of the trouble is that the complex set of instructional techniques and beliefs and institutions that we call *education* has been stuffed into an ill-fitting and constraining garment. Content-based standards and single-shot tests offer too narrow a portrait of what students know or even how they learn.

Rose's collection is filled with stories of students and teachers working together in ways that dispel stereotypes about what is possible in the inner city classroom, or the remedial college writing class. But in his book story and vignette are melded with a voice that is more philosophical in tone, urging us to think not just what we do in public schools, but how we see. Like Michael Harrington, who wrote in the 1960s about the poor living in the "other America," Rose's perspective is that of a poet-philosopher, compelling us to think in a different way about what is before our very eyes – yet still hidden. The problem, Rose argues, is not one of the paucity of standards but of a dearth of vision. "We have lost our way," he writes in the book's opening pages, because our vision of what public education can and should be has become too small.

Readers who are familiar with Rose's earlier works – *Lives on the Boundary*, *Possible Lives*, *The Mind at Work* – will recognize similar themes in this accessible collection of essays. Rose pulls from decades of research and writing about students living in America's margins including poor students, immigrants, veterans, students who, like Rose himself, are the sons and daughters of factory workers and waitresses. Seen from the margins or as Rose writes, "from off to the side," things look different. For one thing, it turns out that all the kids shunted into the other side of a two-tiered educational system have a lot more than street smarts. Rose blows the whistle on the middle class snobbery that those kids simply lack the motivation or perhaps the raw intelligence to do serious intellectual work. Drawing on his own family stories, Rose shows us how narrow our views of intelligence can be. Even the so-called "remedial" college students whom he has taught bring with them a rich knowledge base, and their hope and hunger for real learning. But too often these are thwarted when the three-dimensional mosaic of their lives and experiences meets a one-dimensional view of what schooling is about.

In *Why School?* Mike Rose writes that we have the capacity to create a morally and intellectually rich kind of public education for young lives in our nation's margins. But first we have to reshape the vision with which we see the road ahead.

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Rose, M. (2004). *The mind at work: Valuing the intelligence of the American worker*. New York: Viking.

Rose, M. (1995). *Possible lives: The promise of public education in America*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Reviewed by Deborah Hicks, Research Scholar in Education at Duke University and author of *Reading Lives* from Teachers College Press, and a forthcoming memoir of teaching entitled, *The Road Out*.

Roueche, John, E.; Richardson, M. Melissa; Neal, Phillip W. & Roueche, Suanne, D. (Eds.). (2008). *The Creative Community College: Leading Change Through Innovation*. Washington, DC: The American Association of Community Colleges.

Pages: 271 Price: \$56.00 ISBN: 978-0-87117-385-0

The editors of *The Creative Community College: Leading Change through Innovation*, certainly presents readers with a wonderful opportunity to gain valuable information from community college presidents from across the nation. Implementing change can be difficult for leaders and these community college presidents share their experiences with readers first-hand. The first chapter includes an introduction from the editors and the following chapters are each written by a president of a community college sharing their perspective on the change they were responsible for putting into action at their respective colleges. Leadership roles appear to be a theme throughout the book, as it examines all types of systems and processes for implementing transformation with a community college. This book appears to be such a collaborative effort on behalf of the editors and the presidents of colleges in seven different states as well as Washington DC. This book will become a very valuable tool for future leaders of any community college.

Perhaps the most profound experiences shared by presidents come from chapters two, four, and five. Chapter two is written by Dr. Donald Cameron, President of Guilford Technical Community College in Jamestown, North Carolina. The campus of Guilford Technical Community College was the first in North Carolina to implement the middle college. Dr. Cameron describes the change employed at Guilford Technical Community College as a "slow, patient change" (p. 29). During his twenty-five years of leadership at the college, the transformational change process of getting the college campus and public high schools on board with the concept of housing a middle college on campus was one that took some time. Dr. Cameron had a history with the public high schools and had the idea of hiring a guidance counselor from each high school during the summers to contact high school graduates from their respective high school to learn of the students' college choices. This provided summer employees at a low cost, increased enrollment efforts, and developed a strong relationship with the high schools. The implementation of the middle college, which is a partnership with a local high school and affords students grades 10-12 the opportunity to complete their high school graduation requirements while simultaneously receiving credit for college courses, shortly followed. North Carolina now has many successful early and middle colleges housed on community college campuses.

Chapter four is written by Dr. Bob Paxton, President of Iowa Central Community College, which serves nine counties. Dr. Paxton recreated the idea that students come first. When he began his role as president there, enrollment at the college was steadily decreasing along with the population in the surrounding counties. Dr. Paxton has increased enrollment and credit hours by 250% since the fall semester of 2004. He discusses in chapter four how the staff and faculty of Iowa Central Community College used to work in silos, but have now since developed learning communities to form a more student-centered approach. Dr. Paxton even went to the extent of eliminating parking for employees by having staff and faculty vote on the issue. This minor change to some, was a huge one for students as it let them know that students at Iowa Central Community College come first. Dr. Paxton states that, "Humanness is a risk in any organization...Friendships, humor, and openness are at the heart of this culture" (p. 49).

Brent Knight writes in chapter five, "regardless of expectations, a new president should attempt to understand the organization and the setting before embarking on a change process" (p. 71). As president of Morton College in Cicero, Illinois, Knight believes that the board of trustees, faculty, and staff of a college are the stakeholders and are vital in any transformation. When he was hired as president, Knight was directed to fix the college and he found that many within the population surrounding Morton College did not know the role of the college within the community. As president he set out to utilize the resources surrounding him. By developing relationships with community members and asking them to serve as consultants, Knight held community forums and transformed the college into a more diverse institution that represented the residents and businesses within the community. The population feels a sense of ownership and pride towards the college and Brent Knight has implemented a successful change.

It is no surprise that the demand of a community college education is on the rise. With the current downfall of the economy, including layoffs and tuition increases, students of all ages are seeking to obtain short-term training or training to enter a new field at local community colleges. The presidents who contributed to this book, have a keen sense of awareness when

it comes to the needs placed upon community colleges by increasing demands. With the contributions of thirteen different community college presidents, editors John Roueche, Melissa Richardson, Phillip Neal and Suanne Roueche do an outstanding job of placing valuable information all in one book for practitioners across the nation to utilize as a resource. This book will help many other administrators at community colleges gain insight on change and how it can be governed in a positive light. The immense improvement for various populations within the community college is highlighted in this book. Practitioners nation wide will be able refer to it often as they too implement change within institutions of higher education.

Reviewed by Carrol A. Warren, M.Ed., Director of Student Support Services at Johnston Community College in North Carolina. She is also an Ed.D. student at North Carolina State University.

Tapscott, Don. (2009). *Grown Up Digital: How the Net Generation Is Changing Your World*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Pages: 368 Price: \$27.95 ISBN: 978-0-07-150863-6

I worry about my fourteen-year-old daughter. Even though we spent hours nestled together reading through her first decade, she no longer will open a book willingly. It's not that she's watching TV or spending hours on the phone; it's the computer. Facebook, YouTube, the myriad of graphics, games and the quick adventures she experiences as one website links to the next have captured her imagination. Is she dumbing down her mind? Not according to Don Tapscott, author of *Grown Up Digital: How the Net Generation is Changing Your World*. He transformed my fears into excitement for my daughter and myself as I read this account of how her generation is changing the world.

Tapscott weaves a compelling and optimistic narrative that describes the transformative impact of the Net Generation, defined as young people born between 1977 and 1997. In his previous book, *Growing Up Digital: The Rise of the Net Generation* (1997), Tapscott predicted that the first entire generation to grow up digitally would "develop and superimpose its culture on the rest of society" (p. 2). At that time before Google, Blackberrys and Facebook, Tapscott could only speculate; a decade later he brings proof. With meticulous detail and data, Tapscott describes changes transpiring in education, the workforce, the marketplace, and the family. He then becomes predictive as he looks again to the future and the potentially long arm of this generation to change democracy and the world. For the first time in history, a younger generation has much to teach their elders.

Tapscott describe eight characteristics that differentiate the Net Generation from the Baby Boomers: freedom, customization, scrutiny, integrity, collaboration, entertainment, speed, and innovation. They not only use technology differently but their behavior and expectations of the world have changed. Compared to their parents, they have dropped usage of TV, radio, land telephone lines and newspapers in favor of Internet supported entertainment, official newsites, blogs, ipods and cell phones. With the Internet, they have greater freedom to choose what they want, when and where they want it; they thrive on variety. This leads to an expectation that other environments will also provide choice, stimulation, and flexibility in hours and place.

As a reading and writing specialist for Denver Public Schools, I found Tapscott's advice on how educational institutions can capitalize the characteristics and developing capacities of this generation especially insightful. With brain scans, he shows how the digital usage of this generation has rewired their brains giving them more highly developed spatial skills and the ability to process visual information more quickly. They even read differently. Instead of the typical zigzag, left to right, top to bottom as preferred by baby boomers, they read in an F pattern. While baby boomers follow typically sequential patterns, the Net Geners "develop hypertext minds" (p. 150). They have the ability to jump in, discover, learn through trial and error, organize information in web patterns, synthesize and absorb a greater quantity of information than any generation before. The result? Young people who are bored with the slow pace and style of a lecture. Young workers who are frustrated by outdated corporate technology. Young learners who don't respond to broadcast instruction but seek out interactive opportunities to process new information. Their intelligence is heightened through collaboration and networking. Therefore, business models based on individual recruiting, training, and supervising are outdated for this generation. Tapscott advises companies to adopt paradigms that value reciprocal relationships that "initiate, engage, collaborate and evolve" (p. 151).

Tapscott systematically addresses fears and negative perceptions of the Net Generation that surface from England's House of Lords to popular journals. While critics perceive them as the dumbest, most entitled and narcissistic generation with the least social skills and the poorest literacy skills, the research indicates the opposite. Tapscott writes that they are "smarter, quicker, and more tolerant of diversity than their predecessors" (p. 6). They are engaged politically and ready to take on problems faced by society. They expect transparency from their public officials and have the tools and willingness to scrutinize records and policies and detect fraud. With their social networking, they have the capacity to discover, communicate, debate and quickly organize for their causes. Tapscott doesn't shy away from the potential for individuals or groups to use these digital tools for harm. He sees their lack of privacy as a liability. He references terrorist groups who use the Internet to incite suicide bombers and online games that train neo-Nazis. Overall though, he sees the contributions of this generation far outweighing their problems.

I read this with a range of responses perhaps typical of the boomer generation: trepidation for the upheaval that is undoubtably coming, excitement for the possibilities of better ways, hope provoked by the institutions and companies that are leading the way and more than anything, gratitude to Tapscott for envisioning the future with infectious optimism. *Grown Up Digital* gives older generations ways to embrace the new generation with humbleness to learn from them and wisdom and courage to help them fully develop their potential. Tapscott offers us the crystal ball, "If you understand the Net Generation, you will understand the future."

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Reviewed by Lynn Hawthorne, University of Colorado, Denver

Theoharis, George. (2009). *The School Leaders Our Children Deserve: Seven Keys to Equity, Social Justice, and School Reform*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Pages: 192 Price: \$24.95 ISBN: 0807749516

In this engaging and ambitious book, George Theoharis emphasizes the importance for school principals employing a social justice leadership framework in their leadership style. He presents the stories of seven school principals, including himself, and how they embody this form of leadership. Theoharis is a self-described social justice leader who believes that inclusion and equity must be the pillars of any definition of social justice in schools. As an educator who is active in diversity education and an advocate for equity, I concur with these conclusions. The sampling for this autoethnographic study was purposeful and snowballing beginning with eighteen principals which after many conversations, interviews, and logistics were narrowed down to seven. There is ample research on the theory of social justice leadership in schools, but not in its enactment (Theoharis & Causton-Theoharis, 2008) and Theoharis fills that gap in *The School Leaders Our Children Deserve*.

As a former principal himself, Theoharis embarked on an ambitious justice agenda of creating more equity and inclusion in an attempt to close the achievement gap at his school. To achieve a healthy balance of personal health and professional success, he embarked on forming a network of school administrators who shared his same passion for social justice work in schools. Working in higher education, he continued to explore the gap between the research on social justice teaching vs. research on principals employing social justice leadership to change schools. He proceeded with this ethnographic study to focus on the latter issue (Theoharis, 2008).

Theoharis presents his framework of social justice leadership (S JL) that consists of creating equity and inclusion within the school community among the students, parents, faculty, staff, and administrators. Following his overview of the S JL framework, Theoharis introduces the principals and their schools using pseudonyms to conceal the identities.

The content of the book addresses a theme presenting examples and experiences from the seven principals. Some examples included one principal addressing inclusion by ending all programs geared to tracking students with learning disabilities and/or special needs while another principal sought to encourage faculty dialogues about race by creating faculty book clubs on various books including Beverly Daniel Tatum's book, "Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?" (1997).

This book also focuses on these school leaders and their leadership style. It addresses the barriers they confronted implementing S JL and how each of them handled these challenges. Barriers included the vast scope of the work being a principal entailed, resistance to changing the status quo, parental concerns for their own child, and various obstructions presented to impede change. This book presents professional and personal strategies that each of these leaders used to reenergize themselves, persevere, and ultimately remain steadfast to the S JL cause. Some were very basic such as physical exercise and/or seeking extracurricular activities completely out of the realm of education. Other strategies were more complex and somewhat questionable, such as the use of alcohol. Theoharis presents the entire scope that the work of these principals entails and the sacrifices that are made in pursuit of a social justice leadership framework.

The book concludes by exploring the personality traits of these principals. It summates these reflections into overarching lessons for future potential school leaders. These personality traits include an engrained passion for social justice and a worldview that is sensitive to the marginalized in society; persistent strength in these values are crucial for school leaders to enact a countercultural, leadership agenda that will inevitably face criticism and skepticism.

Theoharis' work is significant in that he translates a theory of S JL in education through these Principals' lived experiences and their persistence efforts at implementation. Maintaining the confidentiality of the research subjects did make it difficult keeping track of which Principal was which; this was despite the use of pseudonyms. By following the experiences of each specific school leader more intently and not having to formulate their experiences around the S JL framework, I might have found the results more compelling.

The organization of the feedback from the Principals around the framework produced findings that adequate, but also a bit brief and choppy at times. Instead of taking each school principal one at a time and presenting their experience in its entirety, Theoharis appeared to let the framework dictate the ethnographic piece in organizing the study. This took away somewhat from the richness of each Principal's experience and their insights less riveting. Theoharis attempted to both formulate his ethnography around his S JL framework equality and subsequently perhaps sacrificed its emotional impact.

The pool of principals selected for this study possessed great diversity in terms of gender, level of education, and context, but was lacking with only one representative of each in this study. It would also have been helpful to explore the diverse educational and professional experiences these seven principals received and how it contributed to their pursuit of S JL.

There is also the question of whether it was wise for Theoharis to include himself as one of the participants in the study. This is debatable given that he is currently not a school principal and his experience took place several years ago. In future studies, Theoharis might take into consideration the following suggestions:

1. Consider selecting one level of educational leadership to study instead of an amalgam of elementary and secondary principals.
2. Redouble efforts to sample a more diverse pool of school principals. In my work in education as a diversity officer, recruiting a diverse pool of faculty is difficult enough compared to having a diverse pool of leaders.
3. Consider accumulating data from members of the school community in which these principals worked. Interviews with members of the community could have added some much needed texture to the description of these principals' experiences within their schools.

Leadership of any kind including social justice leadership does not take place in a vacuum. Solely focusing on the seven principals while putting the rest of the school- students, teachers, districts etc. on the periphery places too much of the onus on the principals. That being said, there is a great need for more research similar to what Theoharis presents in this book- a focus on multiple case studies of school leaders enacting and practicing successful social justice leadership in schools accompanied by its personal and professional challenges.

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Theoharis, G., & Causton-Theoharis, J. N. (2008). Oppressors or emancipators: Critical dispositions for preparing inclusive school leaders. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 41(2), 230-246.

Reviewed by Sajit U. Kabadi, a doctoral candidate in Educational Leadership and Innovation at the University of Colorado with an emphasis on equity and justice in Education. Sajit is an advocate and works with first generation college students. Sajit has a masters degree in intercultural/international communications from the University of Denver and another masters degree in Religious Education from Loyola University Chicago. He serves on the faculty at Regis Jesuit High School in Aurora, Colorado

Walther, Maria P. & Phillips, Katherine A. (2009). *Month-by-Month Trait-Based Writing Instruction: Grades K-2*. New York: Scholastic.

Pages: 190 Price: \$22.99 ISBN: 978-0-545-06693-8

Teachers and school librarians who work with the primary grades will appreciate this idea-packed addition to the Scholastic teacher resource collection. The cover of the book gives the reader an accurate and helpful indication of the practical contents within when it highlights "ready-to-use lessons and strategies for weaving morning messages, read-alouds, mentor texts, and more into your daily writing programs" and "targeted grammar lessons, focused genre explorations, annotated picture books" (cover). Authors Walther and Phillips share an exceptional compilation of try-it-tomorrow writing lessons here that both new and experienced teachers will be happy to discover. New teachers will find the high-quality instructional assistance that is sequenced through an entire school year to be immensely supportive, while experienced teachers will find many new ideas here for morning messages, writing workshop mini-lessons and for integrating children's literature into the writing program. Both public and school librarians will be thrilled at the number and quality of children's fiction and non-fiction books that Walther and Phillips use as mentor texts and read-alouds, and the "Children's Literature Cited" list included at the back of the book will serve as a valuable collection development tool for classroom, school, and public libraries. Those who want to acquire the children's books used in the lessons will be grateful to Walther and Phillips for their selection of fairly recently published popular titles, so that many are likely to still be available for purchase.

The ready-to-use lesson ideas are prefaced by a foundational chapter that explains what Walther and Phillips understand by balanced writing instruction and why they use the teaching strategies presented in the book. In this opening conversation, the authors set the context for the lessons that follow and provide the research-based evidence that supports their classroom activities. Right from these opening pages the authors make it clear that their writing lessons emerge from their use of children's literature, noting that they "couldn't teach writing without a stack of enticing books" (p. 16). For teachers who are always looking for new books to integrate into their writing program, Walther and Phillips are a fabulous source to turn to. Readers will appreciate the detailed and focused attention given to the mechanics of the teaching of writing in this opening chapter. From discussions of what, how, and when to teach specific skills, to helpful descriptions of why and how to use modeled, shared, interactive, guided and independent writing, Walther and Phillips lead readers through their experiences with teaching writing. This is professional development at its most practical and helpful. In this chapter and in the monthly lesson chapters that follow, the targeted writing topics are accompanied by clear diagrams (for ex. Balanced Writing Instruction, p. 10), samples of student work and classroom photos (often featuring the board with the morning message), helpful charts (for example, "The Sample Daily Schedule," p. 23), and framed key points (for example, "What Does Guided Writing Look Like?" p. 21). These well-designed features make this a book that is easy to browse, so the lack of an index is not a problem.

Although the remaining chapters follow a writing program as it unfolds through a school year, Walther and Phillips are quick to point out that teachers should adapt, select, and modify their lessons and ideas to fit into the teacher's own program.

Teachers who want to do this will find it easy to modify the clearly-presented plans that Walther and Phillips share. Each monthly chapter is set up following the same 3-part structure: part 1 offers multiple examples of that month's "Morning Message" ideas followed by suggested "Read-Alouds for Writers"; part 2 offers a "Menu of Mini-Lessons"; and part 3 provides a suggestion for a "Genre Exploration" study that incorporates learning covered in the month's morning messages and mini-lessons. The mini-lessons consistently include detailed information on the teacher's preparation, in-class explanations and demonstrations, and on the teacher's invitation to the students to write – again conveniently making these lesson ideas easily adaptable – especially for using with different children's books than the ones chosen by the authors.

My only disappointment with this otherwise sensational teacher guide is with the last chapter where the genre exploration focuses on "Delving Into Nonfiction – From Research to Writing." Instead of encouraging the development of a question as the first step in the research process, the research task here appears to be a simple retelling of facts – with no apparent purpose or audience. As Carol Koechlin and Sandi Zwaan note in *Q Tasks*, "we need to create an environment where asking questions is recognized as part of the learning process, where it is applauded, where it is encouraged and spontaneous" (Koechlin and Zwaan, 2006, p. 11). Even in the early years the development of simple questions can be included as a part of the research task, so that the fact-finding and documentation is meaningful. This questioning piece could easily be built into the nonfiction genre exploration lesson presented here by spending time before the fact-hunt on developing a question the student wants to find the answer to. Since Walther and Phillips themselves encourage readers to modify their ideas, this final lesson is perhaps one that a teacher could modify to include an authentic information-seeking component. The flexibility of Walther and Phillips ideas is evident here, as this lesson can easily be extended and built upon. The mini-lessons provided by the authors in their genre explorations can all accommodate additional lessons – and this is one of the best features of their work.

Scholastic has done a great job here of designing a visually appealing book that portrays the inventive ideas of the authors in a clear and easily accessible format. This is a highly recommended title for every primary grade teacher and most especially for every faculty of education library. Primary grade teachers are always interested in learning how other teachers are integrating children's literature into their teaching, and looking for lesson ideas to add to their own set of instructional strategies. Walther and Phillips are to be congratulated for their willingness to share in such helpful detail so many of their proven-successful teaching strategies for balanced writing instruction.

References

Koechlin, C. & Zwaan, S. (2006). *Q tasks: How to empower students to ask questions and care about answers*. Markham, ON: Pembroke.

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