



**Gellert, Claudius. (1999). *Innovation and Adaptation in Higher Education: The Changing Conditions of Advanced Teaching and Learning in Europe*. London: [Jessica Kingsley](#).**

Gellert defines a set of issues he hopes to address. He is interested in higher education as it interacts with secondary education and the larger community, particularly the world of work. Preparing students for today's more highly technical jobs, helping mature students into retraining programs, supporting research within the academic setting, and offering programs that allow increased student mobility within the rapidly integrating European community are the issues that form the core of this discussion.

Having outlined the issues, Gellert turns his authors loose to discuss them as they see fit. The predictable result is a variety of approaches to the common theme. Some authors emphasize the historic roots of current developments; some offer a case study approach, looking at the development of just one or two disciplines; others look broadly at the current situation. The book offers geographic variety as well. There are articles from most of the major European centers of scholarship, including England, France, and Germany. Some smaller but historically significant traditions, such as Portugal, Italy, and Greece are also represented. In all eleven country perspectives are included.

The result of all this variety is a somewhat uneven book. The reader cannot be sure that particular types of information will be available for every country covered. For the reader less interested in comparability, some of the individual essays are excellent, see for example Guy Neave's "Utilitarianism by Increment (France)," or Johan L. Venderhoeven's "Change Under Exogenous Pressure (Belgium)."

Pages: 320 Price: \$39.95 ISBN: 1-85302-535-6

**Reviewed by Kate Corby, Michigan State University**

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**Graves, Donald H. (1999). *Bring Life into Learning; Create a Lasting Literacy*. Portsmouth, NH: [Heinemann](#).**

The many followers of Donald H. Graves will welcome his nineteenth book. While it may not hold many surprises, it proves a welcome addition to Graves' work by extending the writing process he espouses into new areas of awareness. The title of the first chapter, "Let's Bring People Back into the Curriculum" introduces the major theme of the book. Graves notes that in our fast-paced, standards-driven curriculum, we focus on facts, not why things happen. Taking a multidisciplinary approach, Graves notes that people make historic events happen, people observe and make scientific breakthroughs, and people see the world in different ways and share their art with the rest of us. "Bypass people and you bypass learning." (p.2) 20

The book is both theoretical and practical. Above all, it is highly readable. Graves is eloquent in his cry for including people in the curriculum, but he gives concrete examples of how to do this in the classroom by including Actions, a device used in previous books. Possibly the strongest application involves teaching history. Graves uses letters and other writings of historical figures and then offers students the chance to interpret their writings and actions. The section on Artful Thinking examines Georgia O'Keeffe's way of looking at life and art, and the section on Science: Change in Motion examines the life and work of Jean-Henri Fabre. The Actions associated with these sections include scripts for role-playing, charts for delineating characters' motivation, art exercises, and interview scripts. Readers interested in the writing process will find this book a valuable resource. Teachers looking for instruction on how to teach the mechanics of writing (e.g. punctuation, spelling, and grammar), will be disappointed. Graves is operating on a different level. He wants learning to be engaging, exciting, and relevant. Teachers may consider carving the time to implement Graves' suggestions an impossibility and his philosophy at odds with current trends, but his impassioned plea against years of skill-driven activities may make many teachers reevaluate their priorities.

Pages: **126** Price: **\$15.00** ISBN: **0-325-00170-7**

**Reviewed by Sharon Naylor, Illinois State University**

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**Lewis, Anne C. and Barnett, Berry [1999]. *Figuring It Out: Standards Based Reforms in Urban Middle Grades*. New York: [Edna McConnell Clark Foundation](#).**

The Clark Foundation has a record of involvement in middle school education for urban youth. They sponsor the MiddleWeb site and have supported standards base reform efforts since the early 90's. In this book Lewis offers both a report of their funding activity and a look at the standards based reform effort in action. After an orientation to the project and the schools involved the book looks at implications for teachers and students. There are brief case studies and numerous other examples of lesson planning, classroom activities and student teacher interactions. Lewis does a good job of making issues of pedagogical change, teacher preparation and student involvement understandable. While clearly written from a pro-standards stance, the challenges are not ignored. Barnett's contribution comes in the form of a survey he administered to teachers at the funded schools. He reports the results and discusses implications. This section was helpful in putting the information presented in other sections in perspective. Even in the most successful schools teachers differ significantly on a number of issues related to standards based education. By reproducing not only the survey numbers, but also comments from some of the teachers, Barnett succeeds in providing balance to the overall presentation. Anyone interested in standards based reform would find this book a good introduction.

Pages: **141** Price: **Free** ISBN: **NA**

Reviewed by Kate Corby, Michigan State University

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**Power, Brenda. (1999). *Parent Power: Energizing Home-School Communication*. Portsmouth, NH: [Heinemann](#).**

My first reaction to this book was, "shouldn't teachers who are college graduates be able to compose their own letters to parents?" A more careful look shows a whole lot more than a collection of letters to parents. Brenda Power, an associate professor of literacy at the University of Maine, with the help of a half-dozen teachers from the Mapleton, Maine elementary school staff have put together a how-to-do-it guide, including a CD, with essay, newsletter and brochure suggestions. Most of the book's pages (Part 2) include one-page reproducible essays, available in English and Spanish (on the reverse side) to include in newsletters to parents. The essays are about school/curriculum concerns and general parenting issues. The resources are designed to be used with parents of children in grades K-3. =20

The opening pages of the book (Part 1) includes tips for designing newsletters using the CD software that is included; examples of using the Essays in a parent outreach program; lists of recommended books and web sites on the topic of parent involvement; advice on reaching more parents, including bilingual families; and grant-writing suggestions. 20

Most of the material in this book is easily available elsewhere. A lot of this lively, easy-to-read writing style merely presents common sense, such as, when planning a parent evening, "don't underestimate the value of refreshments and doorprizes." The book's value consists of its cumulation of ideas for involving parents, tools for constructing a newsletter with the CD, sample calendar of events, tips for community outreach, which all provide a one-stop resource for improving home-school communication, for one teacher or school-wide. For the price, it is a useful tool, which saves a lot of time. The Essays, which are to be sent home to the parents, have a writing style better than mine. I guess I would use some of them in the right situation.

Pages: 127    Price: \$19.95    ISBN: 0 325 00153 3

Reviewed by Helga Visscher, University of Alabama

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