



**Bennett, Frederick. (1998). *Computers as Tutors: Solving the Crisis in Education*. Sarasota, FL: Faben Inc.**

Bennett is a readable writer who strongly believes that American schools would be well served by an aggressive adoption of individualized electronic instruction. He systematically points out a number of benefits, both of individualization and of computer use. The book would be better if he were less the advocate and offered a more realistic, balanced assessment of the computer's ability to contribute to education.

The book is full of sweeping generalizations and quick dismissals of negative concerns. Bennett's claim that it is currently feasible to start teaching virtually every child virtually every academic subject largely via computerized instruction is particularly surprising given that he has apparently consulted few resources published after the early to mid 90's. The weaknesses in Bennett's arguments make this book easy to dismiss.

Pages: **232** Price: **\$25.00** ISBN: **0-9669583-6-5**

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

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**DeCicco, Eta, Farmer, Mike, & Hargrave, James. (1998). *Using the Internet in Secondary Schools*. London: Kogan Page.**

If nothing else, this book proves the truth of the old song "*It's a Small World After All*." Written in Great Britain for a British audience much of it will be very familiar to American readers. Connectivity and the Internet truly are a universal language. The first half of the book is devoted to an introduction to Internet technology, with an emphasis on software and practical tips. All of this information would transfer easily to an American audience, though I doubt an American novice would choose a British book for this purpose.

The second section is the part that is tempting. It offers lesson plans for many curriculum areas that utilize Web resources. The concept of just what constitutes a "lesson plan" is rather vague, and these plans are brief, generally only a page or two. They offer specific Web addresses and a few paragraphs suggesting how the information a site presents could be used as the basis of study. Many of the suggestions use the web resource as a data set, taking bits of information -- weather statistics, random story endings, etc., and using them as part of a class exercise. There are many good ideas that should generate creative lessons. Readers who hope the book will provide British specific lessons may be disappointed, as many of the Web sites suggested for use are located in the United States.

Pages: **154** Price: **\$25.50** ISBN: **0 7494 2522 9**

Reviewed by Kate Corby, Michigan State University

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**Duffy, Bernadette. (1998). *Supporting Creativity and Imagination in the Early Years*. Buckingham: [Open University Press](#).**

This is an admirably detailed guide to creativity for persons involved in caring for young children. In addition to expected information about developmental stages and caregiver response, Duffy discusses diversity and accessibility issues that affect children's response to opportunities to express their creativity.

The suggestions presented here are all based on current research with many references and suggestions for further reading throughout the text. While there are occasional references to specifically British concerns, the work should be valuable anywhere. Duffy uses outline and lists formats extensively; clearly conveying the important issues she wishes to address, but compromising readability to some extent.

Pages: 156 Price: \$78.95 Hard cover, \$21.95 Paper ISBN: 0-335-19872-4 Hard cover, 0-335-19871-6 Paper

Reviewed by Kate Corby, Michigan State University

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**Flippo, Rona F. (1999). *What do the experts say? Helping children learn to read*. Portsmouth, NH: [Heinemann](#).**

With this highly readable book Rona Flippo appeals to all teachers and other school professionals to challenge the popular assumptions that the teaching of reading in the US is woefully inadequate and that a higher authority is needed to step in and reform reading education. Alarmed by what she sees as the media hype which portrays reading experts as at opposing and mutually-exclusive sides in the "reading wars," Flippo has written this book to demonstrate that there is in fact common ground among the different approaches to the teaching of reading. She is clearly very concerned about the apparent trend toward top-down decision-making in which state education boards or even state legislators have begun mandating specific teaching practices in their schools. In search of the common ground, Flippo asked a number of experts - educators and researchers - to generate lists of contexts and practices which would either hinder or enhance the teaching of reading. Using these lists, which she and her panel of experts developed over a period of ten years, she identifies points of agreement between those with a whole language perspective, those who advocate more traditional methods, and those with a more interactive or integrated perspective. She does indeed find many areas on which all of the experts agree and presents a balanced and well-articulated explanation of those significant points of agreement. Perhaps the most interesting chapters in the book are those written by teachers who, after reading Flippo's analysis of the experts' opinions, described their own real-life practices and how those paralleled with the views of the experts. They, too, were able to find much common ground. This book is not a guide to teaching reading.

Its ultimate purpose is to get politicians and state-level boards of education members out of the classroom, leaving the selection of teaching practices to the real experts - teachers. Showing that reading educators do have a common ground - and, thus, do have a sense of what is critical in reading development - is an important strategy in achieving that end, according to Flippo. She offers teachers the opportunity to add their voices to the discussion by completing a survey indicating their level of agreement with what the experts' identified as helping or hindering learning to read. Those confused by the "reading wars," will find this book useful in clarifying the fundamental elements needed in reading education. Teachers who are concerned about political interference in the classroom may wish to respond to this call to action by using this as a basis for dialogue with other teachers, concerned parents and all those interested in how our children learn to read.

Pages: **129** Price: **\$15.00** ISBN: **0-325-00044-1**

**Reviewed by Darlene Nichols, University of Michigan**

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