



Brandt, Ronald S., editor. (2000). *Education in a New Era*. Alexandria, Virginia: [Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development](#).

The self-proclaimed purpose of *Education in a New Era* is to "look back to look ahead". It is a collection of essays on the status of education and its prospects. The authors were asked to highlight the ideas, events or developments of the 20th century which they considered noteworthy and to predict what educators could expect in the future. Reliable as this trend extrapolation exercise may be, the editor cautions readers: "All we can do is offer informed speculation, trusting that what we have written will encourage our colleagues not only to ponder future prospects but also to work for the possibilities they value most." *Education in a New Era* is composed of an introduction by the editor and nine essays by some of the foremost names in education throughout North America. Topics include:

- Universal public education by Chris Pipho
- Educational equality by James A. Banks
- Teacher development by Ann Lieberman and Lynne Miller
- Advances in instruction by Robert J. Marzano
- Curriculum by Allan A. Glatthorn and Jerry Jailall
- Assessment by Elliott Asp
- Learning as a science by Ronald S. Brandt and David N. Perkins
- Technology in the schools by Barbara Means
- Progressive Education in the 21st Century by Deborah Meier

Each author was selected because of an expertise in the subject discussed. In addition to the nine articles the book provides a detailed index and a brief biographical sketch of each contributing author.

Education in a New Era is a clearly-written collection of writings on pertinent topics of interest to most educators. Administrators, teachers and parents will find this book informative, thought-provoking and satisfying. Most importantly, it will assist them in reassessing their educational beliefs and putting their own thoughts and priorities into perspective. Whether the articles are read as separate entities or a part of an entire look at the educational picture of the 21st century, *Education in a New Era* is guaranteed to stimulate thinking and dialogue in the education community.

Pages: 246 Price: \$24.95 ISBN: 0-87120-363-4

Reviewed by Gail Lennon, Bluewater District School Board (Ontario, Canada)

Snell, Martha E. and Janney, Rachel. (2000). *Social Relationships and Peer Support*. Baltimore, MD : [Paul H. Brookes Pub](#).

This offering is part of series of four books, all by Snell and Janney, entitled

Teachers' Guides to Inclusive Practices. Its stated aim "to describe proven, practical ideas for individualizing support to students who have social limitations with their peers." is largely accomplished. While never far from a research base, the authors provide clear, understandable, practical information for practitioners who wish to be more than caretakers for their included charges.

Going back to the beginning is one of the book's strengths. The authors provide information about social relationships generally before plunging in to the specific challenges of children with disabilities. They discuss both emotional and physical disabilities and a variety of strategies which might work in different situations. They also take a holistic view of the school community, acknowledging that successful inclusion requires the support of the entire community. My one criticism; the authors use some specific examples, but don't follow individual cases in any depth, so the discussions have a choppy feel for the reader and it is harder to grasp the effect of the programmatic approach they are advocating. The book includes an extensive list of resources and suggestions for additional reading.

Pages: 188 Price: \$24.00 ISBN: 1-55766-356-4

Reviewed by Kate Corby, Michigan State University

Thompson, Ted. (1999). *Underachieving to Protect Self-Worth: Theory, Research, Interventions*. Aldershot, England : [Ashgate](#).

For all those self-esteem critics who've been crying "Where's the beef?" Ted Thompson has the answer. He's been publishing studies on underachievement and self-worth for almost a decade. Here he brings together much of his own and other's work to present a complete picture of empirical research findings. While he rarely uses the words "self-esteem," Thompson's research goes to the heart of the issue, especially for underachieving students.

The book opens with a general introduction to self-worth theory and achievement motivation. Then follows a detailed review of research, showing how perseverance and risk-taking behavior tend to develop in some situations, while others encourage protective behaviors such as self-handicapping, or procrastination. The book concludes with chapters that discuss creating learning contexts that reduce threat.

Unfortunately the book is also tough sledding for the reader. Simple ideas are couched in the language of empirical research to such an extent that even a determined reader will sometimes have trouble teasing out the author's meaning. A typical sentence:

"Given the low academic self-esteem of self-worth protective students, noncontingent feedback is likely to exacerbate their low success expectancies and uncertainty about future performance outcomes, promoting self-handicapping."

While not indecipherable, is also not easy reading. But the book should not be dismissed, persistent readers will find much to reward their effort.

Pages: 240 Price: \$64.95 ISBN: 1-85972-513-9

Reviewed by Kate Corby, Michigan State University

Viteritti, Joseph P. (1999). *Choosing Equality: School Choice, the Constitution, and Civil Society*. Washington, DC : [Brookings Institution Press](#).

Alternatives to public education including charter schools, private religious institutions, voucher systems and magnet schools were once a uniquely American education problem. However the times are changing. The controversy over school choice is showing strong signs of becoming a Canadian problem. With increasing cuts to education, strategists search for ways to cut education costs and the public systems seeks innovative ways to retain programs in the face of drastic budget cuts. As this struggle ensues, privatization and charter schools become imminent possibilities. Both Alberta and Ontario governments are looking with interest at voucher systems, privatization of services, private schools and charter schools. They cast their eyes south of the border to investigate the many, varied, and cheaper ways of delivering education.

In *Choosing Equality: School Choice, the Constitution, and Civil Society*, Viteritti contends that the present realities of American education have redefined the meaning of school choice and changed the essence of the debate. The free-market model, the author argues, has been replaced by an "opportunity model" which advertises its benefits for disadvantaged or hard to serve populations that are lured by stories of better services than those offered by the public schools in their communities.

The idea that choice is good and private must be better is coupled with the claims of charter schools to deliver unique programs which appeal to specific groups. It is hard to argue with the lure of the novel, better, elite, specially-tailored labels which advertisers attach to these education alternatives. Beyond providing quality education, the public system is now being forced to advertise, market and lure a student population. The time and costs involved in this pursuit were never factored into public education, nor were educators trained to be marketers. Many find this new duty offensive and overwhelming.

Viteritti assesses various kinds of school choice programs; outlines the role that private and religious schools can play in advancing equal educational opportunity; and includes a set of 10 policy proposals designed to address the educational needs of underserved communities and populations. While the author does not advocate alternatives to the public system, he does point out the harsh realities. Competing with other education services is a very real threat to public education. Moreover, the ability to be as slick as the competition is what will keep public education alive.

Those who are looking for school alternatives, those who are attempting to provide school alternatives and those who are attempting to keep public education alive will find this book informative, practical and frightening in that order! For all of the above reading audiences, *Choosing Equality: School Choice, the Constitution, and Civil Society* will prove to be current, well-researched and as unbiased as any book on this topic can be said to be.

Pages: **284** Price: **\$29.95** ISBN: **0-8157-9046-5**

Reviewed by Gail Lennon, Bluewater District School Board (Ontario, Canada)



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