



Finkel, Donald L. (2000). *Teaching with Your Mouth Shut*. Portsmouth, NH: [Heinemann, Boynton/Cook Publishers](#).

Writing for high school and college teachers, Donald L. Finkel, a professor at The Evergreen State College in Washington, strives to convince educators to re-evaluate their teaching methods and involve students in the teaching process, thereby creating a more democratic learning environment. In eight chapters, he discusses various alternative approaches to the traditional "Great Teacher" archetype, who imparts knowledge by lecturing and telling. Advocating the involvement of students in learning, he describes techniques that demand student participation with chapters such as "Let the Books Do the Talking" and "Let the Students Do the Talking." Each chapter contains some discussion of the philosophies behind the methods being presented, but Finkel also takes a very practical approach to his topic, providing concrete examples and suggestions of classroom activities; his ideas are grounded in day to day reality of teaching students.

Geared primarily to those types of courses, such as literature classes, which lend themselves to discussion activities (as opposed to subjects like mathematics or biology), Finkel has written a very pragmatic guide to changing a classroom environment in a way that results in true learning for students, engaging them and making them responsible for their own education. While he claims that the book was not written as a "manual for teachers," many educators will find his case studies and suggested topics extremely helpful in developing their own curricula. Others will find Finkel's arguments challenging and thought provoking; careful reading will indeed "spark" the dialogue that is the goal of this book.

Pages: **180** Price: **\$26.50** ISBN: **0-086709-469-9**

Reviewed by Shellie Jeffries, Wayne State University

Gee, Karolynne. (2000) *Visual Arts as a Way of Knowing*. York, ME: [Stenhouse](#).

Visual Arts as a Way of Knowing is part of the *Strategies for Teaching and Learning Professional Library* and the Galef Institute's [Different Ways of Knowing](#) school reform initiative. Written to assist K-8 teachers (not just art teachers) in meeting the demands of the National Standards for Visual and Performing Arts Education, this book:

- includes information on visual arts content and techniques;
- provides professional development information related to visual arts and current pedagogical theories;
- offers field-tested strategies for interdisciplinary and thematic teaching; and
- encourages teachers and students to recognize, use, and become comfortable with visual arts as powerful teaching and learning tools.

Gee's writing style is personal and readable. She organizes her points logically and presents her content with clarity. Those who want to browse for activities, professional development readings, assessment guidance, and from-the-field-tips will find Gee's *Shoptalk*, *Field Notes*, and *Dialogue* boxes full of easily spotted, valuable information. Three helpful bibliographies are also included: books on Professional Development related to visual arts; an annotated listing of children's art books; and names and addresses of a wide variety of professional associations and/or publications that may be valuable to those interested in integrating the visual arts into their daily curriculum.

This is a practical, highly accessible book that can be read with ease. The ideas presented are sound and will serve to energize the curriculum. Those who have avoided working with the visual arts in the past will find this book particularly useful, and even those who incorporate the visual arts into their curriculum extensively will come away with some practical and useful strategies to incorporate into their teaching.

Pages: **192** Price: **\$18.50 (paperback)** ISBN: **1-57110-090-3**

Reviewed by Jeneen LaSee-Willemsen, University of Wisconsin Superior

Routman, Regie. (2000). *Conversations: Strategies for Teaching, Learning, and Evaluating*. Portsmouth, NH: [Heinemann](#).

Author of three previous books (*Transitions*, *Invitations*, and *Literacy at the Crossroads*), Routman develops in this book the theme of conversations-or dialogues of all types-that are inherent in teaching, learning and evaluating. Written in first-person voice as if she were speaking directly to the reader, the book is exceptionally readable and well organized. Each chapter focuses on a particular aspect of an effective language arts and literacy program across the curriculum. Routman includes theory, field-tested teaching ideas, detailed strategies, lesson plans, and references for further research. Beginning with the professional roles of a teacher, Routman moves on to defining a comprehensive literacy program, the literature program, teaching children to read, quality writing in various genres, spelling and word study, nonfiction, and curriculum inquiry. She also discusses how to develop collaborative communities and conduct meaningful evaluation.

The extensive appendices are color-coded as "blue pages" and include resources for teachers compiled with Judy Wallis, K-12 Language Arts Director in Houston, TX, and Susan Hepler, a Children's Literature Specialist in Alexandria, VA, as well as others. This section also contains writing samples, position statements from professional associations, evaluation instruments, and spelling words.

This work is timely, comprehensive, and a valuable resource for teachers and education students.

Pages: **613 plus 240 Blue Pages** Price: **\$37.50** ISBN: **0-325-00109-X**

Reviewed by Laverna Saunders, Salem State College

Zemelman, Steven, Bearden, Patricia, Simmons, Yolanda, and Leki, Pete. (2000) *History Comes Home: Family Stories Across the Curriculum*. York, ME: [Stenhouse](#).

The authors of *History Comes Home* provide readers with a thoughtful, well-written, and practical book that presents genealogy as a ideal topic for integrating the curriculum. They place particular emphasis on social studies, history, geography, mathematics, multicultural studies, information literacy skills, and language arts. In addition to providing content information about the study of genealogy and tips regarding curriculum integration, the authors emphasize that student-centered, authentic, and inquiry-based learning is essential to making the *History Comes Home* program work. To this end, they provide ample guidance, thoughtful how-to information, and case studies that will assist educators in creating effective learning environments in their own classrooms.

History Comes Home is divided into eight chapters or "workshops" that introduce genealogical study, step-by-step. The first chapter introduces genealogy and provides guidance on how to involve students in planning and designing a learning program. Chapters two through seven emphasize different research methods within genealogy such as interviewing people, charting information, creating time lines, researching individuals, citing sources, and writing histories. Each also provides suggestions on how basic genealogical research skills can be introduced, learned, and used across the curriculum. The final chapter is reflective and speaks to assessing the success of the program at its completion. All of the workshops can be covered as quickly or a slowly as necessary, and are adaptable for students ranging from the elementary level to adults. Finally, all are organized in a consistent, logical fashion. Each contains:

1. An introduction and content explanation
2. A how-to activity guide
3. A list of learning objectives
4. A series of case studies or "reality checks" (real life classroom examples of how the workshop activities and objectives worked for others)

History Comes Home clearly relates the richness of possibilities that genealogy offers educators. It is an engaging text that will provide K-12 teachers a wonderful example of how to integrate their curriculums effectively. If used as suggested, will provide the structure that helps students make connections between their lives and their school subjects. In a nutshell, this is a practical and engaging book that uses genealogy to make student-centered, authentic learning real and viable.

Pages: **164** Price: **\$17.50 (paperback)** ISBN: **1-57110-308-2**

Reviewed by Jeneen LaSee-Willemssen, University of Wisconsin Superior



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