



Burch, Kerry T. (2000). *Eros as the Educational Principle of Democracy*. New York: Peter Lang.

Through this book, Kerry Burch, Assistant Professor of Philosophy of Education at Northern Illinois University, aims "to provoke the next generation of teachers to think about their vocation in radical new terms." Defining eros (one of the Greek terms for love) broadly as "soul" or "passion and connection," Burch states that historically eros has been devalued because of prejudice against the feminine. He then explores representations of eros through Western thought in four historical periods: a) pre-philosophic and philosophic eros with Plato's Symposium and selected parts of Phaedrus and the Republic; 2) a Christian view as exemplified by Augustine's interpretation of the Garden of Eve story; 3) a modern representation through Rousseau's Emile; and 4) contemporary accounts including feminist theory. Burch concludes by proposing a conceptual framework for thinking about the pedagogical relationship between eros and democracy, particularly in qualities and values such as questioning, the intense desire to know, to revise, to envision a perceived good, and to participate in a community of inquirers. Burch believes that eros should be treated as the defining educational principle of critical pedagogy and democratic citizenship.

This work has value as an upper level or graduate resource in educational philosophy. While the topic is fascinating, the style is dense, intellectual, and not easily absorbed.

Pages: **223** Price: **\$29.95** ISBN: **0-8204-4481-2**

Reviewed by Laverna Saunders, Salem State College

Cecil, Nancy L. (2001). *Activities for Striking a Balance in Early Literacy*. Scottsdale, Arizona: Holcomb Hathaway.

In this follow-up to her textbook, *Striking a Balance: Positive Practices for Early Literacy* (Holcomb Hathaway, 1999), Nancy Cecil offers 70 activities for literacy instruction that "have been found to be highly effective in today's diverse classrooms." Aimed towards pre-service and new teachers, the book is divided into seven chapters covering different aspects of literacy, such as spelling, vocabulary, comprehension, and phonics. Each chapter includes: 10 activities, the details of which are clearly described; suggestions for other activities; a list of children's books that speak to the element of literacy being addressed; other resources that may be used to help develop early

literacy; and questions to think about after an activity has been completed by students.

The individual activities state the intended grade level (ranging from pre-K to 3rd), the purpose of the activity, materials required, and the procedure involved. Cecil also includes suggestions on how to assess the activity. To help teachers integrate the activities into their curriculum and evaluate their effectiveness in doing so, Cecil provides an Appendix with suggestions for video self-assessment, an instruction and reflection profile and a lesson plan format. The book is three-hole punched and the pages are serrated for easy removal.

These activities, based on what Cecil calls "state-of-the-art understanding of the best practices for teaching young children to become literate human beings," have been field tested by teachers and thus should be practical and relatively straightforward to implement. Pre-service teachers will find this book the most useful, but experienced teachers would also gain insight and ideas from it. While reading *Striking a Balance* is not essential to understanding *Activities for Striking a Balance*, education students and teachers will find the earlier title helpful in providing the theoretical foundation for the activities.

Pages: 211 Price: \$18.95 ISBN: 1-890871-31-1

Reviewed by Shellie Jeffries, Aquinas College

Kaufman, Douglas. (2000). *Conferences and Conversations: Listening to the Literate Classroom*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Douglas Kaufman has produced a remarkable and refreshing narrative for teachers who wish to become and remain reflective practitioners and who wish to increase the quality and effectiveness of their classroom's student-student and teacher-student communication.

Kaufman does not provide readers with a formula or step-by-step process; nor does he suggest strategies such as "build rapport with the students" or "act as a sounding board" without providing a clear model and analysis. Indeed, Kaufman effectively combines research, observations of a real world classroom, and the reflections of a master teacher and her students to create an immanently readable and useful guide.

The book is based on Kaufman's yearlong observations of Linda Rief's middle school writing arts classroom. Rief, a master teacher, is also a well-known author in the area of education. Her works include: *Seeking Diversity: Language Arts with Adolescents*; *Vision and Voice: Extending the Literary Spectrum*; and *Staying Off-Balance and Alive*:

Learning from My Students in All That Matters: What Is It We Value in School and Beyond? She provides an exemplary model for teachers of all levels and experiences.

Kaufman's observations of Rief's classroom practices are detailed and specific. The observations, in and of themselves, would have made for a revealing and enlightening case study, but his obvious care in crafting his writing and pairing those observations and reflections with current research and exemplary practices has resulted in a marvelous resource.

Readers enter Rief's classroom, observe her teaching methods, and hear her students' reactions. At the same time, Kaufman's personable voice helps readers focus their observations of Rief, informs them of related research, pushes them towards a greater understanding of their own classroom interactions, and gets out of the way of their learning. Even Kaufman's writing models the exemplary classroom practices he describes!

The only quibble I have, and it is admittedly small, is that Kaufman included several "see references" to the appendices in one of Rief's books, *Seeking Diversity*. The references were appreciated, but I would have preferred to have those particular appendices reproduced in *Conferences and Conversations* for ease of use. On the other hand, Kaufman has inspired me to delve further into the processes that he and Rief have so invitingly shared. I now have a copy of Rief's *Seeking Diversity* on my desk and an order for *Conferences and Conversations* in my collection development pile (the copy I received for review will not be donated to the library, my usual practice, because I want it handy for my own reference and inspiration!)

Pages: 214 Price: \$20.00 ISBN: 0-325-00271-1

Reviewed by Jeneen LaSee-Willemsen, University of Wisconsin-Superior

Lake, Jo-Anne (2000) *Literature & Science Breakthroughs: Connecting Language and Science Skills in the Elementary Classroom*. Markham, ON: Pembroke Publishers. Published in the United States by Stenhouse.

There have been quite a few 'science and children's literature' books published in the last five years. *Literature & Science Breakthroughs* is sufficiently different to warrant purchase. Jo-Anne Lake has written a thoughtful, well-organized book, which is both theoretical and practical. Her approach to the topic is unique, she uses the *National Science Education Standards* (National Research Council, 1996) strands as her structure. Lake thoroughly explains how books can be integrated into each strand discussing how to get started, hands-on

activities and assessment. The chapter on assessment is excellent, clearly demonstrating that the use of children's literature in the science classroom can be effectively assessed. The list of suggested titles is extensive and includes a wide variety of literature—picture books, fiction, information books, poetry, folklore, etc. The last chapter illustrates how to integrate materials across all the strands and into other areas of the curriculum.

This is not a quick fix book with canned activities, it is a thoughtful explanation of how and why children's literature can be used in the elementary science curriculum. *Literature & Science Breakthroughs* would be helpful to both preservice and in-service teachers.

Pages: **128** Price: **\$18.95** ISBN: **1-55138-126-5**

Reviewed by Judy Walker, University of North Carolina, Charlotte



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