



Anderson, Carl (2000). *How's It Going? A Practical Guide to Conferring with Student Writers*. Portsmouth, NH: [Heinemann](#).

A key element in developing successful student writers is the one-on-one conference between teacher and student. Carl Anderson, lead staff developer for the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, has presented educators with a guide containing all the critical components for conducting student writing conferences and details for ensuring success. Written in a conversational style, this book discusses teacher and student conference roles, suggestions for integrating authors into the student writing process, the architecture and use of mini-lessons to address student needs and teach necessary skills, and points to consider in determining how and where to conduct and manage student conferences.

Each chapter begins with a personal story introducing the chapter topic. Teacher - student conversations, charts, diagrams, illustrations and actual student drafts are generously included throughout the text. Relevant references complete each chapter. An appendix of mentor texts, children's books particularly useful when conferring with student writers concludes the book.

Educators interested in enhancing or establishing student-writing conferences will benefit from the rich, concrete, and well-organized information contained in this work. The opportunity to observe the interactions of Carl Anderson with his students is both compelling and inspiring. Indeed, the stories themselves are enough to convince teachers that student writing conferences are an experience not to be missed. This book is recommended for teachers, pre-service teachers and those involved in teacher education programs.

Pages: 204 Price: \$40.00 cloth, \$18.50 paper ISBN: 0-325-00224-X

Reviewed by Francine M. DeFranco, University of Connecticut

Cram Henry G. & Germinario, Vito (2000). *Leading and Learning in Schools: Brain-Based Practices*. Lanham, MD: [Scarecrow Press](#).

Cram and Germinario are both New Jersey school superintendents who did their doctoral work at Rutgers. This is their second book together and like the first, which focused on educational change at the classroom level, this one seems to be aimed at teachers. One imagines them having lunch together at some state meeting and griping about how some of the teachers in their districts don't keep up with professional reading, or at least don't seem to understand the research behind ideas being used in the classroom. Unlike most such lunches, which

simply give participants a chance to vent, these educators decided to write a book.

The book looks at developments in brain research, beginning from a basic diagram of a brain cell, and continues in plain, understandable language to explain recent advances in brain research and interpret them for classroom use. It discusses ideas such as active learning and parent involvement and the classroom community. In the process the authors reference, often even reproduce tables and charts from, some of the most important work in the field. The book is almost a small text, but it lacks the assortment of typefaces, boxes, and other such devices by which textbooks force their readers to notice the important points. This book is simply meant to be read. For educators who do not know the research behind some of the most successful recent classroom practices, or who simply would like a clearer explanation, this book should serve well.

Pages: **219** Price: **\$29.95** ISBN: **0-8108-3755-2**

Reviewed by Kate Corby, Michigan State University

Hong, Eunsook & Milgram, Roberta M. (2000). *Homework: Motivation and Learning Preference*. Westport, CT: [Bergin & Garvey](#).

Hong and Milgram take homework seriously! This book provides a synthesis of work they've done together over the last decade, and reported piecemeal in journal articles and conference papers. Throughout, their emphasis has been on the student. The authors explore homework motivation and preferences across a grid of more than 20 factors using an 80+-item questionnaire they have developed and refined. While the focus is on the student: how each individual approaches homework and is changed (or not) by the experience, the researchers have also studied parents and teachers in an attempt to look empirically at their roles as well. The research is carefully thorough, assessing students of different cultures, ages, genders, and talent levels.

Readers will appreciate the evident depth of research presented here, some may find it overwhelming. The authors claim to be writing for parents, teachers and counselors, but the book is best suited to a professional audience. Research results are presented in a rather formal style, as are intervention suggestions. Many of the interventions require commitment to a research program that is rather comprehensive in scope. Those looking for a few quick tips will not find them here, the authors are really calling for a transformation of our approach to homework. We must make it suit the individual, just as we try to present classroom instruction in ways that meet the needs of various learning styles.

Pages: **191** Price: **\$65.00** ISBN: **0-89789-585-1**

Reviewed by Kate Corby, Michigan State University

Janney, Rachel. & Snell, Martha E. (2000). *Modifying Schoolwork*. Baltimore, MD : [Paul H. Brookes Pub.](#)

This is part of series of four books, all by Janney and Snell, entitled Teachers' Guides to Inclusive Practices. Here the authors focus on the individual classroom. They assume an inclusive classroom, an appropriate IEP (individualized education program), and special education support for the classroom teacher. From this basis they go on to outline how educators can form a successful instructional team and plan to meet the needs of all students within the framework of their existing instructional plan. The goal of having a plan for each lesson for each special needs child, rather than hoping to find ways to include them as each lesson progresses is the big message here. Janney and Snell want educators to realize that this is not an overwhelming task.

While sample forms are often not particularly helpful, Janney and Snell use many sample forms in this book to good effect. By providing a form to document each step in the planning process they effectively provide an easy graphic synopsis of their most important points. There is a chart that outlines each team member's responsibilities; one for general adaptations to be used for recurring lesson formats; a weekly plan of specific adaptations; and an assessment of the student and his/her learning goals. The text also features composite student case studies that run throughout the book. The featured students are at various age and ability levels. Using the same examples throughout makes it is easier for the reader to get an understanding of what the whole plan for a student might entail. This brief book will be a great help to many educators.

Pages: **93** Price: **\$24.00** ISBN: **1-55766-354-8**

Reviewed by Kate Corby, Michigan State University



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