



**Flynn, Nick & McPhillips, Shirley (2000) *A Note Slipped Under The Door: Teaching From The Poems We Love*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.**

The proper way to begin this review would have been to share one of my favorite poems as a centerpiece around which to frame my comments and share my understanding of this book. Poems, however, come hard to me. Not so for Flynn and McPhillips who share with their readers a deep dialogue about poems, writing poems, and teaching poems.

Flynn and McPhillip's book is structured around the various techniques and methods poets use to create poems and the ways readers can enjoy poems (finding the image, listening to the sounds of words, making lists, revision, connecting to the spiritual, etc.). Each of their eleven chapters begins with a poem that illustrates a given concept and around which the discussion evolves and focuses. The authors expand the discussion into instruction by providing four example mini lessons for each poem/concept. The mini lessons are complete with descriptions of how the lessons worked in real life writing workshops and samples of student work they generated.

Teachers looking for ways to bring in-depth inquiry into their elementary and middle school level poetry writing workshops will find Flynn and McPhillip's text a deeply thoughtful and engaging book. Teachers who simply want to become more comfortable with poetry and find good, solid models of ways to teach it will find what they are looking for and much more.

Pages: **241** Price: **\$19.50** ISBN: **1-57110-320-1**

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

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**Graves, Donald H. (2001) *The Energy to Teach*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.**

In this book Donald Graves investigates the energy factor in teaching. Over a period of 18 months, Graves, Professor Emeritus at the University of New Hampshire, interviewed teachers, administrators, students and parents asking the question:

Tell me what gives you energy, takes it away and what for

you is a waste of time". (p.4)

In his travels and discussions with educators, Graves observed that increasing numbers of teachers are experiencing energy fatigue. As a former teacher and principal, Graves knows that teaching is an emotional roller coaster with its ups and downs, twists and turns where each day brings new challenges not only from students, administrators, and parents, but also from state lawmakers, educational consultants and community leaders.

Through his interviews Graves sought to pinpoint the factors impacting teachers today. He set out to determine why teachers were experiencing more fatigue and, more importantly, discover how teachers could overcome this phenomena. The result is a practical discussion, directed toward teachers, that guides them in discovering what gives them the energy to teach and what takes away their energy.

In the first few chapters Graves walks teachers through the process of examining their current situation: taking stock of their schedule and setting a clear direction for their life. Subsequent chapters look at the specific energy factors that surfaced from his interviews, including classroom structure, curriculum, colleagues, learning, assessment and parents. Each factor has the potential to give or take energy and Graves instructs teachers on how to make each challenge work for the positive.

In the final chapters, Graves outlines how one school system and a school administrator have successfully learned to put energy into their work. Throughout the book, Graves brings encouragement and comfort to today's often-overburdened teachers.

Practical and insightful, this short volume is highly recommended for teachers, parents and administrators. Includes an index and reference list.

Pages: **192** Price: **\$17.50** ISBN: **0325003262**

**Reviewed by Stephanie Davis, Spring Arbor University**

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**Harvey, Stephanie & Goudvis, Anne (2000) *Strategies That Work: Teaching Comprehension to Enhance Understanding*. York, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.**

The authors of this book share their insights, techniques and practical suggestions to help students become fluent readers. Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis, former classroom teachers, are now reading and writing staff developers for the Denver-based Public Education and Business Coalition, training teachers and school librarians in reading comprehension activities. Their reading strategies include activities to change the teacher's point of view, as well as teacher led activities to

discern the children's point of view. According to the authors, "of the many books currently in print on the subject of reading, most deal with the decoding aspect of reading. This book focuses on the thinking aspect of reading." (p.5)

Part I of the text leads in with a description of "The Foundation of Meaning" covering strategic thinking, strategic reading, instruction and practice, along with some book selection tips to accompany suggested activities. In part II "Strategy Lessons and More," the authors emphasize looking at inferences, reading for details, and questioning as a part of reading. They suggest that looking at a jigsaw puzzle while trying to put it together, or following a recipe to make a cake are examples of synthesizing information that an inexperienced reader can relate to. Part III is appendices including resources that support strategy instruction such as book lists for curriculum subject areas, and magazines to engage thoughtful young readers.

*Strategies That Work* at first appears to be a daunting display of how the "expert teacher" handles her subject. Fortunately, Harvey and Goudvis present a variety of strategies, offering choices of books to present, and activities to engage students, so that readers can choose the ideas that best suit the needs of their students. This book is a good addition to a teacher's resource center or professional educator's collection. The authors' enthusiasm for reading and sharing ideas with students is clear, and used appropriately, their ideas will inspire classroom learning.

Pages: **314** Price: **\$22.50** ISBN: **1-57110-310-4**

**Reviewed by Helga B. Visscher, University of Alabama**

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**Szymusiak, Karen & Sibberson, Franki (2001) *Beyond Leveled Books*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.**

There are a plethora of books and articles about methods to use when teaching and working with emergent readers, but similar information about transitional readers (also known as expanding or self-extending readers) is difficult to find. Authors Szymusiak and Sibberson help fill this gap with *Beyond Leveled Books*, a short, highly readable, and practical book.

According to the authors, transitional readers have a wide variety of needs that are not always easily identified or addressed by their teachers. Teachers, they feel, need to provide explicit instruction and support for their transitional readers. To this end, Szymusiak and Sibberson identify six of the more common needs of transitional readers and provide practical examples and concrete methods of ways to teach to each of these needs. The six needs are: learning to select appropriate books; sustaining comprehension in long and complex

books; maintaining interest in long and complex books; understanding the features of different genres; increasing the sophistication of decoding and fluency skills; and making sense of structural features found in "advanced" texts.

*Beyond Leveled Books* is an easily digested, short book that is filled with a surprising amount of solid information about transitional readers and their needs; children's books; and practical teaching methods. Teachers of grades 2-5, librarians in school media centers, children's librarians, and students of children's literature will find this a useful and eye-opening book.

Pages: **128** Price: **\$15.00** ISBN: **1-57110-330-9**

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



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