



Burke, Kay (2002) *Mentoring Guidebook: Mapping the Journey*. Arlington Heights, Illinois: SkyLight Professional Development.

This book is designed to show mentors how to help beginning teachers becoming competent and caring educators. The two sections of the book address the needs of the mentor and the protege.

Section I, "Setting the Course," provides definitions and ground rules for those embarking on their shared journey through the mentor / protege experience. These guidelines provide feedback and demonstrations for the protege teacher to determine for herself the improvements needed in her teaching. Definitions of terms, evaluation forms, and a list of further activities for the mentor and protege are available for photocopying.

Section II, "Planning the Itinerary," includes lesson plan guidelines, lists of further resources, and scenarios for classroom management and solving behavior problems. The mutually agreed upon expectations of the mentor and protege allow the mentee to discover and solve problems independently whenever possible, but leave room for the mentor's intervention in a serious situation. Emphasis on trust between the mentor and protege is useful. The practical tips such as an observation checklist for reading, (available for photocopying) and Burke's "Dirty Dozen" list of negative teacher behaviors (such as sarcasm, put-downs, public reprimands) help the new teacher avoid some problems before they come up.

The practical hands-on activities offered for both the mentor and the protege makes this a very useful resource in the literature of mentoring. Activities are presented as a shared journey. It is not overly prescriptive, the mentor and protege select their route together, ensuring their cooperation for the rest of the journey.

Pages: 211 Price: \$32.95 ISBN: 1-57517-546-0

Reviewed by Helga B. Visscher, University of Alabama

Hurst, Beth; Wilson, Cindy; Camp, Deanne & Cramer, Genny (2002) *Creating Independent Readers: Developing Word Recognition Skills in K-12 Classrooms*. Scottsdale, AZ: Holcomb Hathaway Publishers.

Focusing on word recognition skills and avoiding debates on various (and contradictory) educational philosophies, Beth Hurst and her colleagues from Southwest Missouri State University strive to provide "practical suggestions for teachers and students" who are or will be teaching reading. Sections throughout the book provide working definitions for individual word recognition skills, strategies for teaching beginning and experienced readers, and ways to assess how effectively students use their word recognition skills. The authors attempt to address the needs of both elementary, middle and high school students, as well as match student learning styles with instructional practices.

Chapter 1 offers an overview of word recognition and defines eight methods of assessment of word recognition skills. The second chapter describes those skills, such as phonics, structural analysis and context cues, and offers activities to develop them. "Supporting Skills," including previewing and visual clues, help readers become independent learners; these are discussed in the third unit. In the last chapter, the authors show how all the "pieces of the puzzle" fit together to enable reading comprehension. A number of appendices list common prefixes and suffixes, as well as technology resources, references and a glossary.

Despite its short length, this title has much to recommend it. The strategies discussed are supported by research, the suggestions for activities are practical, the authors make an effort to address the skill levels of a variety of readers, and they accommodate the cognitive development of students. "Creating Independent Learners" is recommended for any teacher or education student who wants to learn about methods of incorporating word recognition skills into her curriculum. Teachers specializing in reading will want to begin with this book, but may wish to explore other titles for more in-depth discussions of the topic.

Pages: **141** Price: **\$19.50** ISBN: **1-890871-36-2**

Reviewed by Shellie Jeffries, Aquinas College

Ladson-Billings, Gloria (2001) *Crossing Over to Canaan: The Journey of New Teachers in Diverse Classrooms*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

The need for teachers able to teach in diverse classrooms and communities is evident and not going away in the near future. In this book, Gloria Ladson-Billings explores the experiences of students in the Teach For Diversity (TFD) teacher education program at a midwestern university. While presenting to the reader her personal background as an educator, as well as her motivation behind working with the TFD program, the author offers a fine blend of observation

and storytelling.

Ladson-Billings highlights the pertinent issues and concerns faced by educators in present-day society, such as: finding "teachers who are capable of teaching successfully in diverse classrooms" (p. 12), what "diversity" means in the year 2001 (p. 14), what "teaching" means in the year 2001 (p. 26), and "theories of pedagogy" (p. 29). After addressing these challenges faced by teachers, the author introduces readers to the "novice teachers" from one cohort of the TFD program. The ethnic and socio-economic diversity represented among these teachers impacts, as well as offers a better perspective on, their experiences. For example, one teacher had taken part in a student exchange program in Japan and knew what it felt like to be an outsider. This experience helped her empathize with children feeling like outsiders (p. 37).

Fellow "novice teachers" may find connections with the student teaching experiences of the participants in the TFD program. The author reveals the participants' concerns over whether student learning was taking place and their struggles to work effectively with students who present varied challenges to a teacher. All teachers will appreciate the concerns addressed by the TFD program, including a motivating premise that teacher education is in need of reform (p. 6) and without reform, new teachers are being sent out feeling poorly prepared (p. 7).

Another valuable aspect of this book is the exploration of knowledge gained from the TFD program, as well as some of the pitfalls of TFD. For example, TFD made clear to the sponsors of the program that "(p)rospective teachers need the opportunity to do serious intellectual work" (p. 136). According to Ladson-Billings some notions of teaching are based more on the personality traits of teachers (compassionate, for example) rather than on the planning teachers must carry out or professional development teachers take part in after being initiated in the field. One shortcoming the author found in the program was the overkill of work with TFD. Student teachers' days were packed with planned activities from morning to afternoon, which left little time for participants to reflect on their teaching (p. 140). Ladson-Billings showed support for the program while sharing realistic outcomes.

Crossing Over to Canaan is a valuable read for those interested in changing the way that teacher education is accomplished, as well as for those teachers interested in teaching in diverse communities. All readers should take away information about what may and may not work in teacher education reform.

Pages: **172** Price: **\$24.95** ISBN: **0-787-95001-7**

Reviewed by Joy T. Jodlowski, DePaul University

Sauerteig, Judy (2001) *Science to Go: Fact and Fiction Learning Packs*. Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited.

In a brief, two paragraph introduction, Sauerteig explains that she created these learning packs for parents. Each "pack" is a pair of books, one fiction, one non-fiction and activity sheets to accompany the readings. There are four sections, Kindergarten through grade 3, with 15 packs in each for a total of 60 book pairs. Sauerteig envisions schools making these packs available to supplement classroom activities. She feels that it is important to encourage parents to read and enjoy non-fiction with their young children.

Teachers and parents who share the author's concern about introducing young children to non-fiction will appreciate the obvious care with which the books have been matched. There are none that seem inappropriate or unlikely. Sauerteig does not provide information beyond author and title for recommended books, but most of them are well known mainstream books available in any public library. The suggestions for activities are less impressive. They are generally very predictable lists of questions about a reading, recapping facts and reinforcing new information. These may work well in a classroom situation where groups of students can interact with each other in response to the questions. In a parent-child situation, more open-ended questions and items that spur the child to further interest in the topic, would be welcome.

Pages: **186** Price: **\$30.00** ISBN: **1-56308-844-4**

Reviewed by: Kate Corby, Michigan State University



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