education review

Burke, Jim (2001) *Illuminating Texts: How to Teach Students to Read the World.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

In the book, *Illuminating Texts: How to Teach Students to Read the World,* author Jim Burke explores the interesting and timely concept of "textual intelligence." He argues that students today need the skills to read, understand, and create a larger variety of texts than ever before. Burke claims teachers should provide students with the tools they need to be literate readers of the following seven texts: the world, the Internet, textbooks, tests, literature, information, and images. Each chapter focuses on one of these seven types and explains the background on and rationale for the chapter's focus, the connection to national academic standards, the proper questions to ask when tackling each type of text, classroom connections for the teacher, and elements of the text to be analyzed.

One of the remarkable features about Burke's writing style is that he illustrates for the reader what he is asking teachers to do with their students: he guides the reader through how to best utilize this book. In his preface, he suggests teachers use the accompanying Web site, www.eng lishcompanion.com/illuminating, to find sample lesson plan ideas, student examples, and links to interesting Web sites. The companion Web site helps to reinforce Burke's argument about the importance of reading and creating multiple texts to convey ideas and information. The author also includes eight appendices, including everything from forms for evaluating textbooks and Web sites to a literacy timeline. Finally, the format of *Illuminating Texts* is also conducive to its easy reading and comprehension. Each chapter has the same organizational structure and multiple tables, figures, and icons in the margins. The icons bring the reader's attention to useful Internet sites or important points of interest.

Although all of the seven chapters are helpful and well written, the one that addresses how to read the Internet is the most beneficial. Burke describes the various types of texts on the Internet, questions to ask when researching on the Internet, ways to use the Internet to supplement classroom instruction, and methods for evaluating the validity of Web sites. Burke also provides practical strategies for finding the authentic educational resources available to both students and teachers. This chapter is a must-read for anyone feeling overwhelmed by the vastness of the Internet.

The author sheds light on an important and multifaceted topic: preparing literate readers in the 21st century. Each chapter synthesizes the multitude of signs and symbols both students and teachers will

encounter into meaningful constructs. Burke successfully advises teachers on how to improve their students' textual intelligence, or their ability to critically read the world around them. The one shortcoming of this book is that in some places there are too many lists and not enough closure. The effect of all the lists on the reader is that the bulleted information becomes lost in a sea of unconnected bullets; if the author had saved the listing technique for the most important points in the chapter, then the truly important points would remain salient. This overuse of lists and lack of closure in some instances is just one criticism of an otherwise powerful book. Overall, teachers will find this text and its accompanying Web site a practical, well written, and worthwhile tool to add to their repertoire of instructional literacy texts.

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Reviewed by Kelly Courtney-Smith, University of Oklahoma and Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School in Oklahoma City, OK.

Heard, Georgia (2002) *The Revision Toolbox; Teaching Techniques That Work.* Portsmouth,NH: Heinemann.

Georgia Heard is one of those people who deserves to be called a "master" of her craft; her talent is reflected in her book *The Revision Toolbox: Techniques That Work.* She helps the reader understand the process of revision and presents many "tools" to help fix problems that occur.

After reading this small yet amazingly complete book, one becomes clear about how editing and revising differ. The focus on process rather than only on product helps the reader become aware of the value of revisiting work so that a more objective evaluation and clearer rewording might take place.

The ideas in this book are good for experienced writers as well as teachers who are helping their students learn to hone their skills. Many tips are given for enhancing student writing. One suggestion is for an "Amazing Words" bulletin board which helps create an environment of "word awareness" and provides the writer with an expanded word bank.

Activities with flashbacks, slow motion, and big sweeps of time can be used to help students learn to add detail and clarity to their writing. Webbing, a focusing tool, can be used to teach organization skills. Suggestions for experimenting with a variety of "selves" help writers learn to describe the same event from differing perspectives. Placing value on reading aloud and sharing writing with others adds dimension to the writing process. Having students close their eyes to envision details can also aid them in using words to create a clearer description of a situation.

If you are looking for creative ideas to help you become a better writer, this is a great reference. If you are a teacher, you will find practical suggestions in the book which will offer your students exciting and challenging ways to help them become better writers.

Pages: **144**   Price: **$17.00**   ISBN: **0-325-00460-9**

Reviewed by Dr. Kathleen E. Fite, Southwest Texas State University

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Lincoln, Melinda (2002) *Conflict Resolution Communication: Patterns Promoting Peaceful Schools.* Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.

Melinda Lincoln is an expert in the fields of communication and mediation; she has combined theories from both fields in an intelligent, clear and concise manner. Lincoln states, "*Conflict Resolution Communication: Patterns Promoting Peaceful Schools* offers an efficient and proven strategy for solving problems peacefully and provides an array of lifetime coping skills as a much needed solution to school violence everywhere." (p. xviii) In Chapters One through Four, Lincoln gives stakeholders a theoretical grounding in communication that is unintimidating and straightforward. She connects conflict resolution education to changing attitudes, beliefs and patterns of behavior. Lincoln suggests that any approach to creating conflict resolution education needs to be holistic and involve all stakeholders. She identifies a broad range of possible stakeholders but at the most basic level this includes school boards, teachers, counsellors, parents and especially students. Peer mediation training is given great importance and Lincoln claims "Trained mediators can affect the level of violence and promote a sense of safety in schools by facilitating conflict resolution processes, communication techniques, and problem-solving skills." (p. 37)

In Chapter Five, Lincoln talks about communication and how nonverbal cues can belie the verbal statements of parties in a dispute. A negotiator need not only be aware of mediation techniques but must also recognize how the unspoken messages between parties can affect understanding. Chapter Six focuses on bullying and addresses the changes that need to be made before bullying is made unacceptable within a school. "For consistent progress to be made in obliterating the effects of bullying, the internal causes or reasons for the inappropriate actions of the bully must be revealed, understood and removed." (p. 56) Chapters Seven through Nine focus on giving specific conflict resolution communication techniques to teachers, administrators, parents and students. Lincoln identifies the unique roles that each group plays in modelling effective conflict resolution. The abbreviated guidelines that Lincoln has presented for creating a conflict resolution

communication program would need to supplemented by further reading. The reference section does provide some resources but considering the complexity of the subject a more extensive bibliography would have been appreciated. This book would be useful for individuals who are thinking about implementing a peer mediation program or who are considering alternate methods of conflict resolution.

Pages: **126**   Price: **$31.95**   ISBN: **0-8108-4388-9**

Reviewed by Laura Koltutsky, University of Houston

Marriott, Donna (2002) *Comprehension Right from the Start: How to Organize and Manage Book Clubs for Young Readers.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Meeting the challenge of teaching reading to children of varying capabilities has long been a puzzle to primary teachers. A teacher may like to work individually with a student but class size often makes it impractical. However, whole group instruction does not address the wide- ranging needs of individual students. To attend to this problem, Donna Marriott quickly focuses on small group instruction through book clubs in *Comprehension Right from the Start: How to Organize and Manage Book Clubs for Young Readers*.

Firmly believing in the importance of comprehension, Marriott places meaning at the center of the book clubs. Within the group, students are asked to interact with the text and each other as they explore the book together. Asking young children to look into the meaning of the work emphasizes to them that reading is not merely decoding symbols, but a thinking, questioning and responsive activity.

The structure of meeting daily to examine a book is also emphasized. Students have the time to fully examine and master the work when they are meeting. The teacher then can take the time to meet individually with students and provide custom guidance to the separate groups.

Intermixed with real-life examples, Marriott provides not only a broad outline for the organization of book clubs, but also expands on the idea, giving specific attention to Kindergarten through second grade classes in separate chapters. Assessment has its own chapter with techniques and processes discussed such as "look-think- act", writing assessment, case studies, and video studies. Additionally, lesson plans for specific children's books are included as examples.

Student teachers and practicing teachers alike will find insight and guidance from *Comprehension Right from the Start* in engaging young children in reading and encouraging them to grow as readers.

Pages: **192**   Price: **$19.50**   ISBN: **0-325-00429-3**

Reviewed by by Melissa Cast, University of Nebraska at Omaha

Morrow, Leslie Mandel (2003) *Organizing and Managing the Language Arts Block: A Professional Development Guide.* **New York: Guilford Press.**

Leslie Mandel Morrow has written a primer for pre- service teachers and a study guide for in-service teachers who are interested in "creating, revising or adding new strategies to their teaching of a language arts block (LAB)." (p. ix) As Dr. Mandel discovered through her research and experience, teachers are able to learn new strategies quickly but find implementation cumbersome. This text, well-organized itself, offers guidance.

A weekly plan for in-service staff development or teacher study group is succinctly outlined. Instructors of language arts methods would use the book as a primary text. It is suggested they guide pre-service teachers through each chapter covering classroom literacy programs for kindergarten through fourth grade. Generous use of classroom photographs, diagrams, charts and other concrete examples further clarifies the accompanying text.

Following an overview of the physical environment of the classroom and organizing the classroom into guided reading and center activities, Morrow neatly lays out plans for a literacy program grade by grade. A case study of each grade is followed by activities and plans that the case study incorporates. The cases are composites of real teachers exhibiting best practices in their classrooms. Activities and plans that follow each case include such topics as cross-curricular connections, teachable moments, morning meeting, daily schedule options, reading and writing workshops, mini-lessons, things to do when students arrive, skill development and more. These are the nuts and bolts topics teachers come to know and master if they and their students are to experience success in teaching language arts. The focus on management and organization will be appreciated by in-service teachers and valued by instructors of pre-service teachers.

Pages: **348**   Price: **$30.00**   ISBN: **1-57230-794-3**

Reviewed by Sandra R. Glass, Arizona State University

Thier, Marlene with Daviss, Bennett (2002) *The New Science Literacy: Using Language Skills to Help Students Learn Science.* **Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.**

Marlene Thier, the Teacher Education Coordinator for two science education programs at the University of California, Berkley, and Bennett Daviss, a journalist who frequently writes on educational innovation, science and technology have collaborated in The New Science Literacy to produce a persuasive and practical guide for science teachers from the elementary through the high school grades.

The authors have two clear intentions in this text:

- persuade science teachers that a student's ability to learn science improves as that student's comprehension and use of language improves
- provide elementary, middle and high school teachers with classroom activities and curriculum ideas that have been successfully used to integrate literacy development with science learning

An enthusiastic "Foreword" by Harold Pratt, the 2001- 2002 President of the National Science Teachers Association, introduces the book. He writes that Thier and Daviss provide "clear guidance and concrete examples of how to link science and language instruction by demonstrating the inherent interdependence of the two disciplines" (p. ix). Thier and Daviss articulately remind us that the recent emphasis across North America on standardized tests in reading and math has inevitably increased both classroom time and school resources for these two disciplines. The resulting effect is that other disciplines, including science, suffer the consequences of exclusion from the basic curriculum. Thier and Daviss urge science teachers to explicitly integrate literacy into the science curriculum; not just because the combination is beneficial to science students, but also because links to literacy help to move science back into the mainstream curriculum.

Thier and Daviss take the promotion of science learning in the schools seriously and recognize that the integration of literacy and science will only succeed if teachers are provided with practical guides and concrete examples. To this end, the authors provide several creative and highly useful guided inquiry lessons at the elementary, middle and high school levels. Each lesson is thoroughly described early in the book, and then as each strand of literacy is further explored in the context of a science classroom, these same guided inquiry lessons serve as "how-to" examples of integrated teaching and learning. Literacy is broken down into five strands in chapter-by- chapter guides that focus on reading, writing, speaking and listening, and media literacy. For each literacy strand the authors provide performance expectations, teaching strategies and metacognitive strategies that have been carefully developed for the context of everyday science activities. Science teachers will likely find that the teaching suggestions in these chapters are easily adaptable to their current science curriculum because the authors are essentially making explicit for science students the metacognitive strategies of highly literate learners.

The ready-to-copy guides for both teachers and students that are referred to in the text are helpfully included in the Appendix of this valuable handbook for science teachers. The book will be of interest to language teachers but it is particularly recommended for all science teachers and for university libraries that support education programs.

Pages: **194**   Price: **$19.00**   ISBN: **0-325-00459-5**

Reviewed by Brenda Reed, Queen's University, Canada

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