



Balajthy, Ernest & Lipa-Wade, Sally (2003) *Struggling Readers: Assessment and Instruction in Grades K-6*. New York: The Guilford Press.

The book *Struggling Readers: Assessment and Instruction in Grades K-6* is a comprehensive book that combines theory, research and ideas for teaching the struggling reader, the students who do not seem to benefit from classroom instruction. The authors, Ernest Balajthy and Sally Lipa-Wade, have taken a “unique approach to thinking about struggling readers and their teachers” (p. 1). This text provides a resource for teachers who wish to understand these struggling readers and how better to help them learn to read. It focuses on instruction. The authors say, “Our hope is that this text provides a framework that will enable classroom teachers and reading/literacy specialists to make effective strategic and curricular decisions about the children who struggle with reading and literacy development” (p. 3). Curriculum developers and other administrators responsible for school design and curriculum who are willing to loosen controls over teaching would also benefit from reading this book.

The authors categorize struggling readers into three different groups, the catch-on reader, the catch-up reader and the stalled reader. The three categories of struggling readers are used to help the reader recognize his/her own students. They warn, however, not to use these as a label for a child, but just as a way to be able to think of groups with common strengths and weaknesses. The authors state that research shows that within each group students share common characteristics and respond well to similar treatments.

Catch-on readers are described as students who have difficulty acquiring basic sight vocabulary, applying language cueing systems, comprehension, understanding concepts about print, learning letters and sounds and their connections. Individualized direct instruction focusing on authentic reading and writing experiences works best with these students. Programs such as Reading Recovery® or Early Success are two suggestions from the authors on how best to meet these students' needs.

Catch-up readers share difficulties in meeting the demands of grade level work. They are reading below their grade level peers. Causes of these difficulties could be limited literacy experiences, delayed maturation or cultural and environmental differences. These students require additional time reading. The instruction needs to be focused on the child's individual needs using high interest materials.

Stalled readers exhibit very limited progress in reading and writing and are significantly lower than their grade level peers. These are usually students in special education classes. This group need intensive, direct, and individualized instruction to develop basic reading skills using very easy materials

Balajthy and Lipa-Wade have reviewed significant research regarding the causes of and available instructional interventions for struggling readers. They write “so much of this writing is transitory; tentative findings and hypotheses that receive brief moments of fame, only to be discarded as new theories and research appear in print” (p. 1). The authors do not provide any compilation of their own ideas or research evidence that their method would prove to be successful with struggling readers. They provide evidence of the difficulties common to each category and offer recommendations on addressing these difficulties but the recommendations are not supported by research evidence.

The authors’ “ideas are based on a balanced, interactive, social constructivist theory of reading” (p. 3) which they believe is the most useful theory for understanding reading difficulties and planning for how to teach struggling readers. The theory is reader-centered, allows for students’ individual differences and gives teachers opportunities to observe students and then decide the best way to teach them.

Teachers need to know what causes reading difficulties and be able to use information from assessments in order to teach struggling readers effectively. The book is set up in a very teacher-friendly way to be able to accomplish this goal. Twenty chapters separated into three sections (the three categories of struggling readers) make it easy for the reader to search for information according to individual student’s needs. Within each section the authors share case studies, which help make the characteristics of each category memorable. Chapters are dedicated to explaining common characteristics, providing possible explanations for the problems, stating instructional goals and supplying assessments and activities for teachers to use in order to help meet students' needs. Each section also allows the reader to reflect on case studies and to think about issues, interventions and the needs of each student. Balathjy and Lipa-Wade furnish the reader with additional resources that review more of the research and materials available. At the end of every chapter is a thorough summary of the previous pages as well as a preview of what is coming up next.

Teachers, according to Balajthy and Lipa-Wade, are responsible for observing and analyzing their students, and then using ideas from the book to best fit the needs of struggling readers. It may be difficult to see how a teacher would be able to implement these ideas in many current school systems.

Reading instruction needs to be individualized, targeted, intensive, extensive, motivational and supportive (p. 160). Balajthy and Lipa-

Wade cite Neal and Kelly (2002), “there may be a lack of willingness and determination on the part of the school system to succeed with struggling readers”. The authors recognize the limitations teachers, schools and districts have for meeting all of these individual needs, but affirm that the goal is to be able to provide the best education for every student. On this issue Allington (2001) suggests that schools should use their knowledge and resources to allow children to become literate. “Addressing the issue of reading difficulties would require school programs that were more comprehensive and flexible than most are today” (Allington, 2002).

If, as Allington suggests, school systems were willing to loosen curriculum control and use the research and implement the ideas in this book, we may be able to address the needs of all struggling readers. Balajthy and Lipa-Wade provide an extensive tool, *Struggling Readers Assessment and Instruction in Grades K-6*, for this cause.

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Pages: **285** Price: **\$32.00** ISBN: **1-57230 852-4**

Reviewed by **Anne Weisenberg**, Reading Recovery® Teacher Leader, Manteca Unified School District. An educator for 16 years with experience in Special Education (learning handicapped), Resource Specialist, Reading Recovery Teacher and Teacher Leader. Passionate about all students becoming literate. Currently a Doctoral student in Educational Leadership at St. Mary’s College of California.

Berger, Ron (2003) *An Ethic of Excellence: Building a Culture of Craftsmanship with Students*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

“For twenty-five years I’ve led a double life. I’m a full-time classroom teacher in a public school. In order to make ends meet for my family, I’ve worked during the summers, vacations, and sometimes weekends as a carpenter” (p. 1). In the hands of another author, this could be the beginning of a stinging indictment of the place of the work of education in American society. For Ron Berger, however, it begins the story of the ethic that unites both of his lives: “If you’re going to do something, I believe, you should do it well. You should sweat over it

and make sure it's strong and accurate and beautiful and you should be proud of it" (p. 1). This is the ethic that he works to share with his students, and also, in his role as a consultant (and author of this book), with other teachers and schools.

Berger's primary tool in working with students is the thoroughgoing use of projects. He is quick to point out that he means something different from the way projects are usually conceived and implemented. As he describes this, "the word *project* suggests to most people an extra activity after the real curriculum and instruction is done. I need to make explicit that we use these projects to teach children to be strong readers and writers and mathematicians" (p. 72). For anyone interested in making projects part of their curriculum, Berger's chapter on the subject is worth careful consideration. Here educators will find tools with immediate hands-on potential.

There is much recent scholarship that draws upon art and aesthetics to understand education (see Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery, & Taubman, 1995, ch. 14). However, this scholarship tends to use the cultural studies lens of viewing its subject as *text*. Berger is inspired by a Deweyan vision of education as *experience* (Dewey, 1938) and art as *craft* (Dewey, 1934).

Berger's central concern is to build a "culture of excellence" in schools to support and direct students (and teachers): "I believe that achievement of students is governed to a large degree by their family culture, their neighborhood culture, and their school culture...[T]he attitudes and achievements of students are shaped by the culture around them. Students adjust their attitudes and efforts to fit into the culture" (p. 34). Criticism of reliance on testing to improve schools is a recurring theme. Most boldly, he claims, "testing children constantly doesn't make them smarter" (p. 4). After describing an experience of his school's students (in rural western Massachusetts) hosting students from a school for the deaf in New York City, he says, "Much of what my students learned...is not in the new prescriptive state curriculum 'standards.' Little of what we learned will make my students better test takers...There is no time in the new 'standards' for a deep investigation of culture" (p. 62). Later he throws down the following challenge: "Do I regret sacrificing the shallow coverage of countless facts in order to have students craft something of excellence and competence? Not for a moment" (p. 116).

Why is there no time for a "deep investigation of culture" in the new standards? There are ideological factors in the society at large and in the political institutions where decisions are made that promote the narrow-minded mandarin mentality that marginalizes the students Berger hopes to help. It is not his task to address these questions head-on. It may be there, however, that we need to start, if our attempts to work as Berger does are not to lead to frustration, so these questions need to at least be mentioned. As Michael Apple says,

It was made strikingly clear to me then [as a teacher] that

unless we acted politically—both inside the school and in the larger society—to get less racist, sexist, and class-based curricula, more critically oriented teaching practices, and closer relationships between schools and the local community, neither I nor my students and colleagues would have much of a chance of widespread success (Apple, 2000).

Berger provides an inspiring vision for the last two of Apple's concerns, a vision that in the last chapter he extends to the preparation and professional practice of teachers. For this, and for the engaging and direct writing style with which he relays particular experiences of teachers and students in widely diverse settings attempting to enact a "culture of craftsmanship" and an "ethic of excellence", he is to be commended.

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Pages: **186** Price: **\$17.50** ISBN: **0-325-00596-6**

Reviewed by **Brian Burt**, a PhD student at the University of Pittsburgh. His primary interests are the role of education in political theory and the philosophy of educational research.

Booth, David & Moore, Bill (2004) *Poems Please!: Sharing Poetry with Children*. Markham, Ontario: Pembroke Publishers, distributed by Stenhouse.

Teachers looking for a basic guide on bringing poetry to their classrooms will find *Poems Please!: Sharing Poetry with Children* by David Booth and Bill Moore a useful introduction. At times, the book feels like a campaign to help poetry regain a more respected place in schools yet the authors never lose sight of their goal to strengthen teachers' abilities in presenting poetry.

By looking at the qualities that have made nursery rhymes and playground chants long-time favorites, such as rhythm, repetition of sounds, and depiction of everyday life, the authors set the stage for a discussion on selecting the right poetry for children. These qualities appear and reappear throughout the book, as they do in the verses celebrated in each chapter.

The book is full of ideas. Booth and Moore supply numerous lists of

suggestions, and techniques to engage students when reading and writing poems. For instance, in a section emphasizing that poetry is really meant to be read aloud, thirteen possible activities are provided, and separate segments cover related concepts, such as pitch and pace. An entire chapter is devoted to the dramatic exploration of poems.

The chapter on instructing children in the writing of poems seems very helpful, especially to poetry novices. In addition to covering techniques like patterns, riddles, and word play, a nice refresher on poetry structure is given with accompanying ideas for leading students to write free verse, haiku and cinquain.

A long bibliography is included and suitably arranged by type of work (single author collections, story poems, anthologies, etc), and references for further readings on using poetry in the classroom.

While there are sections of *Poems Please!* that leave the reader feeling half full, for example the brief coverage of assessment, overall the book provides a good starting point for teachers who are introducing poetry to their classes for the first time.

Pages: 160 Price: \$19.00 ISBN: 155138-157-5

Reviewed by **Melissa Cast**, University of Nebraska at Omaha

Burkhardt, Ross M. (2003) *Writing for Real: Strategies for Engaging Adolescent Writers*. York, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

It is rare that a book of teaching strategies draws you in the way that *Writing for Real* does. From the early pages, Ross Burkhardt's devotion to teaching is evident and his anecdotes and samples of his own and student writing resonate with the reader in a way that make this book more than a just a tool for working with adolescent writers.

Burkhardt's book draws on 35 years experience as a middle school writing teacher. Samples of his students' writing are incorporated throughout the book and it is apparent that these students are exceptional writers. Burkhardt refers to working with students at several writing levels throughout the book, but it is apparent that even those he calls "struggling" writers began the year with at least average writing skills for middle school students. Even so, after a year in his class, the change in their skills is dramatic.

The tone in which Burkhardt writes is comfortable and feels like a conversation you might have in the hall with a seasoned teacher. *Writing for Real* reads like a narrative of the year, rather than a "how to" or textbook. Within this structure, Burkhardt still manages to focus each chapter on a topic or skills set, flowing through the nuances and

subtopics of each in the manner of a natural teacher, enabling you to learn from his experiences in a seemingly effortless way.

Beyond being an enjoyable reading experience, the information in *Writing for Real* is presented clearly and has a useful, easily browsable layout. In the opening chapters, Burkhardt identifies ten “assertions,” which are the philosophical foundations on which his writing strategies are based. Throughout the book he connects each activity and assignment to these assertions and illustrates how the different assignments address them.

Each chapter begins with an “In a nutshell” page, which clearly states the assignments, the assertions and skills addressed, the time required in class and for prep and assessment, questions to explore and an explanation of why the assignment is being done. The chapters are subdivided, with sections for the individual activities, a summary of how the assertions were addressed by the activities and closing thoughts.

The book’s overall organization follows the progression of the school year and the growth in skills and confidence that writing students experience during that time. It begins with strategies and activities to incorporate during the first days and weeks of the school year. These are aimed at allowing the writer to produce personal pieces for him or herself and gradually build confidence as a writer. By the end of the year, the activities are more publicly oriented pieces, such as school newspaper articles and play reviews/responses. He also encourages the students to create cumulative volumes of their work to be compiled and shared at the end of the year, an activity which requires a great deal of confidence on the part of the writer.

Writing for Real is a compelling and beneficial read that will be particularly useful for teachers working with students who already have some basic writing skills and just need direction and confidence to excel.

Pages: **294** Price: **\$21.00** ISBN: **1-57110-358-9**

Reviewed by **Camila Gabaldón**, Western Oregon University

Clayton, Jacklyn B. (2003) *One Classroom, Many Worlds: Teaching and Learning in the Cross- Cultural Classroom.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Jacklyn Blake Clayton is a teacher with 20 years of classroom experience and a professor of education with vast theoretical knowledge. This book combines both aspects of her background in a practical book for educators.

One Classroom, Many Worlds addresses teaching and learning in the cross-cultural classroom. Clayton begins with the story of her own experience as a child and student raised and educated in a cross-cultural setting and the impact of that on her own learning. Chapters one through six address aspects of culture that teachers must understand in order to teach effectively in a cross-cultural setting. Chapters seven, eight, and nine are the most significant chapters in the book, as previous details regarding aspects of culture lead to the question of the child; how everything is joined and represented in the student herself. Chapters seven and eight explore the essence of the challenge for teachers in a cross-cultural classroom, modes of acculturation and the U.S. classroom culture. Chapter nine puts all the previous discussion together, “imagining all the possibilities,” discussing multicultural education, its key points, what it looks like in the classroom, and opportunities for incorporating it into curricula, schools, and policies.

Clayton does not purport to address all cultures, all scenarios, or all experiences of teachers, but she takes the complex ideas of cultural awareness and cross-cultural theoretical views and makes them accessible. Clayton seems to realize that she walks a fine line between presenting general tendencies in her chapters and generalizing to a population, her candor about this and her recognition of how her own culture affects her ideas and opinions about the cross-cultural classroom are refreshing.

One Classroom, Many Worlds provides resources for readers who want more information, applications to the classroom (through boxes entitled “Try This!” which provide lesson plans, projects, and activities easily applicable across grades and ability levels), and opportunities for self-reflection along the way (through similar boxes entitled “Journal Time” which encourage readers to reflect on the ideas and experiences of teachers and how they relate to their own classrooms).

The book as a whole, and each individual chapter, is extremely well organized. There is seamless movement from classroom anecdote, to theoretical discussion of the topics, to the effect of the topic on the child and family. Such discussions conclude with applications to the classroom and a return to the initial classroom anecdote. Clayton applies the ideas presented to the specific classroom scenario and offers teachers practical means to interact with students within their own cross-cultural classrooms.

The chapters address such important aspects of cross-cultural lives as culture, socialization, values, learning, verbal communication and non-verbal communication. Throughout, I cannot help but see Clayton’s main goal as one of offering awareness to educators of the challenges they can face and the importance of the possibilities that are inherent in cross-cultural classrooms. Clayton provides an abundance of description, to create awareness in teachers of the impact of culture on the cross-cultural classroom. She also offers a bit of solution to some

problems that might be inherent in such classrooms. Many times she writes that teachers need to be aware of their own culture, their own socialization experience, their own values, learning styles, and communication patterns. She shows that the culture and experiences of the teacher also impact the culture and experiences of the students in the classroom.

Although at times *One Classroom, Many Worlds* reads like a textbook, as Clayton expands on varied theoretical views, in-service and pre-service teachers will find much in the book to reflect upon in regards to their own practice. Clayton voices an opinion many educators agree with: in classroom interactions with linguistic or ethnic minority students, the mainstream teacher, and dominant culture students “broaden the possibilities of what may be happening in the classroom” (p. 184). Where Clayton stands tall and many other authors fall short is in the provision of theoretical knowledge in an easily accessible manner, real world examples, and activities for teachers to use to increase their own and their students’ awareness of the importance of culture to us all.

Pages: **188** Price: **\$20.00** ISBN: **0-325-00548-6**

Reviewed by **Amy Garrett Dikkers**, University of Minnesota

Thomas B. Fordham Foundation (2003) *Terrorists, Despots, and Democracy: What Our Children Need to Know*. Washington, D.C.: Thomas B. Fordham Foundation.

Terrorists, Despots, and Democracy: What Our Children Need to Know is one of a series of publications through which the Fordham Foundation, founded in 1981 by Chester E. Finn Jr. and Diane Ravitch, has addressed issues around history teaching in the public schools. Since reform of elementary and secondary education at both the local and national levels became its main focus in 1996, the Foundation has produced documents for teachers and others interested in education which are intended as “an antidote” (p. 6) to what are viewed as pedagogies that are “long on multiculturalism, feelings, relativism and tolerance but short on history, civics and patriotism” (p. 6).

Terrorists, Despots, and Democracy: What Our Children Need to Know is a response to 9/11 curriculum guides and materials made available to teachers by such groups as the National Association of School Psychologists, the National Education Association, the Red Cross, *Time Magazine*, and “a much-cited outfit called ‘Rethinking Schools’” (p. 11). To these groups are attributed “pernicious ideas” and “rotten advice – relativistic, non-judgmental (except about the United States), pacifist, and anything but patriotic” (p. 9).

The collection of 29, 1-3 page essays is divided into 3 sections: “What Children Need to Know About Terrorism, Despotism and Democracy;” “How to Teach about Terrorism, Despotism and Democracy;” and “What Teachers Need To Know About America and the World.” Essay titles include: “Preserving America, Man’s Greatest Hope;” “Protecting our Precious Liberty;” “The Doctrine of Pre-Emption” and “Civic and Historical Literacy for a Dangerous World.” Authors include Richard Rodriguez, William J. Bennett, E.D. Hirsch, Abraham Lincoln, Lynne Cheney, and Tony Blair. All seem well-qualified as contributors: almost all are involved in education at different levels of the school system, government, and private research foundations.

The first section: “What Children Need to Know” extols traditional American values of freedom, democracy, and tolerance and urges the need for their vigilant defense through the enhancing of students’ knowledge and appreciation of American history in a content-rich curriculum. The “How to Teach” section offers suggestions for the kinds of content and historical documents worth studying - materials needed to ensure a balanced approach that enables students’ “knowledge of the facts and dates and principles and key figures in American history and government” (p. 39). In “What Teachers Ought to Know” teachers are urged to familiarize themselves with some of the most important documents of American history as well as with studies of Islam and explanations of such concepts as the doctrine of pre-emption and debates about liberty vs. security.

These essays are individual’s interpretations of September 11, expressions of personal beliefs about American values and America’s role in the world. In the attempt to balance out what it views as the liberal, left-leaning curriculum currently taught by historically ill-educated teachers, the collection offers examples of alternative ways of thinking which are unabashedly conservative and right-leaning. There are several thoughtful pieces here: they avoid jingoistic sloganeering and simplistic them and us characterizations. William Galston, for instance, makes clear that “no one should claim a monopoly on patriotism” (p. 51) and urges that relations with America’s allies reflect “some measure of patience, humility, and mutual forbearance” (p. 52). Richard Rodriguez, in the opening essay, points to an unarguable truth: “There is nothing inevitable about our civilization...All can be undone” (p. 20). Most, however, exhibit little nuance and give little more than lip service to the complexity of some of the issues they address. Many portray the world as a dangerous and evil place in which Americans, blessed with their achievement of freedom and democracy, are envied and hated. “Why are our institutions and practices the object of contempt or hostility by psychopathic leaders of rogue states and religious fanatics?” ask Sandra Stotsky and Ellen Shnidman (p. 84).

That said, these writers show a deep and I believe justified concern for the lack of serious history teaching in schools. They criticize textbooks that do not recreate the drama of events and excite children’s imaginations; they point out the importance of recognizing that some

systems of governance allow greater individual freedom than others and that we should not take our freedom for granted since it can be undone. The implication, however, is that the threats are mainly external rather than internal. William Galston is almost alone in voicing the belief that “Democratic debate should always be robust, but it should never be embittered by charges that legitimate dissent is unpatriotic” (p. 51). In light of current "with us or against us" rhetoric, it is unfortunate that more writers do not assert the importance of vigilance at home.

Given the number of essays, the inevitable repetition of key themes and views, and the also inevitably general nature, with one or two exceptions, of the advice on how to teach (children need to understand...teach children about...etc.) it seems to me this collection could be a basis of discussion among the target teachers if used in comparison with and critical analysis of the other materials with which they are supplied. According to the Foundation, their targets are teachers who are “not sure about what to teach, what’s appropriate for their pupils to learn, and what their stance should be on these vexing and controversial issues” (p. 6). While it seems unlikely that trained history teachers would consult these essays as a substitute for informed historical documentation, it is somewhat worrying to contemplate their being used by untrained history or social studies teachers who have little background against which to assess some of the claims and positions being taken.

The collection affords a rich repository of topics and references to documents on which to draw to achieve a celebratory history of America. At the same time, the essays are an illuminating window into the thinking of serious people with serious concerns and they warrant critical and skeptical examination for their content, rhetoric, and assumptions. In some ways, they might be seen to correspond to the advocacy of creationism which likewise needs to be recognized and acknowledged but also to be treated with critical awareness of mainstream scientific thinking about evolution.

Pages: **103** Price: **Online at**
<http://www.edexcellence.net/doc/Democracy.pdf>. or single copies
free from 1-888-TBF-7474

Reviewed by **Wendy Strachan**, Director, Centre for Writing-Intensive Learning, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C. Canada

Hurt, Janet (2003) *Taming the Standards: A Commonsense Approach to Higher Student Achievement, K-12*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

The purpose of this book is to help teachers use existing standards, not teach existing standards. “Our challenge as educators is to find a way to

use those standards so that students will score higher on state assessments and will benefit from the use of higher level concepts that are either embedded deeply within or beyond the standards” (p. xi). The book provides a step-by-step process for use by curriculum planners and teachers.

The book is organized in a user-friendly format with each chapter following the same design. A specific step is addressed, followed by application examples from a middle school and pitfalls to avoid. Each chapter closes with a vocabulary list as well as a list of further reading.

This process includes identifying *umbrella* concepts or broad concepts across and within content areas. An additional step is to then bundle or cross-bundle the standards. Umbrella and content-specific concepts are stated or implied within standards (p. 36). For example, an umbrella concept might be *systems*, and the stated concept-specific concepts might be *economic, production, distribution, consumption, goods and services*.

Additional steps include relating topics to standards—these are the “smaller themes that are usually found within a content specific concept” (p. 36) and refining concepts through questions. The questioning step is the development of umbrella questions, essential questions and guiding questions. The author provides specific steps for teachers in how to move from umbrella concepts to umbrella questions. Essential questions are developed from the content-specific concepts, the topics, or both (p. 59). Guiding questions are those that “guide short instructional periods” and are not fully developed until the strategies and activities are identified. The final two chapters provide a detailed process of how to develop a unit framework and curriculum map. Included in these sections are several matrices for assessing unit designs and to make sure that teaching strategies are diversified.

Much of the book’s content is a reorganization of curriculum theorists and planners with the author’s twist on terminology and a view towards increasing test scores. Many administrators and teachers might find the multiple steps and terminology cumbersome, perhaps even requiring consultation from the author. Personnel in a district or school site who are interested in raising test scores and willing to engage in the time intensive work of this protocol most likely would find the book beneficial.

Pages: 118 Price: 15.00 ISBN: 0-325-00592-3

Reviewed by **Cheryl A. Franklin**, Assistant Professor; Curriculum, Instruction and Foundational Studies, Boise State University.

Jacobson, Tamar (2003) *Confronting Our Discomfort: Clearing the Way for Anti-Bias in Early Childhood*.

Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann.

Tamar Jacobson's *Confronting Our Discomfort* is an interesting mixture of possible books. One of these possibilities is a memoir of Jacobson's life as a child in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). In this part of the book she focuses both on her experiences of racism in a profoundly and unquestioningly racially divided society and on her unhappiness as a rejected child. She was the only child born of her mother's second, in-between marriage to a Sephardic Jew. The first and third husbands were Ashkenazi Jews, and she was considered not-quite-white by her family. This combination of influences, she believes, led her to activism as a teenager, and eventually to choose emigration to Israel, where she became an early childhood teacher. In this aspect of her book, she writes about her experiences with years of psychotherapy that helped her understand her family history and her response to the racism that surrounded her in her childhood.

A second possible book is an anecdotal account of Jacobson's career as an early childhood teacher and administrator in Israel and in the United States. Here she shares rich stories of her efforts to counter bias she saw in other preschool teachers and in herself as they interacted with children and families. In these accounts the psychotherapeutic understanding of life that is so important to her comes to the fore. She sees bias as an expression of internal discomforts that can be approached therapeutically, and it is with a therapeutic touch that she talks with other teachers - and with herself.

The third book potentially contained in this slim volume is an account of Jacobson's research in establishing and leading a support-supervision group with an anti-bias focus for preschool teachers and administrators. Here she reviews a number of well-known works on anti-bias education and finds them lacking in terms of their failure to emphasize therapeutic self-examination in working on anti-bias issues. She also recounts the interaction of the support-supervision group and its effects on the participants (as documented through participant interviews with a fellow-researcher who was not part of the group). She finds that this kind of group interaction in exploring one's own biases, journaling about them, and engaging in facilitated conversation can help raise one's awareness and lead to letting one's biases go.

In short, the book we have is a highly personalized account that looks at racism and patriarchy (in its sexist and heterosexist manifestations) primarily in terms of their effects on the thinking of the individual. Jacobson clearly believes that deep self-examination and many tears can make an effective worker against all forms of bias.

Jacobson gives short shrift to institutional racism in this book. In the second chapter, titled "Reflections on Diversity," she refers briefly to this concept, and goes on to write about the system of patriarchy, with its harmful values imposed through the culture. But she does not discuss the massive and powerful institutions, economic, political, and

bureaucratic, that enforce those patriarchal values, and require a more active form of resistance than the internal, attitudinal changes that she advocates.

In my own teaching of multicultural, anti-bias education in both pre-service and post-service teacher education, I found that a necessary starting point for learning and change was an appeal to the feelings of participants, not much different from the approach Jacobson advocates. Self-understanding, recognition of the pain of others, and opportunities to interact with those we see as different from ourselves are steps that prepare people to learn where the roots of oppression are found. They are not enough in themselves to provide understanding of how oppression is created and sustained, or to prepare tools for resistance.

Jacobson's book provides a good starting point for anti-bias education in early childhood, but those using it should see it only as a beginning.

Pages: **143** Price: **\$15.30** ISBN: **0-325-00569-9**

Reviewed by **Mary Phillips Manke**, University of Wisconsin-River Falls

Jago, Carol (2004) *Classics in the Classroom: Designing Accessible Literature Lessons*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

At a time when middle school and high school reading lists are filled with young adult material Carol Jago makes a case for a return to the classics. Students may balk at the difficult syntax, unfamiliar settings, descriptive passages, and the length of these works, but that is not an excuse to abandon them.

An English instructor at Santa Monica High School and the director of the California Reading and Literature Project at UCLA, Jago admits these are not "easy reads" and they require "an act of will" (p. xii) on the part of the teacher. These are not works of literature that can just be assigned with a culminating essay or discussion; a solid instructional plan is needed to make the difficult text accessible. With such guidance, though, these novels, short stories, essays and poems can come alive for all students, not just those in the advanced tracts.

Before she provides concrete ideas on how to structure lesson plans for teaching the classics, the author discusses her seven guiding principles for literature teachers. Unhappily, Jago points out that, "Too many students are doing everything *but* reading" (p. 1). She emphatically declares students must read and she urges teachers not to confuse reading for pleasure with the study of literature. Reading literature requires language study and builds background knowledge and vocabulary while expanding the student's imagination. Jago also

believes that metaphorical thinking is a life skill.

Citing persuasive speakers such as Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King Jr. and playwright William Shakespeare, Jago explains, "By examining imagery, metaphor, and symbols in classical literature, students begin to understand how words work their magic on us. It is not just practice for an AP test, it is training for the real world... Classical literature can also offer us the words we need when emotion leaves us tongue-tied" (pp. 16-17).

Once she has made her case for teaching the classics Jago follows up with chapters on vocabulary (choosing which words to teach), book selection (criteria for choosing books), and a discussion of how stories and poetry work. Lesson designs using Homer's *The Odyssey* and Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* close out the volume, along with a very interesting listing of "Classic Best Sellers" based on the number of copies sold in 2002.

"Though the number of copies sold are obviously influenced by teachers assigning certain common texts, it is amazing to see how well classical literature continues to sell," (p. 168) writes Jago. The top five novels on the list with sales over 225,000 copies are (in order) *The Hobbit*, *The Catcher in the Rye*, *The Red Tent*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and *Lord of the Flies*.

Combining plenty of practical advice with specific examples of what has worked for her make *Classics in the Classroom* a very useful guide for teaching good literature. Reacting to what she terms the ZME (Zone of Minimal Effort) in literature instruction, Jago shows that if both the teacher and the student put some real effort into reading and understanding this material, the rewards will be positive and long lasting.

Pages: **180** Price: **\$20.00** ISBN: **0-325-00590-7**

Reviewed by **Robert F. Walch**, Retired educator, Monterey, California

Kortman, Sharon A. & Honaker, Connie J. (2002) *The BEST Beginning Teacher Experience: Program Facilitator Guide*. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing.

In *The BEST Beginning Teacher Experience*, the authors provide a coordinated packaged program guide for the development of teachers in the initial phase of their profession. A workbook supplements the facilitator's guide to form the complete package. It was originally created for BEST (Beginning Educator Support Team), a three-year teacher induction and mentoring program developed at Arizona State University, but it can easily be adapted to fulfill the needs of many teacher induction programs. The authors include many practical and

useful techniques to be presented for the beginning teacher.

The *Program Facilitator's Guide* is a good resource for the instructional leader. It comprises 8 modules, each a complete lesson plan focusing on a different aspect of teaching. Topics include communicating with students and parents, balancing stress, developing corrective discipline strategies, accommodating differences and understanding standards, to name a few. As a packaged program, it provides well organized, detailed guidelines including, lesson plans for each seminar, scripted step-by-step directions for each phase and activity, forms and handouts, and a presentation CD with slides. The accompanying workbook is designed much like a student's workbook accompanying a text, containing exercises and written assignments to help the beginning teacher develop an array of effective practices.

Although a good resource for the facilitator of a teacher induction program, the book should to be used judiciously. Like most teacher guides, it presents the material in a schematic fashion. This may be viewed as reducing the concept of teacher development to the mere accumulation of effective practices without much thought to individual professional self-development. There is a scarcity of theoretical and reflective reading materials to promote thoughtful and reflective practices. Instead, the aim seems to be to train practitioners to follow recipes without much thought about the complex context of their individual classrooms. The oversimplification appears to be the result of a conscious effort to protect beginning teachers from becoming overwhelmed. This is made evident in the introduction when the authors caution facilitators from adding too much extraneous materials for it may hinder the "beginning teacher's ability to process and apply information" (pg. xxi).

Facilitators who seek an easy to follow plan of activities with practical information to enhance the practices of novice teachers will appreciate the easy to read format. However, the educator who seeks to develop critical pedagogues may find the information useful, but not without supplementing it with other materials aimed at promoting a more critical stance.

Pages: 261 Price: \$499.95 ISBN: 0-7872-8173-5

Reviewed by **Alcione Ostorga**, University of Texas - Pan American

Orehovec, Barbara & Alley, Marybeth (2003) *Revisiting the Reading Workshop: Management, Mini-Lessons, and Strategies*. New York: Scholastic.

Revisiting the Reading Workshop presents the K-12 teacher practitioner's understanding of what a reading workshop is and how it fosters lifelong strategic readers in elementary grades. The authors

provide information on each component; how to organize a reading workshop as well as teaching activities/techniques. Examples of basic elements, procedures, recommended books (for particular skills instruction), and various guides for immediate classroom use are included along with explanations of many teaching activities. The book proposes that the Reading Workshop is effective due to the supportive environment created for authentic and meaningful reading experiences based on the strengths and needs of each individual learner. The authors draw upon their many years of first-hand experiences—one as a classroom teacher and the other as a reading specialist—to map out a plan for their fellow teachers.

The book is structured in eight chapters and centers on how to establish a literate community using a reading workshop approach. The strengths of the book lie in the mini-lesson ideas, various teaching activity guides, and sharing “Teacher to Teacher” tips. An overview of each chapter and evaluation of the book follow. Chapter one includes the basic elements of a reading workshop (i.e., the mini-lesson and read aloud, independent reading and conferring, responding and sharing), a rationale, and a comparison of traditional reading instruction to the reading workshop classroom approach. The differences are examined in terms of time for reading, types of direct instruction, nature of instructional practices, nature of responses, and assessment. Chapter two discusses the organization and management of a reading workshop classroom. It highlights principles of a successful workshop such as teacher expectations, ways to encourage “on task” behaviors, scheduling, space design, classroom library set up and system, and parental involvement.

The next four chapters (three, four, five, and six) are devoted to structures, contents, and techniques of mini-lessons. They include a brief discussion of long-term and short-term planning, and sample planning guides. In structuring mini-lessons, it is important to understand what is required for a teacher’s role and the responsibilities of the student to ensure a smooth transition to independent reading activities. Chapter four highlights a four-week plan for the month of September for the purpose of ironing out a routine in the beginning of academic year. A twenty-day mini-lessons example illustrates a variety of topics for the mini-lessons and the procedures. Chapters five and six focus on teaching (1) reading strategies—mainly metacognitive strategies, (2) skills instruction—a variety of skills such as decoding skills, identifying the content and the structure of different types of text, and response techniques, and (3) literary elements—e.g., character, setting, theme, etc. for mini- lesson instructions.

Chapter seven explains independent reading, reading conferences, and reading response. Different formats of organizing independent reading time (e.g., partner reading, story chats, guided reading, etc.) provide readers a general understanding of what and why. What a reading conference is and possible content of reading conferences are listed. A table highlights interventions for conferring with students who are

having reading difficulties. The chapter ends with a brief section of different methods of responding to literature. The final chapter introduces several informal assessment techniques in documenting student progress. Checklists and rubrics are provided. Following the final chapter are recommended children's books, a list of professional resources, and appendices of more ready-to-use guides for different teaching activities. For example, "Story Chats" is a checklist to guide the students in what to do before they meet for story chats.

This can be a useful book for classroom teachers who are seeking ideas for the reading workshop approach, and mini-lessons in particular. The authors' attempt in mapping out a framework for a reading workshop instructional approach should be applauded. However, there are several concerns with regards to the scope of the content and the overall knowledge of the reading workshop approach. First, the presentation weighs heavily on mini-lessons and offers little on independent reading, reading conferences, and reading responses, which are also main components of the reading process. Second, the categorization of reading strategies, skills, and literary elements overlaps and very likely will confuse readers' and learners' understanding of metacognitive strategies, reading skills, and literary repertoire. This understanding is critical in sequencing effective instructions that meet individual learner needs. Third, explanations and information on "Independent Reading" are limited. Ways in which grand conversations can be promoted during partner reading or group reading are not addressed. Overall, this book is a useful resource guide for a variety of ideas and strategies of the reading workshop instruction. Other readings are needed for adopting a Reading Workshop approach.

Pages: **160** Price: **\$15.99** ISBN: **ISBN 0-439-44404-7**

Reviewed by by **Shwuyi Leu**, Saint Xavier University, Chicago

Reynolds, Marilyn (2004) *I Won't Read and You Can't Make Me: Reaching Reluctant Teen Readers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

The basic idea underlying Marilyn Reynolds' *I Won't Read and You Can't Make Me: Reaching Reluctant Teen Readers* is that students would benefit greatly, both educationally and personally, from the development of a life long habit of reading for pleasure. This is something I, as a ninth English teacher, firmly believe. I also agree with Reynolds that part of my responsibility as a teacher is to help my students find success and enjoyment in reading by, in part, offering a large and varied collection of books that speak to a wide range of ability and interest. In fact, I believe most teachers would agree with Reynolds on these points. That is what draws us to a book such as hers. However, unfortunately for her readers, while Reynolds does clearly tempt us with these central beliefs as the motivating force behind her

book, she does not deliver the in-depth discussion of practical application and theoretical support we expect. In fact, readers learn much more from *I Won't Read* about the life and works of Marilyn Reynolds than about the important task of motivating reluctant readers in the classroom.

Reynolds starts by telling us the story of her teaching years at "Misunderstood High School" where she ran a Self Selected Reading Workshop (SSR) part of the time and a Revision/Editing Workshop (devoted entirely to her own developing draft of her first young adult novel) the rest of the time. Thus begins what seems like little more than her eighty-four page commercial of the long line of books for teens that she has written. Reynolds goes on and on about how her books, on topics such as sexual abuse and drug addiction, have motivated young people everywhere to read. While this might indeed be true, her shameless self-promotion on practically every page is simply annoying and tiresome. She never misses the opportunity to mention a title or plot line from one of her many works of young adult fiction -- in fact she seems to have written *I Won't Read* just for that very purpose. There are excerpts from her novels. There are reviews of her novels. There are letters about her novels. There are stories about writing her novels. There is even a picture of a row of students, supposedly engrossed in SSR, that all just happen to be reading pristine copies of one of her many novels!

There is so much here about her own books that one wonders if she could have room for much else. But somehow, in this slim volume, she manages to also include a good portion of her entire life story. From her first creative writing class at Cal State University, to her self-doubt while writing a column for a failed newspaper, to coping with rejection as she began to send out her first manuscript, all the way through to her successful career as an established writer. And all this as she was going through a divorce and raising two kids after moving back in with her parents. (No, she unfortunately does not spare us any of the details!) These stories go far beyond brief anecdotes used as an example or to illustrate a meaningful point. Entire chapters are built around personal events from her life, making her book often read more like an autobiography than a professional resource. Reynolds even makes room in the appendix for several of her own essays that serve absolutely no purpose to her readers. One of the essays tells about a memory of Japanese Internment camps. The only thing she says about the essay is that it was written in creative writing class. The reader is simply left to wonder just how such information ever seemed relevant, or even appropriate, in a professional book such as this.

And while there is so much that she does choose to include in her first venture away from YA novels, there is also regrettably even more that she chooses not to include. It is unfortunate the latter makes up information that could be worthwhile and useful to teachers. There is no theory or research here behind her ideas and methods, only random anecdotal stories of students and colleagues (not all of which are very

flattering). In terms of support for her methods, she offers only two sources of information; neither of which lend much credibility. The first is a vague mention of an undocumented *Los Angeles Times* article on a study that showed the "single most significant factor in determining a person's success in life to be whether they read for pleasure" (p. 5). The second is a self-administered informal survey she conducted at a single school. She also does little to show any connection between reading and writing and finding balance within the SSR curriculum. There is one chapter on writing, but the focus is on the importance of teachers writing in order to be the voice of education; and even Reynolds is unable to explain just how that particular chapter fits at the end of her "reluctant reader handbook."

There is one high point worth noting in *I Won't Read* that I do feel warrants a mention; that is her list of resources and information on how to effectively handle a book challenge and censorship in the classroom. Reynolds clearly explains proactive ways for educators to enlist the support of parents and the school administration in order to avoid the censoring of books. She also provides detailed information on how to professionally handle a book challenge and contact information of national groups that could assist you and your school in such an event. This information is invaluable for teachers using the methods of SSR in the classroom, where freedom of students to choose books relevant and interesting to them is paramount. Unfortunately, this is not enough to make the book worthwhile.

Overall, I think the reason I found *I Won't Read* to be such a disappointment is that I truly do believe in the effectiveness of self selected reading programs. I have researched and observed firsthand the positive effect SSR can have on students -- reluctant and avid readers alike. Reynolds, however, barely scratches the surface of the wealth of information available on SSR. Instead, she fills her chapters with irrelevant and disjointed information that tells us much more about her own personal life and works of fiction than it tells us about an effective way for teachers to truly help our kids succeed in reading. There are many practical and thorough resources available on the subject of SSR and Reading Workshop (notably those by Kyleene Beers and Laura Robb). This book, however, isn't one of them.

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Beers, Kyleene. (2003). *When Kids Can't Read: What Teachers Can Do*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. Pp. 392. ISBN 0- 86709-519-9. \$25.65

Robb, Laura. (2000). *Teaching Reading in Middle School*. New York: Scholastic Professional Books. Pp. 318. ISBN 0-590-6860-0. \$23.95

Pages: **134** Price: **\$15.30** ISBN: **0-325-00605-9**

Reviewed by **Shannon Neary**, Butler Traditional High School in Louisville Kentucky. In her five years as a public school educator, she has worked extensively in the area of reading instruction and currently

teaches a collaborative reading class for struggling freshman readers who are significantly below grade level.

Sibberson, Franki & Szymusiak, Karen (2003) *Still Learning to Read: Teaching Students in Grades 3-6*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

If you are a classroom teacher or a teacher librarian who works with students in grades 3 through 6, this book of teaching strategies from two experienced reading teachers is one that you will want to read from cover to cover. Then, because the boxed booklists are so strategically integrated into this text, you will want to make lists of all the titles that are recommended for teaching particular reading strategies, so that you can both purchase the recommended titles and add your own ideas to the suggested literature. You will want to keep the book handy, too, for the excellently formatted handouts that are supplied in the appendix, because these forms add to the immediate practical use that you can make of the expert teaching suggestions in the text. The forms range from “Reading Logs” to a page of questions that probe students’ thinking about “Reflecting on Reading”, to a teacher’s diagram for “Grouping for Instruction”, to a “Form for Unknown Words in Baloney”. Sibberson and Szymusiak provide teachers of upper elementary students with creative but practical tips for ways to keep students learning to read beyond the basics. The authors base their text on the premise that “we can’t assume that the skills our students learned in grades K-2 will carry them through their lives as readers. They are ready for new skills and more independence” (p. 2).

Sibberson and Szymusiak have both taught elementary school in Dublin, Ohio, for many years, and have also co-authored the title *Beyond Leveled Books: Supporting Transitional Readers in Grades 2-5*. Their area of expertise is in the teaching of reading beyond early reading instruction. In *Still Learning to Read* Sibberson and Szymusiak offer teachers not just book titles, but also methods for identifying students’ needs as readers and instructional strategies that are designed to help students move on in their reading development. The book is divided into two parts: “Making the Most of Time and Space” and “Threads of Learning Throughout the Year”.

In Part One the authors describe how they set up their classrooms at the beginning of the year – making this a superb book for beginning teachers or for teachers who are looking for new ways to organize books in their classroom. A key feature in this and every chapter in the book is the way that Sibberson and Szymusiak integrate the reading habits and strategies of adults into their classroom instruction. These teachers talk to their students about their own reading, they bring other adults in to the classroom to talk about what they like to read, and they work hard to let their students know that even good readers get stuck when reading, but that there are strategies for getting past those

difficult places in books. This is ultimately a book that gives teachers ideas for how to consciously give students the strategies that good readers use for getting past the points in books where they want to give up. Strategies are also included for how to select books, in recognition that some students and adults get stuck even before sitting down to read – when they are not able to find suitable material. Sibberson and Szymusiak provide strategies for book choice and then they follow the reader through the reading process, right to finding the next book.

Teachers will be thrilled to find here many clearly explained strategies for organizing whole group, small group, and individualized instruction, and lesson plans that focus on common problems that students encounter as they grow as readers. The chapters in Part One take readers through the beginning of a school year, illustrating how to get to know students as readers, and suggesting routines and conversations that will help to make classroom time be used as effectively as possible.

In Part 2 the authors provide “Strategy Lessons” on topics such as “Sketching for Deeper Understanding”, “Building Background Knowledge”, and “Using Evidence in the Text to Support an Inference”. The effective use of reading-aloud and re-reading in the upper elementary grades, and the use of sticky notes to help students identify parts of the text that they want to refer to later are also discussed, as are teaching ideas for several pieces of literature, including *Holes* by Louis Sachar. Sibberson and Szymusiak offer many inventive tips and ideas for teachers to use with their students, and their book is so well organized, and contains so many examples of student work that teachers will find it easy to put the suggested methods to work right away.

A list of professional references is included, as is a list of popular series books. This is a book that will both energize reading teachers to try new strategies and confirm the strategies of reading teachers who work first with the needs of the readers in their classroom but who also feel compelled to prepare students for standardized testing. Sibberson and Szymusiak address this question and offer teachers ways to manage both needs.

Pages: **158** Price: **\$21.00** ISBN: **1-57110-359-7**

Reviewed by **Brenda Reed**, Queen’s University, Canada

Wyatt, Robert L. III, & Looper, Sandra (2004) *So You Have to Have a Portfolio: A Teacher's Guide to Preparation and Presentation*. Second Edition. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press.

In 1999, Robert Wyatt and Sandra Looper penned the first edition of

their book entitled *So you have to have a portfolio: A teacher's guide to preparation and presentation*. The purpose of the book was to serve as a practical guide for educators. The authors realized that portfolios were becoming commonplace and that institutions of higher education were using portfolios to assess both individuals and programs of study.

Change in education is inevitable and as expected, the field of portfolio assessment has evolved. To respond to the changes in the field, Wyatt and Looper updated their book in 2004. The second edition differs from the first by elaborating more on the practical aspects of this form of assessment and providing more current information about electronic portfolios and the use of portfolios for National Board Certification.

The book is organized in a teacher-friendly way. Each of the ten chapters begins with a scenario that provides context for the reader. At the conclusion of the chapter there appears a summary, a set of comprehension questions and a list of topics for further consideration. The authors end the book with a series of useful appendices. For example, one appendix lists online resources for developing a teacher portfolio and websites that showcase sample electronic portfolios. Other appendices provide the reader with checklists and rubrics for judging the quality of a portfolio.

The authors explain portfolio assessment and provide a historical overview of its genesis in the field of education. Although portfolios have been used for many years in other professions, only recently have educators used them as a “qualitative method of assessing students’ work” (p. 2). Art and Language Arts teachers were the first to use this assessment tool as a way to capture the breadth of students’ work. Now, portfolios are used in all courses and at all levels of education. The authors make several key points in regards to creating a portfolio. First, have a goal and an audience in mind. Next, the development process is recursive, not linear. Finally, the authors introduce the acronym CORP to assist in the development. CORP stands for Collection, Organization, Reflection and Presentation. Of these four parts, the authors contend that reflection is the most important. Reflection is when the owner states why she selected the particular artifact and how it fulfills the intended goal.

Developmental portfolios are a way to “show the growth and development of students as they progress from one learning stage to another” (p. 13). The developmental portfolio highlights the accomplishments of diverse learners in a chronological or ranking order and benefits the learner because “knowing that even some growth has occurred is very supportive and comforting to the student” (p. 14). Consequently, selecting artifacts and reflecting on the learning assume a critical role in the developmental approach. The authors write, “If an artifact or a reflection does not empower the compiler and establish pride in the work, the compiler should reconsider the effort involved and choose some other kind of artifact” (p. 20).

A showcase portfolio highlights students' best work. During the selection process, students rank their artifacts and submit a few representative samples. "When one is trying to determine those 'best' works, one has to rely on his or her own judgment to make qualified decisions that will please the audience" (p. 26). In essence, the showcase portfolio allows the owner to "show yourself to your best advantage so that others will admire you, hire you, or give you other considerations that you desire, while still reflecting your autonomous self" (p. 30).

The authors turn their attention in chapter four to reflection, specifically heuristic reflection, which "takes place when the owner of the artifacts reflects in a very personal manner (very subjectively) about why a specific item was chosen, and why it fits a particular need" (p. 34). In a very clear and practical way the authors show the reader how to write an exemplary reflection after selecting an artifact to meet a specific teaching competency. The reflection should address five areas: (1) the purpose of the competency, (2) the relationship of the artifact to the competency, and an understanding of the competency in terms of (3) subject matter, (4) teaching skills and (5) disposition.

Selecting items to include in the portfolio is an important step. Although each portfolio is unique and depicts the owner, common items seem to be found in many portfolios. Suggested artifacts include: an introductory letter, a table of contents, a résumé, a philosophy statement and samples of student work. The authors advise, "The primary objective is first to collect and then to select" (p. 46). Beyond selection they discuss maintaining confidentiality when using students' work and following a timeline for developing the portfolio. An actual reflection that was written by a college student is provided to show the reader how the artifact addresses the competency from a theoretical as well as application perspective.

Evaluation has been a point of concern for educators. The evaluator can look at the student's work from a broad, programmatic perspective to determine how the student compares to the teaching competencies. To assess following this approach, common artifacts must be included. At the other end of the spectrum, the evaluator can require the owner to self assess and examine individual progress over time. The authors include sample rubrics that could be used to assess for these different purposes.

In the chapter entitled "Putting It All Together," explicit guidelines are stated for assembling the contents. Specifically, the owner may want to group artifacts together in one section. At the beginning of each major section, the owner may want to write an introductory statement that "gently guides the reader into your thoughts about the subject" and expresses your philosophy about the subject (p. 74). The final appearance of the portfolio should "mirror your teaching preferences, philosophy and style" (p. 76). The authors suggest ways to organize the artifacts. They can be organized chronologically or topically around

standards such as the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC). The owner may have freedom in determining how the artifacts are organized or may be mandated by an outside entity such as a university or school district. Regardless of the method, the overall appearance should be professional and indicative of thoughtful creation.

In one chapter, “Presenting the Professional Portfolio,” the authors veer away from the main focus of the book and discuss in detail the interview process for a teaching position. They offer advice on professional attire, behavior and questions for the interview. Although the information is useful for the beginning teacher, it seems misplaced in the book. At the end of the chapter, only a few paragraphs mention how the portfolio should be integrated into the job interview.

Information about electronic portfolios is new in this edition. The authors contend that “technology is here to stay.” Teachers, institutions and policy makers have embraced technology and included it in many educational standards. The argument is that “preservice teachers must be technologically literate themselves before that same technology will become integrated into the classrooms of our world” (p. 104). In other words, “today’s teacher candidates will teach tomorrow as they are taught today” (p. 105). In addition to the benefits of technology as a teaching tool, it serves as an ever-changing assessment tool that captures the student’s learning experiences. The authors present the advantages and disadvantages of electronic portfolios and outline the main questions that educators should ask: (a) What is the purpose of the portfolio? (b) How will you store the working portfolio? (c) How will you publish the formal portfolio? (d) How will you guarantee secure assessment information? and (e) Can you use technology to collect the observational assessment data? Finally, educators must consider the students’ technological proficiency when creating an electronic portfolio. Do the students possess the skills and resources to create this electronic version?

In the last chapter of the book the authors address the role of the portfolio for certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). In simplest terms, the portfolio highlights the teacher’s skills in the classroom and shows that the teacher’s instruction aligns with the NBPTS standards. To achieve this prestigious certification, the teacher must capture her professional knowledge, skills and dispositions in the portfolio. The chapter advises teachers how to select artifacts and how to write reflections on their work that will satisfy the specific requirements of national certification.

In summary, the book provides the reader with a wealth of current, useful information that can be applied immediately to the process of creating a professional portfolio. Wyatt and Looper aptly show that portfolios can be created with ease and that they serve a valuable role in education today.

Pages: **176** Price: **\$61.95 (hardcover)** **\$27.95 (paper)** ISBN:
0761939350 (hardcover) **0761939369 (paper)**

Reviewed by **Nathan Bond**, Texas State University



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