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Brief reviews for October 2005

Bender, Yvonne (2005). *The Tactful Teacher: Effective Communication with Parents, Colleagues, and Administrators*. White River Junction, Vt. Nomad Press.

Communications is the key to this book, and interestingly enough, most of the author's other publications. As an experienced teacher she shares some good ideas in this easy to read book and some good advice. Unfortunately, it is essentially a popular psychology type format, with few insights into the why of human communication. That is not to mar the book's value, but to limit expectation of buyers who may have been looking for a little more insight into surviving the classroom, let alone excel, in the educational system.

In a nutshell, this book is like listening to an experienced, if a bit jaded, teacher talk about the real workings of a school — from the importance of dealing with the classified staff to the avoidance of the perpetually cranky and crabby. It can save you time, but don't expect an in-depth analysis.

The four major chapters overlap in their communication message, but nevertheless hit the highly feared new teacher concerns about how to build effective communications, how to deal with administrators, working with angry individuals, and parents as the central themes. In the appendix Bender prints charts about body language, detrimental behavior, and style of dress under the heading of interpreting non-verbal communications. The insights are fairly vague with such comments under style of dress as "Clothing that is markedly avant-garde is a possible negative sign of attention seeking." I have classrooms full of avant-garde garbed students who dress that way not because they want attention, but because if they don't they're going to get dropped from the A social list. You'd have to be clueless to miss them.

Bender includes narrative throughout the book and then provides her insights and strategies with some hints and warnings. The narratives need to be more realistic. Perhaps Bender could use quotations to enable teachers to better identify with the situation. If all this sounds vague, well, you have some idea of the nature of this book. It is helpful, no doubt, but lacks depth. It would certainly be useful to students in a teacher preparation program and would be more beneficial to the curriculum than the often-required educational psychology course that deals with issues more inclined to the survival of a doctoral candidate than a teaching candidate.

Outside of the lack of depth the greatest weaknesses in this publication a lack of acknowledgement and insights into dealing with people from different cultures. I don't know if Bender has taught in multicultural schools of late, but I have and there are special challenges in dealing with people from different cultures. This is especially true for women teachers being confronted by men from societies where male dominance is inculcated. Since most new teachers are going to have to face these challenges this would be a worthwhile addition to the book.

Finally, some of the comments are valuable, but leave out the how part. For example, on page 52 Bender writes that teachers should publicize their students' successes with the administrator's blessing. That is undoubtedly great advice, but what happens if the principal or superintendent says no. How do you handle that situation? In general, when do you buckle under and when do you fight? As she writes, knowing the chain of command is important, but information about what to do if the chain breaks or how to identify the most likely weak link would add spirit to the work.

Her sample letter of introduction to parents is in need of a rewrite. By writing such things as, "I want to prepare interesting science lessons that meet your child's educational and emotional needs...." (p. 22) teachers could opening themselves up to potentially doing 200 IEPs or more. It is good to communicate with parents, but remember that many teachers have well over 30 students in their class and those in middle and high school can have that many for each of the six periods they teach daily.

Here is what the publisher provided:

Especially helpful for those new to the field, this guide teaches the skills to build effective communication, tailor messages to fit their recipients, and interact with difficult people and under pressure. Using specific scenarios, such as dealing with angry parents, sharing unpleasant information, or communicating in less-than-ideal school environments, different communication strategies, and why they work, are discussed in detail.

This publication reminds me of the old "So, You Want to Be Popular" books that held such insights as don't wear dirty clothes, brush your teeth, be friendly to new students, and don't gossip as the key to Homecoming Queendom. It is not that it is filled with wrong notions or isn't useful, it just doesn't provide enough grit under your wheels to avoid getting stuck in the bedlam of the staffroom.

Bender's website with links to her other works. <http://yvonnebender.com/>

Pages: **198** Price: **\$16.95** ISBN: **0974934437**

Reviewed by Alan Haskvitz, teacher, <http://www.reacheverychild.com>

Chabot, Daniel & Chabot, Michel (2004). *Emotional Pedagogy: To Feel in Order to Learn: Incorporating Emotional Intelligence in Your Teaching Strategies*. Victoria B.C.: Trafford Publishing.

Change is the essence of life and advancement. Euclid paved the way for Galileo who in turn paved the way for Newton, but Einstein replaced him only to be supplemented by Hawkins and so on. Our understanding of the learning process follows a similar course with the authors of this book presenting fascinating insights into the emotional aspects of learning, showing once again that change is a learning situation. (Weddell, 1965)

A good teacher demonstrates an understanding that social and emotional factors in the family impact the learning and development of students in other domains and understands that development in any one domain (i.e., cognitive, social, physical, emotional) impacts development in other domains. This book is an excellent resource to understand the basis for each of these impacts. The authors go into the evidence of "how we learn" by explaining in a lucid language what happens in the human brain as one learns. This is explained with evidence seen in investigative modalities like Computed Tomogram Scans (CT Scans) of the brain.

The authors make an attempt to clarify the emotional aspects of adult learning, looking at the scientific validity of the existing and proposed concepts of the same. The major objectives of the book seem to be to elaborate upon the basics of teaching and learning in an integrated manner so that readers can incorporate emotional intelligence in their teaching strategies and to prove that one's ability to learn depends on one's emotional awareness of the need to learn. The book achieves its aims to a large extent.

The book aptly brings out the insufficiencies of the cognitive methodology of learning and answers many questions regarding the learning process. It's an excellently written book, looking at all aspects in a good amount of accurate detail without getting too extensive. The discussion of the psychological and physiological basis of emotional learning is particularly interesting. The discussion follows a logical sequence to keep the reader engrossed until the end.

The way the authors achieve the major objective of this book by unraveling that most elusive characteristic of humans— emotions— in a manner not only pleasing but also scientific, taking into consideration psychology and neuroscience research findings. In some parts it runs too fast through research implications, fails to define its terms, and depends, at times, too heavily on unsubstantiated anecdotal evidence. But these flaws are largely due to the fact that the book aims to convey quite a bit in its limited capacity and this should not prevent anyone from going through it.

The first part covers the "biological basis for emotional intelligence and learning" especially the limbic system's amygdala and its role in emotional intelligence and proper functioning. Daniel Chabot and Michel Chabot unravel it marvelously with an apt example of "Elliot" a good husband and father whose brain tumor

surgery changed his personality without changing his intellect. Elliot's quality of work was reduced and his personality change led to divorce — although the surgery damaged only that part of his brain that dealt with emotions. The text proceeds to compare the cognitive and the emotional brain and to illustrate with the help of examples, the four categories of emotional competency useful for academic success, i.e, communication, motivation, autonomy and self-management. The authors give observation tables for evaluating a student's emotional competency and explain how to compile results. A similar exercise to evaluate one's own emotional competency as a teacher is an eye opener and is an exercise that all teachers should undergo.

The authors go on to explain primary emotions (fear, anger, sadness, disgust, contempt, surprise, joy); secondary emotions (insecurity, frustration, deception, humiliation, contempt, amazement and enthusiasm) and social emotions. With animal and human experiments they explain how these emotions are learned in the presence of background emotions. This is done with the help of lucid examples keeping in mind the neurological basis. The recognition of emotions with pictorial representation is quite an appealing feature of this work and the authors succeed to a large extent where other authors (Ioannou, et al., 2005) who have tried extracting and validating emotional cues through analysis of facial expressions for improving the level of interaction in man machine communication systems have not yet been able to perfect it.

What follows is an excellent exercise with daily life scenarios to help teachers help students manage their emotions and irrational needs. Tables on types of negative thoughts like extreme generalization or catastrophic predications and the nine step technique of resolving emotional problems are bound to be popular.

Having explained the negative factors that can hamper learning, the authors talk about stimulating emotions that are favorable to the learning process. They explain that reinforcing a student's need to find a solution (motivation) and also reinforcing the feeling of competency required to find a solution is necessary to keep the student emotionally involved in the learning process. The explanation of role of the antagonistic process and ways of using it to one's own benefit is a "must read" part.

Nine personality profiles emphasizing student teacher relationships and the learning process along with signs of each component of personality, so as to identify them and stimulate students according to their profiles is an excellent way of concluding.

Thus the book emphasizes the fact that emotion-based learning systems appear able to encode, and sustain, more sophisticated patterns of valence learning than have been reported previously (Turnball, 2005). Keeping in mind the fact that older adults process emotional information differently than younger adults and demonstrate less of a negativity bias on cognitive tasks (Wood, 2005) it is up to well meaning senior readers to incorporate the principles learnt from this book in to their teaching schedules. For younger adults, that strength is learning and memory and for older adults, that strength is an accurate representation of wins and losses (valence)(Wood, 2005).

Incorporating the teachings of this book can only do good; controlling and harnessing emotions the way the authors propose will definitely go a long way in maximizing results and minimizing error. Scientific evidence in this regard has suggested that errors committed by professionals in even highly demanding roles like emergency medicine often resulted in negative emotions (Hopgood, 2005) and these further impede learning and cause errors resulting in a vicious circle.

At times the authors' role as science writers appears less than that of promoters of emotional pedagogy, it is pardonable as the implementation of emotional pedagogy into our schools, colleges and jobs will undoubtedly make most of us stand out in a crowd. Having said all this it is important to realize that we yet do not understand all the issues in the learning process. This book is but a step in that direction. Many concepts in the book still need validation. The only other issue that is of major concern is the authors' conflict of interest with traditional working methods and the need for a more explicit financial disclosure and statement of interest considering the fact that the authors run courses and the book could be considered an attempt to popularize these courses. Definitely a must read book.

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Pages: 178 Price: \$25.75 ISBN: 1-4120-4219-4

Reviewed by Dr. Sunil Moreker, Consultant, P.D Hinduja National Hospital; Planning Committee member, International Association of Medical Science Educators, U.S.A; Member, Center for Research in Medical and Dental Education, University of Birmingham, U.K; Associate Editor, Indian Journal of Ophthalmology

Chabot, Daniel & Chabot, Michel (2004). *Emotional Pedagogy: To Feel in Order to Learn: Incorporating Emotional Intelligence in Your Teaching Strategies*. Victoria B.C.: Trafford Publishing.

The brothers Chabot tell the reader in the introduction to their work that they have two main objectives: "to provide us with basic theoretical elements of a new vision on teaching, and in addition, to propose tangible and integrated applications of emotional intelligence in our teaching strategies."

The book is divided into two parts, the biological basis and the application. The first chapter focuses on the brain and how we learn. It includes several instruments to appraise the brain. The remaining chapters of the first part then cover some emotions and their general impact on learning, followed by a definition of emotional intelligence.

The second part discusses the application stage. Initially, the authors present methods to detect the emotions of the learner, a short focus on listening and finally steps to assist a student in managing emotions. The second part ends with personality profiles and instructions on how to stimulate students according to their profile. A few exercises are presented in both sections; for example, one might evaluate her emotions while teaching a class. The work concludes with several pages of references and an index.

I was left wondering if the book was published to fill the need for a text for the course taught by the Chabots. My experience with textbooks is that they must establish clear goals and obtainable objectives and then present a careful and well thought out plan to present that information to the learner. I found the first part of the book to be weak in that it did not really address the basics.

I also question the book's exercises in that they were usually completed quickly and were not supported with a scientific basis. I can assess my emotions teaching in a classroom today, but it would be more helpful to reassess on several days to truly evaluate my emotions as a teacher. The authors also seem unclear as to the audience for the book. Was this book for the teacher to help the student or for the students to learn about their emotions and how to deal with them effectively? Both groups are addressed at different points in the text.

Finally, if I were to consider emotions in the classroom I would continually use a classroom setting to more appropriately assess them. This book does not do that. As a teacher, I would look elsewhere for more complete information.

Pages: 178 Price: \$25.75 ISBN: 1-4120-4219-4

Reviewed by Mrs. Marcia W. Davis, Talented and Gifted Facilitator, Davenport Community Schools, Davenport, Iowa.

Day, Christopher (2004). *A Passion for Teaching*. London and New York: RoutledgeFalmer.

Passion Calling

At a time when the stands are flooded with books championing varied methodologies of 'teaching effectiveness' and 'evaluation and assessment techniques' and at a time when educationists debate over the

merits and demerits of perceived teaching styles, and teachers are urged to 'teach to the test,' Christopher Day puts passion in the center stage linking it to all aspects of TRUE teaching and learning. Going beyond explorations of the role of passion in the domains of classroom practice and related preparations, Day draws from phases of the teaching life-cycle - from the beginning years through the mid-career plateau phases on to the maturing years, dwelling again on school cultures and networks and their role in nurturing the passion to teach.

Perhaps one of the best synthesis yet of how emotions affect ones orientation to educate, Day culls out his conclusions from an insurmountable amount of empirical research and theories of teaching and learning (there are more than 500 books and articles in the reference list) spanning across five continents. His tact lies in the fact that he is able to incorporate works of others, for instance Howard Gardner's multiple intelligence and David Goleman's emotional intelligence (irrespective of the fact that one may or may not agree with the reasoning) concepts into the 'passion' paradigm and it does not read like an imposition.

The wide range of topics distributed across eight chapters, begin with underscoring the need for passion in today's teaching and learning environment. The book then goes on to highlight the workings of passion in teaching where Day interprets the latter elementally as a moral endeavor (in that it is integrally a human action undertaken with regard to other human beings). He then focuses on the domains of emotions and identities that drive teaching and engenders commitment and knowledge building in teaching practices in contemporary class environments. Next, Day draws upon literature that generates a penchant for learning and development among teachers. The final two chapters dwell upon school cultures and networks that engender passionate learning communities and factors that sustain the passion.

What unites this diverse range of topics is the fact that the spirit underlying each chapter calls for the readers/teachers to start thinking differently. If one can get into the core of the book, one would be motivated to feel that it is OK to have feelings that may not be in sync with the mainstream. By doing so, the text urges readers to search for the creative spaces within themselves that have been lying dormant and unrecognized. Given that the world that we live in today, the glittering 21st century, provides reinforcements to external behaviors, rather than to internal attitudes, to what we do, far more than to who we are and rewards people not for being different but for being alike, this book gives us the strength to look inwards and free ourselves from the trap of homogenization.

The book, as the brilliant foreword by Robert L. Fried suggests, "Should be banned from those pre-service courses, in-service workshops, or graduate seminars where readers are required to 'master' great quantities of material quickly." Truly, this book is NOT a 'Ready Reckoner.' It is not for the teacher trainee looking for 'easy' solutions and techniques, neither is it meant for the 'quick fixer,' or the teacher looking for structured and standardized teaching modules. However, if one can give *some* of their hours of reflection to the reading of this book and contemplatively approach its end or else go back to it from time to time, they will surely find a life- long supply of 'quick fix' materials and numerous stuff that teaching modules can be made of. Plainly put, this book can be a great companion to the novice educator or the experienced teacher who wants to incorporate humane scholarship in education and in their professional grooming.

Another significant contribution of this book is the large corpus of literature on the personal histories, biographies and experiences of teachers. Reading through them, a teacher, irrespective of whether s/he belongs to a primary school or a post-graduate business school, is able to relate to the teaching fraternity at a global level. In fact there may be moments when s/he might mutter, "And all this while I was thinking that these things happen to me only!" Also, the "Time to reflect," sections at the end of each chapter provide a space for thought provoking mind-games, exercising which, one can hone one's sensitivities and intellect in and outside classroom environments.

At times, however, Day's attempt at linking passion with all aspects of teaching and teaching orientations, engenders repetitions and long and circuitous reasoning to arrive at a point. This can be a trifle overwhelming. Also, the font size of the text may not agree with all eyesights. Barring that, however, this book is a must read if you are, as the introduction states, a teacher, for whom:

Teaching is more than just a job, more than an intellectual challenge, more than a management task, for whom vocation and commitment are essential features of their professionalism. It is for teachers who are concerned through their work, with education in its broader sense, who acknowledge that emotional engagement and care are essential to good teaching, who are committed to service, and who are, have been or wish to be again, passionate (p.10).

Pages: **204** Price: **Rs250. (Indian Reprinted Ed. 2005); \$35.95(U.S.)** ISBN: **0-415-25180-X**

Reviewed by Arna Seal, Adjunct Faculty and Coordinator, Center for Social Sustainability, ICFAI

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Diffily, Deborah & Sassman Charlotte (2005). *Managing Independent Reading: Effective Classroom Routines: Lessons, Strategies, and Literacy-Building Activities That Teach Children the Routines and Behaviors They Need to Become Better Readers. Grades K-2.* New York: Scholastic.

Authors Diffily and Sassman provide a research-based, Standards linked book with mini lesson-plans and strategies to assist teachers of Kindergarten to Grade 2 in setting up and establishing routines and strategies for effective independent reading. In an extensive introduction, the authors present a case for the need to establish a proper classroom environment, which should support the group and individual routines that the teacher will establish. As they put it, "For routines to be most effective, the classroom itself must support children as they work not only as a group, but also individually, with a partner, and in small groups" (p. 5) It is in essence, "looking at the big picture" (p. 5).

The book is divided into four main chapters. The first, "At the Beginning of the Year," provides teachers with some successful classroom management routines and strategies that should be established at the start of the year, in order to promote reading activities for the rest of the year. The mini-lessons are written out as procedural lessons, which assist the young learners in understanding different aspects of their reading instruction (p. 8). The remaining chapters are arranged by progressing reader ability. The second chapter, "For Emergent Readers," is the most detailed chapter in this book focusing on the skills and learning outcomes of Kindergarten and Grade One students.

The book is well organized and accessible. The authors use coding to assist teachers in the implementation of routines throughout the school year and from kindergarten to Grade Two. They divide the school year into three sections: Fall, Winter and Spring and suggest through their coding which lessons are to be conducted at certain times of the year. Of course this organization lends itself to providing a continuity and progression for a teacher in setting up and assisting in the development of reading skills within her students. Some lessons are coded for all three of the grades, to assist in reinforcing these outcomes and skills every year. Each lesson has a target, a justification, secondary objectives, links to English Language Arts (ELA) Standards, learning materials that are required, the time range, things to do before you start, student's prior experience (another example of the built in continuity found through-out the book), What to do and finally how to support learning. Other features that provide added support: formats for letters to parents with some of the activities for further skill-building, references to current research to further substantiate the rationale for the lessons, teacher tips, teaching strategies to build within the lesson, ideas to expand the lesson, templates for some activities and further references to enrich lesson planning and execution.

As an Early Childhood teacher, I found the book to be a good resource for planning my lessons and in setting up routines. I also found that the book spoke to me as a colleague rather than an expert's opinion on how to teach in my classroom. This is a significant aspect, as the tone of a practitioner- oriented book does impact the effect it has on the reader and the extent of its usage by practitioners. I will continue to use this book as a handy reference point in the future and have made a long list of strategies that I can put into place straightaway during this year. The provision of a coding system provides a valuable benchmark for a teacher to be able to ascertain her student's progress at any given time during the year. The usefulness of the book is further strengthened by its links to the Standards, as this will assist me in the assessment of my students as we work through the lessons. The text addresses each of the reading levels i.e. emergent, early and independent readers by providing, the characteristics of learners at each of these levels, useful strategies to employ, whole and small group reading activities and individual and partner reading activities. The materials and prior preparation needed for the conduction of most lessons in the book is fairly easy and accessible, making it teacher-friendly.

A minor critique that goes against the book is the comparatively shorter emphasis on Early Readers and Independent Readers as compared to Emergent Readers. I feel that there is definitely scope for further information to be included in those chapters, which would assist teachers working with students at higher levels. However, what is present is certainly useful and applicable. The book is not making any significant break-through by what is being presented, instead it provides a wholistic process to establish what has already been identified and documented as sound practice. I find that this feature does not detract from the usefulness of the book, but instead emphasizes its focus and validity.

This book targets a diversified audience of practitioners. It has a practical hands-on approach that helps the student or beginning teacher in identifying the need for setting up and continuing to establish behavioral

expectations throughout the year. For the experienced teacher it provides a sound reference point to use as one strengthens routines already set within the classroom. It has a strong behavioral management basis, which provides the teacher with knowledge as well as skills in establishing well-grounded classroom management practice to support reading within the classroom. For the student, the book provides a whole lot of strategies that cater to the varied and multiple intelligences found within young learners. Throughout the book the authors add research findings to further emphasize the basis of the principles being established for reading routines. The authors have worked to provide the average teacher with a resource that is linked with the standards, written in mini-lesson format, has continuity within its organization and builds on the skills being developed within the learner. The fact that one of the authors is an experienced teacher and the other an experienced Early Childhood educator can be seen through-out the book as they have enmeshed their knowledge and practice into a hands-on book for teachers. In short, it is certainly a book *by the teachers and for the teachers*.

Pages: 128 Price: \$17.99 U.S./\$24.99 CAN. ISBN: 0-439-59720-X

Reviewed by Venesser M. Pate, Doctorate of Education student, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia.

Herrington, Anne & Moran, Charles, Editors (2005). *Genre Across the Curriculum*. Logan UT: Utah State University Press .

Genre across the Curriculum is a book for teachers who are serious about writing and reading about writing. The academic level of information and theory might not encourage the casual reader; it is more appropriate for instructors in high school and higher education. This book provides in-depth information about genre and using writing in the curriculum. This is not genre as we often think of it. Everyone knows about genres such as fiction, non-fiction, fantasy, and science fiction. This book discusses such genres as research paper genre, autobiography genre, web genres, and communication genres.

This is a collection of essays divided into three parts: Part one: Genre across the curriculum: general education and courses for majors; Part two: Genres in first-year writing courses; and Part three: Mixing media, evolving genres. The editors, Anne Herrington (Professor and Chair of English at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst) and Charles Moran (Professor of English, emeritus, at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst) bring together what they call "an inquiry into the value of explicit attention to genre in the teaching of writing" beginning with Plato and Aristotle who "framed the issues the teachers and students in subsequent chapters will struggle with" (p. 1).

As writers, the editors chose an excellent group of students and teachers using various forms of writing in their curricula. These students and teachers of genre come from a broad array of disciplines in higher education, including English, language development, communication, writing, literature, and history. They and are from the United States and the University of Cape Town, South Africa. These essays are well written and packed with useful sources and information about genre and its use in the curriculum. They also provide the reader with a significant number of references for future study. This review will cover the introduction, a representative chapter from each of the three parts of the book, and the conclusion.

As the editors indicate, the concept of writing across the curriculum (WAC) made great strides in the 1970s and 1980s. They also state that "WAC has been characterized as comprising two strands: writing to learn and writing in the disciplines" (p. 7). According to Herrington and Moran, the first strand "focuses on having students use writing to engage in exploratory thinking and learning" while the second "focused on having students learn the ways of writing and reasoning assumed to be characteristic of academic contexts." The editors also state that these two strands have become complementary to one another with "genres as potentially flexible guides for that invention and social action within a given discourse community" (p.10).

In part one, Elizabeth A. Petroff, professor of comparative literature at the University of Massachusetts, discusses the general education course Spiritual Autobiography, in which students are taught to study and write autobiography. By teaching both the reading and writing of autobiography Petroff feels that "students can discover how different writers express their own experiences, and as a result write in new ways" (p. 21). The course, for first and second year students, includes reading seven books of autobiography, with lectures and class discussions for each book. While reading the students are also writing their own autobiographies in the form of several essays. Petroff provides the reader with topics for the autobiographical papers, as well as the midterm and final take-home exams for the course. This chapter is interesting and encourages the teacher who wants to have students understand writing autobiography as well as how to study it. Other essays in part one are: "Writing History: Informed or Not be Genre Theory?" (Anne Beaufort & John A.

Williams); "Mapping Classroom Genres in a Science in Society Course" (Mary Soliday); and "What's Cool Here?" Collaboratively Learning Genre in Biology" (Anne Ellen Geller).

In "Getting on the Right Side of It: Problematizing and Rethinking the Research Paper Genre in the College Composition Course," Carmen Kynard, an instructor at Medgar Evers College at the City University of New York, discusses her experiences teaching the freshman research writing class. The goal was to "push students to rethink what they saw as the research paper," and she relates several instances of this and the blocks she encountered from some students. Kynard (p. 136) discusses her first effort at teaching writing and what she felt was her failure to her students when she did not "provide a type of scaffolding in the classroom where students would not only be engaging alternative forms of research writing, but would also be looking at why, how, where, and when they are used." She started her second year of teaching differently, asking her students to talk about their research experience and consider research topics they would like to investigate. The chapter presents topics and samples of student writings that show a marked improvement for the second year students in how they viewed writing and what they were able to write. Other essays in part two are: "I Was Just Never Exposed to This Argument Thing: Using a Genre Approach to Teach Academic Writing to ESL Students in the Humanities" (Rochelle Kapp & Bongsi Bangeni; and "The Resume' as Genre: A Rhetorical Foundation for First-Year Composition" (Shane Peagler & Kathleen Blake Yancey).

In the third part, "Writing in Emerging Genres: Student Web Sites in Writing and Writing-Intensive Classes," Mike Palmquist, professor of English at Colorado State University, discusses "the change in how information and ideas are exchanged" from the time of Gutenberg to the present. Palmquist feels that the World Wide Web a change has brought a change to the rules of writing. He also feels that we are still in a period of transition, with the web still in the experimental stage, and scholars suggesting "that some genres are in the process of emerging, such as the home page (Dillon & Gushrowski, 2000), the digital broadsheet (Watters & Shepherd, 1997), the resource list page (Crowston & Williams, 2000), and the discussion list page (Bauman, 1999)".

Palmquist (p. 221) discusses "efforts of students in three writing and writing-intensive classes to create Web Sites." He explains document structure, its importance, and the difference from the structure of print articles to web articles. Types of structures mentioned are: linear, hierarchical, interlinked, and combined. Navigation of documents is also closely related to document structure. Through the use of navigational tools Web documents can provide the reader with an ever-increasing number of links and attachments. Palmquist reviews the work of students in a speech communication course, a Web development course, and a graduate Web writing course. He also shares the results and discussions that he had with the students to determine "their experiences reading and developing documents for the web." The actual work of the students is presented and evaluated for an understanding and consideration of Web Genre.

Also included in part three: "Teaching and Learning a Multimodal Genre in Psychology Course" (Chris M. Anson, Deanna P. Dannels, & Karen St. Clair); The Teaching and Learning of Web Genres in First-Year Composition (Mike Edwards & Heidi McKee); and the book's conclusion "What We Have Learned: Implications for Classroom Practice (Herring & Moran).

In the conclusion the editors discuss genres and their impact on the classroom. An important conclusion: "Finally, we have learned, though we knew it before, how important talk among teachers is to the quality of teaching and learning. This teacher-talk makes us more conscious of the pedagogical choices we make, and therefore more able to set goals, develop strategies, and assess the results" (p. 252). Herrington and Moran discuss how the authors of the essays use writing and how or if it impacts their work, or how their work impacts what they use in their classroom to teach writing. The structure of the writing classes, the size, when the writing is done, and how it is done, all impact the final product that the teacher takes from the class. The editors also give an excellent overview of the interactions between the teachers and students and what the result of this interaction is. It was obvious from the editorial comments made in the conclusion that the editors held the authors of the essays in high esteem, and that they believed their research and work in writing in the curriculum to be valid and of value.

This book is one that could be read from cover to cover by someone who is seriously interested in the subject of writing across the curriculum and in using something new and more challenging in their work. It also is a book that can be useful if readers just read a chapter or two that they find supports their teaching or gives them new insight into writing in the curriculum. It discusses some excellent processes of writing and good ideas for encouraging and developing genre studies in high school and academic settings.

Pages: **280** Price: **\$24.95** ISBN: **0-87421-600-1**

Reviewed by Naomi Williamson, Special Collections/Children's Literature Festival, James C. Kirkpatrick Library, Central Missouri State University

Means, Barbara & Haertel, Geneva D. (2004). *Using Technology Evaluation to Enhance Student Learning*. New York: Teachers College Press.

The authors of this text effectively analyze, thread together and expand upon key issues of technology evaluation as outlined in the earlier volume *Evaluating Educational Technology* (Haertel & Means, 2003). Throughout the text, Means and Haertel support their rationale for continuing the earlier volume, while incorporating ample detail and description in order to avoid generalizations and misrepresentations of what they are stating. A step towards demystifying the complex reality of technology evaluation is accomplished by positioning the text within a transient educational infrastructure; from my perspective as a secondary English teacher, I find these authors bring clarity, relevance and authenticity to the challenge of *how, when and why* to evaluate the use of technology in schools.

This text is organized into four sections; each section is comprised of an introduction which summarizes key issues prevalent to understanding how ideas have been threaded together from the previous volume; this provides the reader with the necessary framework for understanding the commentaries provided at the end of each section; commentaries are written by policy makers, researchers and educators providing a diversity of perspectives and encouraging the text to remain accessible to readers in a variety of fields.

The authors' intent is to elucidate prevalent issues to documenting the effects of technology integration on student learning. This is done by framing the text according to four key questions: what kind of learning technology research best addresses policy makers' needs?

- How can student learning (with technology) be measured?
- What are the long-term effects of technology integration at a school and district level?
- What are the implications of adapting these authors' suggestions of the research agenda delineated in the earlier volume?

However, these questions are not simply answered; they are deconstructed from a variety of perspectives in order to identify and address how each question might be "implicitly defined." For instance, policy makers and parents may not have the same definition of *evaluation*. For researchers, evaluation might be primarily guided by assumptions of causation; "Is A good: Is A better than B?" Perhaps for teachers and parents, evaluation is equated less with questions of causation and more with questions of access and personal identity. The meaning of the word *evaluation* is determined by what is of relevance to those who hold a vested interest in what is being evaluated. By broadening each question to include the possibility of multiple agendas, the authors assume a critical stance towards their own work; the reader is awakened to the complexity of understanding research questions as embedded in implicit and explicit assumptions of power, audience and intent.

For a significant portion of this text, the authors juxtapose tensions amongst a variety of research designs in order to reveal the potential and limitations of specific design methods. For instance, they recognize that random assignments may reveal causal relationships between interventions and particular outcomes, yet they caution that context is a significant variable which cannot be ignored. Precautions must not only be taken to properly document and analyze how interventions are being implemented and the effects of interventions, but how existing (and changing contexts) might be influencing "results." Random assignments, in isolation, reduce educational complexity into manageable pieces which are not representative of the "messiness" of education. Perhaps this is why the authors propose that balance is the key.

Legislators' motives to continue focusing on random-assignment research, otherwise referred to as scientifically based research, are also questioned. "Many in the education research community are uneasy about legislators dealing with issues of research methodology." The way in which words such as scientific truth and objectivity are used to mislead policy makers, educators and the public is an understandable point of contention for these authors. In order to avoid the misuse and proliferation of research studies not genuinely intended to inform educational practice, these authors wisely suggest that research not be done without "rigorous field trials, complete with random assignment, value-added analysis of longitudinal achievement data, and distinct interventions" (U.S. Department of Education, 2002).

As indicated by Linda Roberts in the forward of *Using Technology Evaluation to Enhance Student Learning*, there is a paucity of research examining the effects of emerging technologies on student achievement. Many texts have already been published expressing the urgency to effectively incorporate technology into classroom practice, yet minimal research has documented the long-term implications of such a transition on student learning or classroom contexts. This is alarming given the amount of time, energy and funding provided to schools and districts for the objective of technology integration (Adelman, N., Donnelly, M.B., Dove, T., Tiffany-Morales, J., Wayne, A., & Zucker, A., 2002; Cook, T.D., Means, B. & Haertel, G.D., &

Michalchick, V., 2003; Cuban, L. 2000; Oppenheimer, T., 1997). Means and Haertel suggest that there are inherent dangers in promoting a resource such as technology with such vigor, when there is minimal evidence of its impact on students' education and educational infrastructures; in this regard I also would agree with Means and Haertel in suggesting that technology may be a reality in our schools, but the decision of how and if it is used should be proven, not assumed.

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Pages: **144** Price: **\$24.95** ISBN: **0807743380**

Reviewed by Vetta Vratulis, a doctoral student in Language and Literacy Education at the University of British Columbia

New Zealand. Ministry of Education. (2003). *Effective Literacy Practice in Years 1 to 4*. Wellington, New Zealand: Learning Media Limited.

The New Zealand Ministry of Education has produced a research-based teacher's text that presents the dimensions of effective practice in literacy education and learning. The text focuses on the first four years of instruction of a child's education. Although New Zealand is a bicultural and multi-lingual society, this text is specific to teaching and learning in English and does not address the teaching and learning of, or with, Te Reo Maori, the language of the indigenous Maori people. This text does not delve into the concept of linguistic capital (Benson, 2004) associated with the bilingual learner or teacher.

Chapter one introduces the concept of acceptance of identifiable effective practice as the essential first step to improving student literacy outcomes. The six dimensions of effective practice are identified as expectations, instructional strategies, engaging learners with texts, partnerships, knowledge of the learner, and knowledge of literacy learning. Chapters 2 through 7 discuss each of the six dimensions individually. Each dimension is discussed in a comprehensible, logical format. Specific, replicable examples for future teacher use are presented throughout the book. The examples are excellent for stimulating creative thinking, but for actual implementation they appear somewhat limited.

Implementation is discussed in terms of effective programs. Classrooms are seen as learning communities. The leaning community concept is illustrated with case studies from two urban schools, and a rural school.

The overall text is an excellent resource for anyone interested in improving student literacy and learning outcomes. Parents, students and policy makers can all find uses for the information presented. The broad usability of this text is significant as literacy outcomes can be used as a criterion for assessing the progress of a society's development (Smith, 1999). The New Zealand Ministry of Education's goal to improve literacy education outcomes is evident throughout the text. The ability to use texts to gain knowledge is stressed repeatedly as a significant factor in total, and individual, student literacy and learning outcomes.

The physical appearance and feel of the book is appealing. Bright colors and graphics are used to enhance

and illustrate the presentation of the text. The size of the book is useable and unassuming. The font used in the text is easy to read, the style of writing is predominantly concise. Any reader should find the book non-threatening, friendly and appealing.

I find it important to note the text is written in New Zealand English. Readers who are fluent in other forms of English, specifically American English, may or may not read the text with the intended comprehension. The American English speaker may assume the language and usages of the vocabularies are identical when, in fact, they may be different. This critical issue of multi-cultural learners and readers is the same critical issue faced within the New Zealand schools and communities. The critical issue of enhancing learner outcomes is global, regardless of language and culture. How these critical issues are addressed for multiple cultures is the foundation of the book. The non- New Zealand reader will find the book useful and enlightening, but must consider the applications in terms of his or her home culture.

I encourage anyone working to enhance literacy learning outcomes to include this text as a reference material in his or her library.

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Pages: 200 Price: \$49.95 nzd ISBN: 0478129408

Reviewed by Mary Ratchford Douglass, a doctoral student in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis at the University of Missouri, Columbia. Multi- cultural studies and international project development are a particular area of interest, specifically the Asia Pacific rim nations. Experience working with the New Zealand Ministry of Education, Special Education Services, has focused her work toward indigenous and multi-cultural educational policy issues.

Partin, Ronald L. (2004). *Classroom Teacher's Survival Guide: Practical Strategies, Management Techniques, and Reproducibles for New and Experienced Teachers. Second Edition. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.*

This is one of those books that you need to thumb through to see if it fits your needs because it is more of a workbook than a textbook. Perhaps that is a good thing as many textbooks easily cost twice as much and provide far less practical advice than author Ronald Partin has provided in this *Classroom Teacher's Survival Guide*. Fortunately you can get some good insights free by going online and clicking on the link below for a copy of the book's table of contents and first 60 plus pages.
<http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0787972533.html>

I think this book is much better than most out there for the novice teacher because it offers such basic information and so many checklists and printable resources. Unfortunately, that is also what detracts from it as the author spends so much time on these sometimes minor issues that he leaves out a great many more troubling ones. For example, he either barely mentions or does not discuss at all such major issues as dealing with the cultural learning differences in students, planning for students with disabilities, pushy parents, differentiated curriculum, English as a Second Language, advocates, unions, reporting abuse, the importance of supervision, and the requirements of No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

I asked the author why he left out any reference to NCLB and he wrote.

I decided not to tackle NCLB directly as I see it as primarily a political strategy and not truly an instructional strategy...I did recognize that teachers have to deal with the state standards and testing mandated by this movement and addressed those topics. The hardest part in writing such a broad publication is deciding what to leave out. My guiding principle was helping teachers meet the daily challenges of teaching.

With this in mind, I can see many teacher preparation college courses having this text as a supplemental reading book and it would be excellent in that capacity. The *Classroom Teacher's Survival Guide* is what I call a McBook. It is easy to read, has some nourishment, and doesn't cost as much as a full course meal. The author has taken comments from those who attended his presentations and placed them in this publication to provide more substance. He writes that the work was designed to provide a variety of strategies

and tips for solving the main problems teachers face such as organizing and managing the classroom, achieving a working relationship with students, maintaining classroom control, working with other adults in the school community (including parents), developing competence as an effective instructor, and coping with the daily stress of teaching” (p. xxiii).

He does this, sometimes to an extreme. There are over four pages on rewards and Partin even has a sample open house letter for the parents. He has included a sample restroom pass! Still the breath of topics is impressive. You get insights about germs on keyboards, breaking up fights, evaluations, examples of awards, and classroom acoustics.

What is missing is an anecdotal approach to fleshing out the suggestions. Where are the sections on dealing with controversial issues and integration of subject matter? If this work was done by one of my middle school students I would be glad he did the work, but would have been hoping for more insights and depth. Vital issues that new teachers face such as how to spend your budget, handling staff room gossip, how to use a tax free letter to garner donations, even which major stores such as Staples offer teacher rebates has not found a home in this book. This does not make the Partin book a poor choice, it just means it is a starting place for new teachers who have not been given a comprehensive teacher training program.

I recently published a work on the traits of superior teachers and so I read with interest Partin's section on characteristics of effective educators. Like most of this book, it offered a nimble overview, but lacked the examples that would have made the lessons more personal. He does not even mention the National Teachers Hall of Fame, which is the ultimate achievement for any of the nation's nearly three million educators.

The author gives space to the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards and does a swell job of telling about its rigor and expense, however he does not offer insights into why it is so controversial. As an experienced and successful classroom teacher I found it sometimes difficult to understand why there are so many lists and so little annotation. He has a page of listservs and yet does not give enough detail. Research into how many members and how many messages arrive daily as well as the advantages of a digest are untouched. His list of useful websites is also blemished by this lack of depth. Some of the sites he suggests require registration and others offer products that cost a lot of money and yet Partin does not suggest if they are worth it.

Overall I would grade this book for new teachers as a “B” based on effort. Sections on classroom routines, motivation, supplies, parent conferences, lesson plans, grading, conflict resolution, testing, team teaching, cooperative learning, homework, open houses, and classroom arrangements provide resources for those teachers who have not enrolled in an in-depth education preparation program before getting their certification. The book jacket states that Partin holds a doctorate in educational psychology, was a counselor for 35 years, and has been collecting ideas for this book for 20 years which is probably why the book needs to be updated with more current issues to help teachers survive, especially for those working different demographic areas.

Partin's book is good and should not be “dissed.” Perhaps a little updating, adding an index, and providing more anecdotal insights would make it much more useful. Room for these could easily be made by leaving out the printable awards and bathroom pass pages that are readily available online.

Pages: **365** Price: **\$29.95** ISBN: **0-7879-7253-3**

Reviewed by Alan Haskvitz, Recipient CherryAward for Great Teachers,
<http://www.reacheverychild.com>

Routman, Regie (2004). *Writing Essentials: Raising Expectations and Results While Simplifying Teaching*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

“ I want students to write with passion and ease. I want them to be motivated, confident writers who see writing as an everyday, useful, even enjoyable tool.” So claims the author as her main aim of this easy to read and practical book. Her purpose, she says, is to make the teaching of writing easier, more manageable and fun, and to raise expectations. She also aims to streamline the teaching of writing to essential elements and manageable procedures. The author wants teachers and students to maintain the energy, commitment and positive attitude that are necessary to produce writing worth reading.

With a wealth of practical strategies and teaching tips sprinkled throughout, the book does just that. This content is intermingled with the author's, teachers' and students' real life experiences of personal writing. Routman clearly engages the reader into the importance of her writing essentials, from every aspect of the writing process. Along the way, the book includes teaching tools and her own experiences of how and why

they work.

The text cleverly connects to the reader with photographs, highlighted tip boxes, real examples of children's writing, easy to use templates and instructional boxes to illustrate the points being made. This enables readers to implement any aspect of the text. The format creates a very user-friendly resource with a plethora of ideas and strategies to encourage even the most reluctant writer to achieve success. It even sets out writing frameworks for the class programme, and assessment rubrics, which any teacher could implement into their classroom writing programme.

A noteworthy feature is the inclusion of a DVD showing the author engaging children in writing conferences, with accompanying teaching notes. A real "how to" extra that enables teachers to see what good conferencing and writing practice actually look like. The in-depth and thorough appendix feature includes useable worksheets, letters to parents templates, assessment rubrics, writing activity sheets and a variety of other photocopy friendly writing templates, as well as a brief definition of terminology used throughout the book

A very readable, practical and inspiring book that would no doubt motivate busy teachers with ways to improve their teaching of writing and their students' writing practices. It does indeed meet its aim of making the teaching of writing, and the writing itself fun, manageable and achievable for all teachers and students.

Pages: **448** Price: **\$32.50** ISBN: **0-325-00601-6**

by **Stephanie White, Christchurch College of Education, New Zealand**

Shalaway, Linda (2005). *Learning to Teach...Not Just for Beginners*. Third Edition. New York: Scholastic.

Linda Shalaway's book, *Learning to Teach*, has an impressive contents page full of useful information which is indicative of a guide that will cover a plethora of ideas in eight substantial chapters that complete this 355 page book. The introduction clearly points out Shalaway's purpose to provide a "guide and map through those first years of teaching and into a lifelong career." The theme of teachers being lifelong learners is reiterated throughout the introduction. The focus on lifelong learning is particularly interesting, because the art of teaching someone else how to learn has to begin with having the mindset of a learner as well.

The author does a wonderful job of defining some of the attributes of the beginning teacher. She notes that the beginning teacher can be an education major fresh out of college, a retired biologist embarking on a new career as a middle school teacher, or even a five-year veteran who has been reassigned to a different grade or subject area. She also includes a "special note for beginning teachers" that speaks of the joys and challenges to be faced in a teaching career.

Shalaway uses skills taught in adult education courses as she presents the concept of the teacher planning the curriculum with student involvement. Although she does not abandon the traditional ideas of teachers directing the flow of the curriculum, she emphasizes that the students must take ownership of their educational endeavors. The concept of taking ownership in this guide is similar to the "Learning Contract" introduced in adult education coursework (Knowles, 1980). This guide also provides sample pages of rubrics as teaching tools for the beginning teacher. The rubric samples are useful in that some include sample text and others are blank so that educators can tailor them to their specific needs.

The characteristics of a caring teacher (which should be required reading for all educators) is also a helpful section. At times educators can become so engrossed in the mechanics of what they are doing that they forget that learners need to know that we genuinely care about them as well. I see the author as also saying that disciplinary actions are less stressful for all when there is a foundation of care in place.

There is also an important human relations checklist that includes questions concerning the classroom, parents and the community, ethical standards and the educator's behavior outside of the classroom. This checklist addresses the intrinsic responsibility of an educator. An educator does not stop being a role model after the bell rings; an educator has a standard of behavior to uphold at all times.

One of the most important sections of this guide is the assessment of student learning and achievement and its value to the teacher as well as the student. Shalaway notes that assessment tools are a profile or report of student progress and that these tools can be useful to parents as well as the teacher in their development of an educational plan for the student.

The guide also has information on classroom management and organization, children as learners, resource

pages on detecting books that promote racism or sexism, information on brain research or neuroscience, differentiated instruction, homework hints for parents, sample notes to parents. The book includes so much information that it is best used as a topical guide. The table of contents is quite large and covers most, if not all of the challenges that new teachers may face, including a checklist for student teachers. Experienced teachers can also benefit from this guide because of its coverage of current educational research, lists of professional educational information and important terms concerning teaching and learning.

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Pages: **355** Price: **\$26.99** ISBN: **0-439-56728-9**

Reviewed by Darcus D. Smith, doctoral student at the University of Oklahoma.

Woodfield, Lynda (2004). *Physical Development in the Early Years*. London: Continuum Publishing Group.

Physical Development in the Early Years, by Lynda Woodfield, packs a lot of information into an almost postcard-size book. It was written to help those who work with or are interested in the physical development of children from birth to age eight. Based on personal experience, the author describes normal development, not motor difficulties or special needs. The text serves as a guide showing stages and predictable occurrences along the pathway of development. It stresses that practitioners should observe children and know both the how children learn in the physical domain as well as the what.

The five chapters of the book address: physical development; perceptual and sensory-motor development; motor skill development; how children learn in the physical domain; and good practice, safe practice: supporting and facilitating physical learning. Cameo stories are provided throughout the book to highlight physical development at certain ages. These are especially helpful as they provide an in-depth view of realistic scenarios. Illustrations and tables enhance the content.

If you are looking for a quick read, but great reference for physical development, this may well be what you are after.

Pages: **102** Price: **\$11.95** ISBN: **0-8264-6871-3**

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

Zemelman, Steven; Daniels,Harvey & Hyde,Arthur (2005). *Best Practice: Today's Standards for Teaching and Learning in America's Schools*. Third Edition. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Best Practice is a excellent tool for reviewing past and present educational practices and standards and for learning about teaching strategies that are time-tested tools for success. The authors bring together examples of state-of-the-art teaching methods, research, and classroom examples to provide the reader with an excellent overview of how engaging and interactive classroom instruction can help teacher and students best meet standards and expectations.

The eleven chapters build on the official standards documents of leading professional organizations in reading, writing, math, science, social studies, and the arts. The authors' vision of school improvement relies on improved instruction, not on more rules and controls. The focus is to help teachers provide excellent teaching that can result in powerful learning.

There are many valuable ideas, but of particular note is a list of MORE/LESS teaching recommendations. Highlights from the list include there should be less whole-class, teacher-directed instruction and more experiential, inductive, hand-on learning; and, less use of and reliance on standardized tests and more reliance on descriptive evaluations of student growth, including observational/anecdotal records, conference notes, and performance assessment rubrics.

Though it seems such a simple idea, it was refreshing to have the authors refocus us by reminding us that

the best starting point for schooling is the student's interests. The authors have pooled together a good summary of current best practice research and have supported the findings with stories and examples of exemplary instruction that will help educators and administrators better understand effective ways of facilitating teaching and learning.

Pages: **336** Price: **\$28.00** ISBN: **0-325-00744-6**

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



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