




education review // reseñas educativas

a multi-lingual journal of book reviews

editors: gene v glass gustavo e. fischman melissa cast-brede

reseñas educativas (Spanish)
resenhas educativas (Portuguese)

These reviews have been accessed  times since May 1, 2006

Brief reviews for May 2006

Boynnton, Alice & Blevins, Wiley (2005). *Nonfiction Passages with Graphic Organizers for Independent Practice, Grades 2-4*. New York: Scholastic.

In the introduction of *Nonfiction Passages with Graphic Organizers for Independent Practice, Grades 2-4* Boynnton and Blevins enumerate reasons for using non-fiction passages with students. Some of the reasons listed include providing natural expressions of students' interest in science and social studies, supporting the reading and content area of the curriculum, and providing easily graded homework practice. One unmentioned advantage is preparing students for standardized test passages.

At first glance, the book looked rather dull, and reminded me of the dreaded "ditto sheets" of my youth. But the authors provide a variety of non-fiction articles in various formats: interviews, pictures with informational captions, and step-by-step diagrams. Several types of graphic organizers are presented with the passages. Although there is a heavy reliance on comparison tables and fact cards, students also get practice in obtaining and entering information with maps, diagrams, charts, graphs and pictures. Many of the passages also have "Reading Tips" to focus students' reading. Commercialism does rear its head, as the Scholastic Magic School Bus crew make an appearance in one passage, and the article on grape jelly shows an assembly line from your friendly Welch's plant. Most of the multiple choice questions at the end of each passage invite deeper reading by the students. There is an answer key at the end of the book. Extension activities range from drawing pictures, making posters, letter writing, doing further research (the word "library" is never mentioned), and for two passages the same activity—describing making a sandwich (pp. 16, 79).

In addition to the Table of Contents, the authors also provide a list of each reading selection and its particular content area and topic, a helpful tool for teachers needing extension activities for the curriculum. Most of the passages have been reprinted from other Scholastic publications such as Scholastic News and SUPERSCIENCE. This might explain why the colloquialism "critters" is used for the word "animals" in Lesson 24 (p. 100) and Lesson 27 (p. 112), and "kid" is used for the word "child" in Lesson 20 (pp. 84-87). A little judicious editing might have been employed so that the passages could also reinforce language arts instruction. An attempt at multiculturalism is made by interspersing pictures of diverse people in the passages, usually when illustrating diverse cultures, but most diagrams, cartoons and photographs represent Caucasians.

This is a handy resource for the classroom teacher needing materials for reading comprehension practice, extension activities to content area lessons, and easily reproduced and graded consumables for homework. However, the glued binding of the book will not hold up to many trips to the photocopier, and the poor quality of the paper used will not survive for very long. The authors have also independently and jointly authored books and articles on similar topics for Scholastic publications.

Pages: 128 Price: \$17.99 ISBN: 0-439-59018-3

Reviewed by Sheila Kirven, Education Services Librarian, New Jersey City University, Jersey City, NJ.

Claerbaut, David (2004). *Faith and Learning on the Edge: A Bold New Look at Religion in Higher Education*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Faith and Learning on the Edge is a thought-provoking book in which the author admonishes Christian believers to reintegrate their faith as a crucial component of learning and he explores ways in which this can be accomplished. The publisher's description notes that the book begins "with an autobiographical journey through his disappointing experiences with faith and learning, both in his student and professorial career in Christian colleges." (from Zondervan web page)

The book is divided into two parts; part one, "Understanding Faith and Learning," has ten chapters and provides a very helpful overview of the issues, from postmodernism to the need for a Christian mind and scholarly activity. The author begins by talking about his personal faith and learning experiences to introduce himself to the reader. He introduces and explains terms like enlightenment, secularism, scientism, and naturalism; and avidly contrasts them with Christian notions. Other terms like reductionism, empiricism, and sociology are also explained and contrasted.

In tackling the subjects of postmodernism, academic freedom, intellectual cul de sac, and the academic mainstream, Claerbaut shows why believers who step in to fill the deep need for such thinking stand on firm intellectual ground – indeed, have the advantage in terms of fact and reason. In the four chapters that close this section, he discusses in detail the main focus of the book, i.e. "faith and learning," while emphasizing how Christian scholarship fits into the academic mainstream. The author gets the reader to appreciate the relevance of Christian views in the classroom.

Part two, "Applying Faith and Learning in the Classroom and in Research," has sixteen chapters and addresses some practical issues, especially in making the connection between faith and the various disciplines, such as art, science, and philosophy. This part is divided into three sections namely: the physical sciences, the arts and humanities, and the behavioral sciences. To stimulate the dialogue, the author suggests five basic Christian criteria which may be helpful in assessing prevailing theories and systems of thought; these include God, creation, human nature, truth, and values. The author cautions the reader that "these faith and learning explorations are meant to be *suggestive* rather than exhaustive; they are in some instances provocative, ripe for debate and additional critique" (p.144).

"The Physical Sciences" explores the mind-set of the Christian in the physical sciences, and the Christian implications in the physical sciences. Claerbaut mentions that the central distinction for the Christian in the physical sciences lies less in specifically Christian theorizing, given the paradigmatic nature in many of the disciplines, than in the mind-set or attitude with which she does her work. He adds that "indeed, you can find evidence of God in the Physical universe, but study in the physical sciences – albeit often rather technical – can also point to spiritual truths" (p.171). I rarely find books which relate the physical sciences to Christian views as this book does.

In "The Arts and Humanities," the author provides a deeper insight into the arts and humanities through Christian eyes. For instance, he provide some guidelines for the Christian artist, reviews how to teach literature in a postmodern world, explores philosophy under a Christian lens, looks at seminal questions of human existence from various philosophical points of view, and provides a Christian perspective on teaching history. This reviewer recommends this section to any scholar who is interested in assessing and interpreting art from a Christian viewpoint.

The last section of part two is titled "The Behavioral Sciences." Here the author ingeniously explores how to apply a faith-and-learning approach throughout the discipline of behavioral sciences. Particularly, Claerbaut tackles issues like political science, psychology, sociology and economics, and he contrasts these same issues to faith and learning. He reviews some of the classical personality theories of famous theorists like Abraham Maslow, Erik Erikson, Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, B.F. Skinner, Carl Rogers, George H. Mead, Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx, and Max Weber; and suggests some directions for a Christian model. Claerbaut's concern here is the dearth of a typical Christian approach in the behavioral sciences.

Overall, *Faith and Learning on the Edge* is indeed a book that would provoke any Christian scholar to challenge many of the theories that have been mostly acclaimed and entrenched by secular scholars. Examining the worldviews that govern contemporary research and academe, Claerbaut unmasks the often vehement, sometimes subtle, disdain toward Christian thinking in both mainline universities and Christian institutions. I concur with the publisher's assessment, this book is recommended reading for provosts, academic administrators, professors, college and graduate students, and everyone interested in the state of "faith and learning" in education.

Pages: **308** Price: **\$22.99** ISBN: **0310253179**

Reviewed by Julius Sonko, Dallas Baptist University

Dellinger, John (2005). *The Substitute Teaching Survival Guide, Grades K-5: Emergency*

Lesson Plans and Essential Advice. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

As a former K-12 teacher, I know how important it is to provide relevant activities for students in order to maintain an appropriate learning environment and ensure that students benefit from classroom instruction. While regular teachers know their students and subjects and can prepare in advance, substitute teachers are often left with limited or no resources. This book is a goldmine for substitute teachers who may find themselves in such a predicament: there are 144 emergency lesson plans for grades K through 5, ready to save the day and sanity!

However, it's important to note that these lesson plans are not merely "emergency activities" for keeping students busy. As the author, an experienced classroom teacher himself, correctly states, "Good substitutes, like good regular teachers, do not merely fill a student's time" (p. 2). This book provides relevant exercises, intended to enrich students' knowledge and experience and complement the curriculum for the appropriate subject and grade level. There are 24 exercises for grades K-5, divided into four categories: English and communication, history and heritage, math, and science and physical world. In addition, "the only materials students need to complete any of these exercises are a pencil and paper," readily available in all classrooms (p. 3).

One unusual activity that may seem puzzling at first is asking students to copy notes. Although it's not frequently used by regular teachers, this approach works great for substitute teachers who may not have time to make copies. However, I would also explain to students why note-taking is important so they don't perceive this activity as meaningless and unnecessary. It would be helpful to include note-taking tips for older students (grades 3 and above).

While providing relevant classroom activities is a main goal of this book, the author also includes succinct and extremely helpful sections filled with advice for both regular and substitute teachers. Regular teachers are provided with ten suggestions on how to prepare for their absence such as instructions for the substitute teacher, classroom management, materials, etc. Substitute teachers' section covers the most common problems such as classroom management, useful materials that should be carried at all times, and end-of-the-day activities.

Overall, this is a wonderful resource for both regular and substitute teachers. Because this book is organized by grade levels and provides interesting and relevant activities for various subjects, creating an effective emergency lesson plan takes only several minutes. Regular teachers may want to keep it on their desks for quick emergency lesson plans when planned activities cannot be carried out. Substitute teachers may want to bring it every time they are asked to work – just in case regular lesson plans are not sufficient or not available at all.

Pages: **163** Price: **\$1995** ISBN: **0-7879-7410-2**

Reviewed by Tatyana Pashnyak, a Ph.D. student in Instructional Systems at the Florida State University.

Dellinger, John (2005). The Substitute Teaching Survival Guide, Grades K-5: Emergency Lesson Plans and Essential Advice. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Although it should never happen, occasionally a substitute teacher may accept an assignment only to discover the absent teacher has not left lesson plans. Books such as this offer a way of perhaps getting through the day but they do not provide more than a stop-gap answer to the problem of how to offer a meaningful day's educational experience when the substitute must rely on his or her own resources.

Focusing on grades K-5, Dellinger has compiled 24 learning exercises for each grade level. Designed to take about 15 minutes to complete for a kindergarten group and double that time for the higher grades, the exercises cover four general categories: English and communication, history and heritage, math, and science and the physical world. Ready to use upon entering the classroom, the suggested assignments rely on having students copying material from the board rather than producing a handout. The author points out that this method has the additional benefit of keeping the youngsters busy so that "they are not free to wander in mind and body" (p. 3).

Each exercise is structured in a similar manner. It begins with a short selection that is to be read aloud to the class. This is followed by information the teacher writes on the board and then a question is presented for the students to mull over silently for a few minutes. The culmination of the activity necessitates compiling the student's responses on the board. For example, the class may be asked why they would or would not want to accompany Lewis and Clark on their expedition. Math exercises tend to involve more board work than the other disciplines and the reading selections become appreciably longer as the grade level increases.

Although the author states that the book can be used in a situation where preparation is not possible (i.e. you walk into the classroom and discover no lesson plans), common sense dictates that one spend time looking over all the assignments carefully ahead of time. Familiarity with the various assignments will allow the substitute to pick and choose exercises that will be appropriate to the class and situation.

It will also very likely be necessary to reread the "out loud" sections of each exercise more than once, depending on the age and attention span of the class. Anyone not comfortable with the instructions for each assignment may find it difficult to explain the task to the students. If one is focused on reading them from the guide, eye contact with the class is lost, and confusion often results from the adult's uncertainty.

Although this guide offers lesson plans that will help in an emergency situation, it would probably be a better idea to select just a few exercises from the book in each discipline and become very comfortable with the assignments and instructions ahead of time. This way it will not be necessary to remain "glued" to the book when it comes to setting forth the task. Better still, if possible, the substitute might find it very beneficial to sit down with some teachers on each grade level, go over the exercises in the book, and decide which of them stand the best chance of holding the students' interest.

Pages: **163** Price: **\$19.95** ISBN: **0-7879-7410-2**

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

**Diller, Debbie (2005) *Practice with Purpose: Literacy Work Stations for Grades 3-6*.
Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.**

School districts, education schools, building principals, and literacy coaches all stress the importance of teachers using literacy work stations in their classrooms. Debbie Diller has written a book to address the unease many upper elementary teachers feel with implementing such work stations in their classrooms. This discomfort is both due to the traditional expectation that upper-grade teachers "do not teach reading," and the realization that the role of literacy work stations has changed radically since they first entered the teaching repertoire.

Literacy work stations, often called centers, were first developed to assist teachers at the intermediate level to move away from an extensive reliance on skill practice and toward more meaningful interdisciplinary learning (see, e.g., Staab, 1991). As reading reform has gotten underway, such work stations are stressed by many researchers as a vital part of a classroom's reading program (Calkins, 2000; Kameenui, Camine, Dixon, Simmons, Coyne, 2002; Tomlinson, 2001a).

Literacy work stations have many advocates since they allow students to work on particular skills and allow the classroom teacher time to work with small groups of students (Calkins, 2000; Tomlinson, 2001a). *Practice with Purpose: Literacy Work Stations for Grades 3-6* strives to meet upper elementary teachers' need for guidance as to how to create, introduce, and manage such learning activities. Diller provides a valuable reference for teachers new to literacy work stations, as well as the reading coaches and administrators supervising them, who are asked to introduce literacy work stations for the first time. Although the book offers many suggestions for experienced teachers, some of the topics are not covered in enough depth to be fully useful.

Practice with Purpose provides readers with a wealth of information regarding how to conceive, structure, operate, and maintain literacy work stations. Diller explains how literacy work stations, with their emphasis on practice, independence, differentiated resources, and permanence, are different from traditional learning centers. This distinction will assist those working with teachers who may be recalcitrant to change because they believe they are already using learning stations. Clear directions are also given on the importance of teachers introducing learning station activities while with the students, and that there exist clear and explicit expectations of what is to be done while at the station. Diller provides numerous suggestions regarding how to accomplish these goals, and stresses that learning stations should be used for active and independent practice of previously learned skills.

The types of literary work stations emphasized include *independent reading, writing, word study, poetry, and drama*. Each chapter is divided into the following subsections, which assist the teacher in setting up and introducing the work station,

- Why the particular work station is necessary;
- What students do at the work station;
- How to set up the work station;
- Materials necessary to set up the work station;
- How to introduce the work station;

- What the teacher needs to model;
- Ways to solve problems that may arise;
- Differentiating at the work station;
- Ways to keep the station effective throughout the year;
- How to assess learning and effort at the work station; and
- How the station supports state content standards.

Suggestions are also made regarding low-preparation and content-specific work stations. Numerous photographs show readers how the various work stations look when functioning. Diller also provides readers with templates that can be used to distinguish learning stations, as well as rubrics and forms that allow students to self-assess and to provide documentation that certain tasks have been completed.

One area that might be addressed differently in further editions is the amount of guidance provided relating to differentiating various work stations' tasks so that they better reflect students' learning needs. Differentiated instruction should, at its essence, provide pathways to address students' readiness levels, learning profiles, and interests (Tomlinson, 2003). With increased emphasis on providing all students with services *within* the regular classroom setting, including those with special needs and the gifted and talented, the need to differentiate reading instruction is especially acute (Gartin, Murdick, Imbeau & Perner, 2002; Sternberg & Zhang, 2005; Tomlinson, 2001b; Tyner, 2004). The provision of these differentiated services is often problematic, requiring extensive training that involves a change in both mindset and practice (Tomlinson, 2001a; Tomlinson, 2003). While *Practice with Purpose* does remind teachers of the need to differentiate and provide alternative tasks, very little guidance is provided to those not familiar with the concept of differentiation. More materials that address how to implement differentiation, especially as they relate to classroom management and procedures, would greatly assist those teachers seeking to do so.

Overall, *Practice with Purpose's* many strengths will prove it to be an invaluable resource for any professional development library. Diller strikes a fine balance between providing an overview of the theoretical reasons underlying literacy work stations and supplying a wealth of ready-made activities and resources that teachers may use in their rooms almost immediately. As such, and especially since the book is aimed at intermediate classrooms where such resources are scarce, Diller has provided a much-needed tool for classroom teachers and those who work with them. While other measures will also be needed to augment exemplary literacy work stations, Diller's book provides a fine starting place for those wishing to implement such stations and a source of new ideas for those wanting to improve and refine their practice.

References

Calkins, L. M. (2000). *The art of teaching reading*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Gartin, B. C., Murdick, N. L., Imbeau, M., & Perner, D. E. (2002). *How to use differentiated instruction with students with developmental disabilities in the general education classroom*. Arlington, VA: The Council for Exceptional Children.

Kameenui, E. J., Carnine, D. W., Dixon, R. C., Simmons, D. C., & Coyne, M. D. (2002). *Effective strategies that accommodate diverse learners* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ : Merrill/Prentice Hall.

Staab, C. (1991). Classroom organization: Thematic centers revisited. *Language arts*, 68(2), 108-113.

Sternberg, R. J., & Zhang, L. F. (2005). Styles of thinking as a basis for differentiating instruction. *Theory into Practice*, 44(3), 245-253.

Tomlinson, C. A. (2001a). *How to differentiate in mixed-ability classrooms* (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Tomlinson, C. A. (2001b). Differentiated instruction in the regular classroom: What does it mean? How does it look? *Understanding Our Gifted*, 14(1), 3- 6.

Tomlinson, C. A. (2003). *Fulfilling the promise of the differentiated classroom: Strategies and tools for responsive teaching*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Tyner, B. (2004). *Small-group reading instruction: A differentiated teaching model for beginning and struggling readers*. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Pages: 217 Price: \$21.00 ISBN: 1-57110-395-3

Reviewed by Stephen T. Schroth. Stephen was an elementary teacher for six years and a literacy coach for two for the Los Angeles Unified School District. In 2006 he completed his Ph.D. in Educational Psychology/Gifted Education and in September 2006 will begin teaching at Knox College

Feldman, Jay, M., López, Lisette, & Simon, Katherine, G. (2006). *Choosing Small: The Essential Guide to Successful High School Conversion*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Feldman, López, and Simon rise to the challenge of communicating how US public schools can drastically change structure to meet the educational needs of students, the professional needs of educators, and the often unanswered demands of local communities. It is a difficult task to write a guide book for so many diverse audiences in addition to delicately balancing funding sources with fair and gracious assessment, yet the authors manage these tasks well. The trade off to addressing multiple audiences is the repetitiveness of the book. The frustration of having concepts defined and delineated for the third and sometimes fourth time within less than 200 pages is balanced by realizing the importance of the message and the scope of the book. While academics may feel annoyance at the circular nature and organization of the arguments, a quick recall of the teaching cycle may ease their concern, as they realize how the authors use their knowledge of teaching to gently persuade the masses about a radical idea. The book reads quickly, so it is not unreasonable to re-read it. In doing so, one becomes conscious of the subtlety and finesse with which the authors nudge their audiences toward accepting the radical as both logical and common.

How does one address multiple audiences about something as political as transforming the goals and aims of public schooling? The authors walk a fine line staying clear of controversy despite the controversial topic, but in this retreat they manage to keep from isolating audiences. All three authors are practitioners or researchers at the administrative level in the small schooling movement, which helps them in understanding and conveying the big picture message of smaller schools. They utilize many different examples as well as raise numerous questions, which leaves open the overall question of how converted small schools may look, despite the multiple pages of rigid outlines that the featured schools were forced to follow. However enumerated and set the paths to success seem, they offer guidance to schools considering conversion as to the difficulty and complexity of process as well as to the constraints of funding sources. The rewards may be great, but the path seems to work best, according to the authors, when it is both quick and detailed, which is a difficult combination. The authors often suggest that seeing small schools is a key ingredient to understanding their benefits. The authors advocate that comprehensive schools considering conversion should visit converted smaller schools that are working well. They also suggest seeding already converted small schools as examples on transitioning campuses. Due to the economic limitations and the strength of the status quo in schooling, the authors should consider having a multi-media insert CD or DVD in future editions of the book so all readers can view examples of the converted small school experience at its best. The added technology cost would certainly balance funds of traveling to see a successfully converted small school in action.

The authors clearly communicate that they both think and believe smaller schools to be superior to comprehensive high schools at serving low performing students. While the different voices are not defined, one can tell that at least one of the authors has a more radical view about conversion, while the overall tone of the book is more focused on consensus building. Due to the multi-authored approach, the strength of the arguments fluctuates throughout the text, which at times makes the information seem conflicting. For example, a case is made that stakeholders who do not come on board are deficient. "Teachers and students may lack knowledge of what is involved in the change to small schools. This lack of knowledge can generate fear and strengthen loyalty to what exists. Fears may relate to concerns about, for example, a teacher's capacity to work well with new instructional methods, in a new work environment, or with new systems of being evaluated (p. 24)." This attitude that increased knowledge will logically lead to the correct choice of smaller schools exemplifies the authors' advocacy, which at times is strong; yet, an overall respect for extended research and open choice in regard to conversion outweighs and tempers pejorative views regarding other choices in schooling. As a whole, the book supplies in-depth questions and real-life achievements forming a constructive frame to examine school size in relation to successful outcomes.

For educators, this guidebook can re-affirm that we are professionals and that words like pedagogy, choice, and vision should be part of our everyday vocabulary. Many educators feel that schools have been reactive to testing pressures and externally imposed benchmarks and goals. The authors of *Choosing Small* offer an alternative. While the authors do not advocate for leaving standardized testing as a measuring model, they do offer additional routes to assessment, which are directed by internal curriculum choices. Many practitioner-oriented books ignore the trade-offs of increased professionalism, but Feldman et al address these exchanges in a straightforward, albeit positively shaded manner. Many schools profiled in this book created autonomous, small schools in which teachers' visions directly led the proposal and creative processes. In return for enacting their dream schools, many teachers were required to work additional hours without supplementary compensation.

For administrators of comprehensive high schools, the authors roll out both an invitation and a challenge. As

an increase in available funding paves the way for more small schools and as authors make the information about conversion accessible to the public via guidebooks and how-to manuals such as *Choosing Small*, administrators may join the movement or should be prepared to make a similarly accessible case in favor of large, comprehensive high schools. The building blocks to defend comprehensive high schools are embedded within the *Choosing Small* text since such manuals must argue against the established form of schooling. Administrators may wonder if increased funding, training, advanced expertise in high demand subject areas, and lower teacher/student ratios were added to their schools, could they achieve the same dream of successfully educating all students to the point of being college ready? The question is a good one and administrators of large high schools should seek funding to see if they can achieve similarly stated results.

Administrators of large high schools may have concerns that *Choosing Small* fails to present statistical information about how its students achieve in post-secondary education. It does not provide cross-comparative results to comprehensive high schools that are getting all the same treatments except for smallness, so it is hard to measure how successful these smaller schools are except in terms of internally set measures. The small school students may perform better on standardized exams, but can this be attributed to the size of the school or to the more global attention allowed by increased funding? The authors also ignore the body of literature about small rural schools that despite their small size do not find similar rates of success. Administrators need to realize that the concept of smaller schools is only part of the package that is used to target improvement. It may not be until after readers have reached the halfway point of the book that they begin to see how the small school conversion process is fundamentally and radically different from extra treatments of funding and training. Administrators who commit to reading the book from the preface to the appendices will at some point reach a moment of clear understanding of the movement and its significance for all public schools.

College-level educators need to incorporate the concept of smaller schools into teacher-methods classes. Like administrators, pre-service teachers need to realize that there are choices in the types of schools that are available to them. By recognizing choice, pre-service teachers may understand that they are choosing to teach in comprehensive high schools, instead of feeling consigned to it. For methods instructors, this should relieve some of the high level emotional concerns pre-service teachers express when they first realize the state of schooling in the US. In turn we can challenge students to read *Choosing Small*. Maybe this is the model of schooling to which some of our students will choose to commit their time and energies. Reading this book may re-inspire some of these new professionals with the ideal that teaching is a profession that can change the world.

University professors will appreciate how the authors masterfully dance around the delicate nature of acknowledging and answering funding sources that allow such grand-scale transformations, while subtly conceding the narrow limitations that accompany such finds. The book clearly states that few schools are able to transform based on internal re-allotment of time and funding. Additionally, college educators can recognize that curricular choices framed by external high-stakes testing legacies remain after the conversion. The external funding ensures the moderation of these transformations by requiring conversion schools to retain the same form of testing that existed in the comprehensive high schools to meet state and national standards.

For parents, students, and communities, the authors have a message that they can influence the path of their schools and take an active role in school changes. The guidebook's organization allows for parents to read only chapters that are relevant to their questions. Any chapter can be read independently with readers taking away the more global messages of the book. The reading level fluctuates dramatically throughout the book, which helps one understand the breadth of intended audiences. For example, the chapter aimed at administrators, "Essentials for Small School Leadership," in "Part Two: Founding Autonomous, Interconnected Schools," when evaluated via the Flesch Formula (1974), rates at 19.03, which would be considered a "very difficult post graduate" level. Chapter Two, entitled "Leading the Process" in "Part One: Toward a Common Purpose," scores at 101.085, which according to the Flesch Formula falls in the "very easy 4th to 5th grade" range. Chapter Eleven, "Student Choice Options," in "Part Three: Transition Planning" written primarily for a mixed audience of students, teachers, and administrators, scores 45.253 on Flesch at the "difficult college" level. This variance represents what is remarkable, magical, and at the same time difficult about the book. *Choosing Small* lives up to its lofty goal of radical educational change from its grand overarching plan to the subtle minutia of its word choice. This is why this book masterly meets the challenge of a guidebook for communities, parents, educators, schools, and administrators, but falls short of a research text. Since two of the three authors are researchers by training and profession, the educational research community would benefit from results-oriented articles aimed solely at the academic community.

Choosing Small is a guidebook that should be in the libraries of every large, urban US high school as well as in community libraries surrounding such schools. The book should be on the reading list of all educators and administrators in large schools, so that they can make and defend their choices to stay large or at least consider other alternatives. The book has limitations in that it cannot be all things to all audiences and its broad reach will touch many, but will also leave it open to criticism from members of all intended audiences. I

think the authors balance well in the cleverness of the book's construction and in the power of its student and teacher-centered message.

References

Flesch, R. F. (1974). *The art of readable writing; with the flesch readability formula*. New York: Harper & Row.

Pages: **\$30.00** Price: **224** ISBN: **0-7879-8027-7**

Reviewed by Emily Summers, Assistant Professor of Curriculum and Instruction, College of Education, Texas State University

Frisby, Craig L. & Reynolds, Cecil R., Editors. (2005). *Comprehensive Handbook of Multicultural School Psychology*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

The *Comprehensive Handbook of Multicultural School Psychology* is a resource written for both graduate students in school psychology and professionals in the field. The book is divided into seven content areas and includes both a subject and an author index. The editors discuss the scope of the book and the criterion for inclusion in the preface (pp. xx-xxii). Readers should note that the definition of multicultural as illustrated in Figure 1 includes the categories of race, ethnicity, language, social class, religion, and geography. This definition is in contrast to the one found in *Guidelines on Multicultural Education, Training, Research, Practice, and Organizational Change for Psychologists* (APA Council of Representatives, 2002), which includes gender, disability, and sexual orientation in addition to the categories used in this handbook.

The stated objectives of the *Comprehensive Handbook of Multicultural School Psychology* are also located in the preface. The editors state that the objectives are

1. to provide current knowledge on relevant multicultural issues
2. to discuss factors that can help explain observed facts
3. to present information of practical benefit to improving services.

The editors indicate that Part II (Cultural variation with American subgroups), Part III (Educational foundations), Part IV (Psychological foundations), and Part VII (International school psychology) deal with the first objective of providing current knowledge on relevant issues. Part II is a collection of articles containing mostly demographic information on population groups. Part III consists of articles relating educational foundations to multiculturalism. Ochoa (pp. 329-358) has an excellent chapter on bilingual education. Part IV covers topics ranging from delinquency to religiosity. Part VII covers school psychology in other countries. Oakland, Faulkner, and Annan (pp. 1081-1106) present a good comparison of the history of school psychology in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States.

No specific sections are identified with the second objective. The editors have tried to meet this objective by including experts from a wide range of fields, including cultural anthropology, behavior genetics, political science, history, and sociology and social psychology. The list of contributors gives the university affiliation but not the academic department of the authors. Without this information it is difficult to discover which fields are represented by the contributors.

The third objective of improving services deals with assessment, intervention, training, and legal issues. The editors indicate that Part V (Testing, assessment, and intervention issues) and Part VI (Training and legal issues) deal with the third objective. Part VI deals with practical issues. Oakland and Gellegos (pp. 1048-1078) provide a good discussion of legal issues related to multicultural students

Part V deals with the controversial subjects of assessment and intervention. Readers who disagree with the assertion that intelligence varies as a function of race will not accept Reynolds and Carson (pp 795-823) claim that racial differences in intelligence are well documented. Readers who wish to understand Reynolds's philosophy should read his article in *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law* (2000) in which he explains his view that intelligence is determined by an interaction of race and environment. For a different viewpoint on the role of race in intelligence testing see Fish (2002).

Part I does not deal directly with the stated objectives. It consists of three articles that are labeled as commentaries and discuss the definition and scope of multicultural school psychology. Two articles written by the second editor on the politics of multiculturalism follow the commentaries. These articles are also commentaries but are not labeled as such.

This is the first handbook that deals exclusively with multicultural school psychology. Although the editors have included contributors whose viewpoints are different from their own, important views were not included in this handbook. See Ingraham & Meyers (2000) for a broader view of multicultural school psychology issues.

Despite its title this book is more an edited volume than a handbook. Most school psychologists will not need a copy on their desk, but the book contains some well-written chapters that deserve a spot on most academic library shelves. I recommend this book for academic libraries.

References

American Psychological Association. (2002). Guidelines on multicultural education, training, research, practice, and organizational change for psychologists. Accessed March 10, 2006 from <http://www.apa.org/pi/multiculturalguidelines/definitions.html>.

Ingraham, C. L. and Meyers, J. (2000). Introduction to multicultural and cross-cultural consultation in schools: Cultural diversity issues in school consultation. *School Psychology Review*, 29(3). pp.315-320.

Fish, J. M. (2002). A scientific approach to understanding race and intelligence. In Jefferson M. Fish (Ed.) *Race and Intelligence*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. pp. 1-30.

Reynolds, C.R. (2000). Why is psychometric research on bias in mental testing so often ignored? *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 6. pp.144-150.

Pages: **1176** Price: **\$95.00** ISBN: **0471266159**

Reviewed by Cynthia Crosser a Social Science and Humanities Reference Librarian/Education and Psychology Bibliographer at the University of Maine. In addition to her M.S. in Library Studies from Florida State University, she has an M.A. in Linguistics from the University of Florida with a specialization in language acquisition and an extensive background in developmental psychology.

Gregory, Eve, Long, Susi, & Volk, Dinah, Editors (2004). *Many Pathways to Literacy: Young Children Learning with Siblings, Grandparents, Peers, and Communities*. New York: RoutledgeFalmer.

Many pathways to literacy: Young children learning with siblings, grandparents, peers, and communities describes the process of how children develop literacy in their environment. The language and structure of this book is very reader-friendly. I read it as I was starting a new early literacy project. My primary focus is family literacy, working with families of preschoolers in Head Start programs. I searched for a solid foundation and framework to support my work. The arrival of this book was timely. The book provides me with a clear definition and broader view of family literacy, especially in diverse populations. It guides my project implementation such as conducting family literacy workshops, home visits, and other programs.

The contributors use ethnographic methodology to study children from diverse backgrounds, such as Puerto Rican, Pakistani, Anglo, Bangladeshi-British, white working-class, Mexican, African, Syrian, Palestinian, Chinese, Turkish, and Greek children from America or England. The findings indicate the richness, resourcefulness, and the literacy skills of children in their *everyday lives* outside of the classroom—across the different ethnic and social economic backgrounds.

All sixteen chapters examine how children from diverse backgrounds gain literacy through interaction with different "*invisible teachers*," such as siblings, grandparents, friends, and other community members in their lives. The effect is to leave readers with an understanding that children's literacy learning goes beyond the walls of the school and the home.

In the book, the term "syncretism" is used to describe children's literacy learning in their everyday activities. It originates from the field of anthropology as researchers study how Caribbean Africans blend their own traditions with those of European Christians into a new Christianity. Over the years, this concept has been adopted in different fields. In education, it means the creative transformational learning process in which people reinvent their culture as they draw on a variety of resources (Shaw & Stewart, 1994). In this book, the editors and contributors use this term to describe how literacy learning happens in children's lives. It is a syncretic process. The authors clearly state their belief that young children are active members of different language and learning communities. In a rich literacy environment, children actively engage in cultural literacy practices and through the blending process, they create new meanings and learn literacy.

This edited collection is divided into three parts: "The family context: siblings and grandparents", "Friends as teachers", and "Learning in the community settings". In the first part, there are five chapters which focus on an analysis of children's literacy learning with siblings and grandparents. For example, Volk and de Acosta studied two Puerto Rican children in their home settings. The literacy learning was co-constructed and occurs through children's interaction with the older siblings. The literacy was blended and reinvented as the children drew their experiences from school, religious texts, from Spanish and English, from US and Puerto Rico, and

so on. Through the process, children develop new skills. Chapter 3, by Drury, is a study of a 4-year-old, Pahari-speaking Pakistani preschooler and her brother, a toddler in their home. Her oral interaction with other children at the preschool was quite different from her interaction with her family at home. She was in charge of being her brother's teacher, displaying her English ability while syncretizing home and school learning contexts. However, her English abilities were largely unknown to her teachers at school.

In Part 2, "Friends as Teachers," there are 5 chapters. It focuses on peer teaching. For example, in Chapter 8, Ming, a 6-year-old shows her classmate Amina how to write in Chinese. Ming uses the curriculum and pedagogy she learned at her Chinese Saturday school to teach her peer, Amina. During the course of learning, these two children exchange their experiences and compare the Chinese and English systems. Through the interaction with each other, they gain new knowledge. They were challenged to think about different ways in which the Chinese graphic symbol systems might operate. Vygotsky's scaffolding method is evident in the section. An experienced child serves as a "young" teacher and works with the peer to enhance their learning in their interested topic. It stimulates children's cognitive growth and introduces new ideas through social interaction, which are then internalized for individual learning.

In the third part, "Learning in the community settings," 5 chapters are included. These chapters demonstrate how crucial the community is in children's literacy development. It is beyond school and family settings. For example, McMillon and Edwards analyze the enriched literacy learning of children in an African American church. They find that learning is beyond religion itself. As a result of attending Saturday classes for Bible study, children learn how to *read* the Bible, *recite* passages, and *sing*. Much of what these children learn from the church is infused into other settings, such as acting in plays or participating in spelling bees.

This book shows readers how to view literacy from a nontraditional angle, which takes into account children's *everyday literacy related practices* in their literacy development. Well-documented cases are provided in each chapter to clearly illustrate their perspectives about children's literacy learning. The volume offers theoretical as well as powerful case studies and reveals an invisible form of literacy learning that occurs in children's everyday life. It is a timely addition to the early childhood field. The book offers an excellent range of chapters covering various cultures with an international team of authors. It serves as an outstanding foundation resource for educators and related professionals to build a systematic perspective to work with children and their families.

As National Research Council points out, one of the key principles for literacy instruction is to start *where the learner is* (National Academy of Science, 1999). Understanding the influences of children's literacy skills from out-side-of the school is important to inform us of who they are. Additionally, it provides insights into how to assist young children in learning to read, write, speak, listen, think and use language. If we value home and community's literacy influence on children, we must consider how to use our knowledge of children's culture and everyday literacy practices—to incorporate them into school literacy learning. It will make learning more meaningful to the children. According to Purcell-Gates (2002), supporting children's culture and language will help students develop the ability to code-switch into the dominant language and culture. Teachers who fail to recognize and value the home culture and language will limit children's learning (Wynne, 2002).

This book demonstrates that literacy development is a lot richer and more multidimensional than what is often assumed. It is especially for children whose "school literacy" performance is not up to the teacher's standards. These children, outside the mainstream may not demonstrate literacy in school-sanctioned ways at school, but demonstrate their literacy skills and engagement in rich literacy activities at home or in community settings. I strongly recommend that researchers and practitioners read this book. It is also excellent reading for teacher candidates to study and have an enriched discussion about how children learn in an educational course. This book challenges readers' thoughts as to what counts as literacy and expands the concept of who counts as teachers of literacy. The book contains breadth and depth. Readers will definitely find the studies useful and informative.

References

National Academy of Science, National Research Council (1999). *How people learn: Brain, mind, experience, and school*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press. Available online at <http://www.nap.edu/books/0309070368/html/>

Purcell-Gates, V. (2002). "...As soon as she opened her mouth! Issues of language, literacy, and power". In L. Delpit & J. Dowdy (Eds.). *The skin that we speak: Thoughts on language and culture in the classroom*. New York: The New Press.

Shaw, R. & Stewart, C. (1994). Introduction: Problemizing syncretism. In C. Stewart & R. Shaw (Eds.). *Syncretism/Anti-syncretism: The politics of synthesis*. London: Routledge.

Wynn, J. (2002). We don't talk right. You ask him. In L. Delpit & J. Dowdy (Eds.). *The skin that we speak: Thoughts on language and culture in the classroom*. New York: The New Press.

Reviewed by Grace Hui-Chen Huang, Assistant Professor in the Department of Teacher Education at Cleveland State University in Ohio. Her scholarly interests are in the areas of child care, early childhood family education, family literacy, and urban family education

Hahn, Liong-Shin (2005). *New Mexico Mathematics Contest Problem Book*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

Liong-Shin Hahn ran the New Mexico Mathematics Contests for a decade, from 1990 to 1999. In this book he has compiled 138 of his favourite problems from his contest files, with 72 problems classified as "Number Theory and Algebra," and the remaining 66 as "Geometry and Combinatorics." The five appendices contain a complete listing of all of the questions and answers from both first and final rounds of all contests held during the period of Hahn's reign, the questions and answers for the calculus competitions held in New Mexico in the late '80s, and a series of "New Year Puzzles" – each based on one of the numbers from 1985 to 2016

Though some puzzles might inspire an interest in mathematics – the very first puzzle is about the number of ways to break a chocolate bar, for example – the majority are designed for those students already keen on mathematics. There are many questions like #47: "Suppose a cubic polynomial $x^3 + px^2 + qx + 72$ is divisible by both $x^2 + ax + b$ and $x^2 + bx + a$... find the roots of the cubic polynomial." The solution to #47 takes over a page. Challenging for many teenagers, certainly, but hardly likely to appeal to those without a prior strong interest in the area. Many of the more interesting puzzles for the relative layman are to be found in the New Year Puzzles at the end of the book – this one for 1987, for example: "Fill in the blanks with digits other than 1, 9, 8, 7 so that the equality becomes valid: B1B9B / BBB = 87."

The book is very much WYSIWYG – What You See Is What You Get. There are no real gems that stand out – to this reviewer at least – but the problems are of a high standard throughout. The questions are always well constructed and unambiguous, and the solutions are clearly explained

Mathematics contests have a long and proud tradition, with roots dating back to the 19th century in Hungary. The problems in this book provide ideal practice for any high school students seeking to take part in similar contests, be they in Budapest or Boise.

Pages: 202 Price: \$29.95 ISBN: 0-8263-3534-9

Reviewed by Tim S. Roberts, Senior Lecturer with the Faculty of Business and Informatics at Central Queensland University in Australia. He has edited three books and published over 30 articles on various aspects of online learning, and runs the Online Collaborative Learning in Higher Education web site at <http://clp.cqu.edu.au>, and the Assessment in Higher Education web site at <http://ahe.cqu.edu.au>. He also has an interest in logic and mathematics, and in 2003 discovered two new magic knights tours, the first new tours found since 1988, and the first irregular tours found since 1936. He has recently been wasting a large amount of time trying to solve the Dorabella cipher.

Hatch, Thomas (2006). *Into the Classroom: Developing the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Teaching is widely viewed as a practice that "happens" within a classroom, within a school. Teachers teach and students learn. This is the perceived role of classroom teachers, a perception that has not changed much since the formalization of teacher training began with the establishment of Normal Schools, the precursors to modern Colleges of Education. Once the profession of teaching became educationalized, or governed by academic institutions and practices, teachers became the product of a system that trained them and then sent them into schools to teach. Once this training had been completed they were deemed to have been prepared to teach and that was that. This formalization of teacher education spawned a new breed of academics; those who professed the ways of teaching and undertook research in higher education institutions were a breed apart from the teacher in the classroom. It was not for many decades that the notion of "teacher as researcher" became credible and worthy of the attention of academic colleges of Education.

In his latest book, *Into the Classroom*, Hatch falls squarely in favor of those who advocate the need for teachers to become researchers and critics of their own practice. Working through The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Hatch and his colleagues work with a number of teachers from across the country to examine classroom practice and to build a body of practitioner based research that would prove useful not only to those undertaking the self-study, but to a wider audience of teachers and teacher educators.

This book is aimed at teachers and those involved with the training of teachers and educational research. The text focuses heavily on what teachers themselves do and how this can be examined *in situ*, by the practitioner—as opposed to a "researcher" from a higher education institution. The book advocates for teachers to recognize that they hold the ability to examine their own practice and to critically evaluate it as a means of working toward increasingly effective practices.

The format of the text makes this an accessible read, one that makes sense and is devoid for the most part of theoretical and abstract ideas, which often make educational research impenetrable to those without higher education in such areas. The book has six chapters and a foreword by Lee Shulman, a researcher well respected in the field of education and another champion of teachers taking a role in examining their own profession. In the first few chapters Hatch sets out his stall, giving the reader the reasoning behind why there has been reluctance on the part of teachers to become involved in research as well as how this is an area that differs within teaching compared to the other professions so often compared to that of the teacher (law, medicine etc.). The book then moves on to highlight case studies of teachers who have worked with Hatch to examine their practice. He shows how this has been an effective tool in allowing them to work through problems they identified with their own teaching.

The case studies make for very interesting reading, particularly for anyone who is, or has been, a teacher, as they demonstrate how those in the profession can easily identify areas they would like to examine and improve. The text illustrates that this is a real possibility for a working teacher. These case studies, and the commentary that Hatch provides to go along with them, offer up a compelling case for the full involvement of teachers to act as primary researchers in their own classrooms. The stories told in this book should act as inspiration for any teacher who wishes to become involved in educational research without necessarily taking higher degrees or leaving the classroom.

Into the Classroom is the sort of "shot in the arm" that teachers and the profession need to allow them to become more involved in the destiny of the profession and to take a greater sense of ownership over the practice of such a crucial and important institution in society, the school.

Pages: 120 Price: \$29.00 ISBN: 0-7879-8108-7

Reviewed by Daniel Kirk, a doctoral student in English Education in the Department of Language and Literacy Education at the University of Georgia. Daniel gained a BA (Hons) degree in English, a postgraduate teacher certification and a Master of Arts (Education) degree from the University of Sunderland, UK. He has taught secondary English and Literature in the UK, Qatar, Bermuda and Dubai. His interests focus on the preparation of new teachers in the area of secondary English/Language Arts and he is working towards beginning a comparative international study of teacher preparation courses between the United States, United Kingdom and United Arab Emirates. He can be reached at: dankirk@uga.edu.

MacKinnon, Fiona J. D. & Associates, editors. (2004) *Rentz's Student Affairs Practice in Higher Education*. Third edition. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.

The contributors to *Rentz's Student Affairs Practice in Higher Education* simultaneously provide a comprehensive overview of the student affairs profession and specific information unique to the various functional areas encompassed within the student affairs umbrella. In a sense, the contributors completed a remarkable task and offer readers a far-reaching introduction to student affairs practice. Yet, the text's value is also limited by the same breadth that makes the text distinctive.

The text can be divided into three primary sections. The first two chapters provide a digest of educational philosophies and the historical development of American higher education. The main body of the book is a series of chapters individually focused on a functional area of student affairs. Finally, the book concludes with a chapter concerning the social role of the professional.

The two introductory chapters form an important basis for the entire book. Chapter 1 is an excellent introduction to philosophical traditions such as Neo-Thomism and Existentialism. A section listing a series of questions that can be asked to determine one's own philosophy seems especially useful for those new to the profession. Still, a single chapter on philosophy can do little more than inform the reader that philosophy matters in higher education, although one should not underestimate the value of that simple lesson. Chapter two includes coverage of Colonial education through the modern research university. An understanding of American higher education's rich historical legacy is tremendously valuable to student affairs professionals and the chapter provides a truly outstanding outline of the relevant history. Once again, however, the book is limited by its breadth absent of depth. For example, the Yale Report defending classical education, the development of specialty schools (e.g., US Military Academy and MIT), the Dartmouth case separating state and private colleges and the Morrill Acts, which led to land-grant and research institutions, are covered in a

single page.

With the foundation for student affairs covered in the first two chapters, the next eleven chapters are each focused on a unique area of student affairs. Together, these chapters are a fine overview of the most common functions of student affairs work. Yet, they lack the depth necessary for anything more than the most elementary understanding of the functions. The chapters give the impression of a dissertation abstract or the Occupational Outlook Handbook. For example, the ways technology and fundraising are changing the roles of Career Services directors are covered with a two sentence paragraph.

As career centers have become increasingly sophisticated in the use of computer technology, directors face complex decisions about which database management systems, hardware, local area networks, and software to purchase and/or update. To supplement shrinking budgets, many directors solicit donations from corporations and foundations and funding from other outside agencies. (p. 134)

A good idea incorporated into this book is the inclusion of a "Technology Resources" section at the end of most chapters. These sections include links to a variety of online sites related to the chapter's content. Most of the sites were useful resources, although some links were no longer valid just two years after the book's publication. The bibliography of the book was also rather dated. While the book was published in 2004, relatively few of the sources were published even as recently as 2000. If the purpose of the book was to merely introduce the concepts of student affairs, the relevance of sources would be more important than the dates of sources. The book's title includes "practice," however, and more recent data are necessary for the reader to become familiar with current practice.

Rentz's Student Affairs Practice in Higher Education concludes with a chapter on the social role of the professional. The chapter reads like a lesson on social work, as much of the content is focused on progressive issues, such as "working to change institutional structures and policies that perpetuate oppression" (p. 389). Affirmative action is promoted along with "educating all students...to be effective advocates for their own and for others' liberation" (p. 389). Ironically, the cover of the book could serve as an object lesson for this chapter. Of the six students on the cover, all are white, five are women and four are blond. Further, they all appear to be of traditional college age and they dress like the cast from an Old Navy commercial.

While *Rentz's Student Affairs Practice in Higher Education* is a common text for introductory student affairs courses, I fail to see enough value in this book to justify its cost for students. That is not to say the book cannot find a place in many professional libraries. Student affairs positions are frequently held by individuals who did not graduate from student affairs programs. For those entering the profession without the specific student affairs training, this book could be an excellent first resource. *Rentz's Student Affairs Practice in Higher Education* does provide a good introduction to the profession and wonderfully demonstrates student affairs as an important part of the educational missions of colleges and universities.

Pages: 422 Price: \$95.95 (hardcover) \$65.95 (paper) ISBN: 0-398-07468-2 (hardcover) 0-398-07469-0 (paper)

Reviewed by Bruce M. Sabin, EdD, Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Assistant Professor of Political Science at Webber International University, Babson Park, FL.

Mondragón, John B. & Stapleton, Ernest S. (2005) *Public Education in New Mexico*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.

The United States is changing. Here in Detroit, students come together representing many different languages, religions and cultures. Detroit, like many other Midwestern cities, has not always been so multicultural, and has struggled with its changing demographic nature. Diversity is increasing in our educational systems across the country, and New Mexico, because of its unique cultural heritage, has much to share about how to adapt to diversity with a careful appreciation for differences.

In *Public Education in New Mexico*, the authors' main goal was to help readers understand the complicated forces which have shaped public education in New Mexico. For example, New Mexicans have grappled with issues of diversity since before the Spanish settled there in 1540, and it has not always been an easy process. The early history of education in New Mexico shows strong outside influence from Spain, Mexico and the United States, which have all flown their flags there. Sometimes the goals of the New Mexican people have been different from those of the nation in power. The text presents the conflicts with careful documentation of both the larger political forces at work, and personal stories of individuals.

One example of these complex forces took place when New Mexico was applying for statehood. Pressure

was exerted on local educational systems to enforce an English dominated curriculum contrary to the goals of local communities in which other languages (from Spanish to the many different American Indian languages) were spoken. Over time, changes have resulted from local people gradually gaining a seat at the bargaining table. As local representation has increased, there have been some unique innovations in New Mexican education. One has been the increase in the availability of bilingual education in Spanish and English, as well as Navajo and English, followed by other initiatives that celebrate the unique cultures present in New Mexico.

A central argument of the authors is the importance of such community involvement in the public schools. Such involvement has led to the creation of beneficial funding structures. One helpful funding structure allows for local education of American Indian students within their school communities, instead of forced enrollment in the boarding school system. Another funding structure guarantees equal opportunity to students regardless of wealth differences in local school districts across New Mexico. According to the authors, studies have shown this formula to be one of the most equitable in the nation. It was developed because New Mexican communities can vary greatly in terms of economics and geography. Some communities are agricultural, while others emphasize mining. Some cater to tourism while others have attracted federal research facilities. The authors argue that this formula should continue to be used despite current pressures to cut costs and move to more centralized control of educational services.

The authors are uniquely qualified to make this argument. Both have had distinguished careers as educators and administrators within the New Mexico Public School system. They have also served as professors in the College of Education at the University of New Mexico. This book documents materials they used to teach a graduate course on the history of public education in New Mexico. The book reflects their research, plus that of colleagues from the Educational Leadership Program, students, and scholars like Tom Wiley. An extensive bibliography offers sources for further information.

This book fills a gap in the literature to explain the financial, legislative, historic and personal stories that influence education in New Mexico. Interspersed within the narrative are short "cuentos" (stories) and historical documents which provide entertaining clarification and description of the New Mexican educational landscape. The book would serve as an excellent textbook for New Mexican educators or those hoping to relocate to the "land of enchantment." Furthermore, its discussion of New Mexico's innovative attempts to represent the diverse interests of its constituents equitably will be of interest to a national audience.

Although it may have been helpful to have more specific documentation regarding the sources of some of the stories, this approach met the goal stated by the authors who wrote, "We believe the oral history and the tales told by our elders illustrate and give life to the facts of history. Therefore, this time with you will be punctuated with tales, most fact, some fiction, to bring life to the characters and events surrounding the history of public education in the state of New Mexico" (p. V).

Pages: **256** Price: **\$22.95** ISBN: **0-8263-3655-8**

Reviewed by Laura Woodward, Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. Laura serves as a learning specialist at the Academic Success Center, and is enrolled as a Ph.D. candidate in the department of Social Psychology. Laura grew up in New Mexico and is a product of its public educational system.

Morris, Darrell (2005) *The Howard Street Tutoring Manual: Teaching At-Risk Readers in the Primary Grades*. Second edition. New York: Guilford.

Now in its second edition, *The Howard Street Tutoring Manual* is a comprehensive and concise guide to working with at-risk readers. Because poor readers risk academic failure across the curriculum, interventions such as Reading Recovery (<http://www.readingrecovery.org/>), the America Reads program (<http://www.ed.gov/inits/americareads/index.html>), and volunteer tutoring programs like that at Howard Street have emerged as pivotal in the lives of thousands of young people.

The Howard Street Tutoring Manual is targeted for volunteer tutors who work approximately two hours a week with students who are at a variety of reading ability levels. This book takes the reader step by step, not only through the tutoring session itself, but provides useful diagnostic information prior to beginning sessions, and commentary in interpreting progress once sessions begin. Author Dr. Darrell Morris, professor of education and the director of the Reading Clinic at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina, provides guidance for tutors working with readers considered to be at Emergent, Fledgling, and Late First-Second Grade levels.

After the introduction, the book moves into a reading assessment that has procedures for administering, grading, and interpreting reading ability ranging from early first grade to fourth grade. The assessment provides sections in word recognition, oral reading, spelling, conceptual understanding, and alphabet

knowledge. Each section provides scoring and interpretation information, and reproducible materials for the student and assessment administrator.

Once the child's reading level has been determined based on their initial reading assessment, the tutor can use the chapters on Emergent, Fledgling, and Late First-Second Grade level readers as a guide. Each of these chapters has a similar structure, designed as a case study, with lesson recommendations, book lists, and activities to try. The tutoring sessions for Emergent readers are organized as 35-minute lessons that include 1) rereading books, 2) word study, 3) sentence writing, and 4) introducing a new book. The tutoring sessions for Fledgling readers are organized with 1) guided reading, 2) word study, 3) easy read, 4) read-to, and optional writing exercises that are designed to fit into a 35-45-minute tutoring session. Finally, the chapter on Late First-Second Grade readers includes sessions that are designed to be 45-minutes in length, and include 1) guided reading, 2) easy reading, and 3) read-to. At each stage, there is a focus on vocabulary development, reading fluency, and comprehension. There is also a nicely paced sense of time within each chapter, as the case study unfolds week by week, providing updates on the child's progress.

As a former reading tutor with at-risk first graders, I found this book to be a comprehensive refresher in the structure and function of tutoring sessions. I think this book will be quite useful for tutors, and can be a handy reference for trainers in tutoring programs. There is a great deal of useful material in the 243 pages of the book, although the user will likely need additional references and guidance when tutoring. The *Manual* assimilates a tremendous amount of information in one volume, and for a volunteer tutor who may not be trained in education, it will be a useful reference. As the introduction states, it is important to develop a supervised volunteer tutoring program in which the supervisor is a strong "hub" and has a firm knowledge of the beginning reading processes, experience in teaching beginning readers to read, and a willingness to work with adult tutors by serving a mentoring role. It would not be good management to expect a tutor to use this book without the guidance and support of someone who has helped readers.

The *Manual* will be most useful for those working with readers who are just emerging, up to 1st-2nd grade level; however this could conceivably apply across many different ages. In such an event, the recommended books at the end of each chapter may need to be adapted for content when used with older children. Nonetheless, the word sort exercises, structuring of optional writing exercises and spelling patterns are applicable for any age student. This book is one that is immediately applicable for use in a tutoring setting. There are smatterings of empirical research to support the recommendations, and they complement the personal case-approach style used throughout most of the text. Overall, the book is a well-researched, incredibly useful resource for working with at-risk readers, complete with materials, books to use, and guidance in assessing a student's progress. At the end, I was left a bit wanting for a conclusion to the book that was as helpful as chapter 1, where Morris carefully explained the tutoring model described in *The Howard Street Tutoring Manual*. Without such a conclusion, the *Manual* seems to end abruptly. Despite the ending, I see tremendous utility in the material that is there, and think the text would be useful for tutors, and potentially teachers looking for insight into the diagnosis of early readers.

Pages: 243 Price: \$30.00 ISBN: 1-59385-124-3

Reviewed by Leslie Forstadt, Ph.D. candidate at The University of Iowa in Educational Psychology. Leslie worked as a reading tutor for the America Reads program in the Iowa City Public Schools. She received her B.A. in Psychology from Smith College, and is receiving her teaching certification in elementary education in addition to her doctorate.

Permuth, Steve & Mawdsley, Ralph D. (2006). *Research Methods for Studying Legal Issues in Education*. Dayton, OH: Education Law Association.

The authors begin this book with a call for multiple research methods that provide depth and texture often missing from mere traditional legal research. They admit that the book provides a limited analysis of various research methodologies but aim for a contemporary view of research and law in a context of rich meaning. The audience includes law students, professors, graduate students in education, "practicing attorneys, school administrators, etc." I suggest that etc. can include teachers at various levels. Everyone should have a basic understanding of law and the research method could be used by teachers for their own research or as class projects.

The book succeeds in both its stated purposes and its audience. Where the analysis is limited, the authors provide significant references. After Chapter 3 "Qualitative Research Redux" the authors provide substantial references broken into categories of traditional qualitative, new paradigm/action research, discourse analysis, ethnography, case study and more. This same quality holds true for the chapters on quantitative research, the continua of disciplined inquiry, and policy research.

Readers will appreciate the way the qualitative research chapter begins with a discussion of case law in

various education subjects and how research might be used to increase our understanding of law and the society it is supposed to serve. Every chapter leads the reader from the very basics to a discussion of practical uses and higher level issues.

Even practicing attorneys will be interested in the review of traditional legal research methods. For those new to legal research, chapter two is a valuable resource in locating and understanding the law. Teachers and students at high school level and above should have some experience in legal research. Legal research provides a deeper understanding of the complexity of legal development and a deeper understanding of our system of government. This book is a useful resource in these regards.

Experienced attorneys can appreciate the chapter on technological tools. Our resources have changed substantially over the last 20 years. The authors even provide nice flow charts for conducting research with Findlaw and Westlaw. Useful web sites are suggested.

The policy studies section is applauded for dealing with values, paradigms, and disciplines. The values section would be improved with examples of values of import in education and not merely their policy manifestations. It is nice to see that the positivist world view is not presumed the norm. Researchers and consumers of research need to understand various perspectives and the book provides some nice summaries.

The concluding chapter deals with legal writing. The language of the law is demystified with useful charts for common terms, case actions, rules of procedure, and some abbreviations.

The book meets its stated purposes and recognizes its own limitations. This is a book that is useful for a good number of persons: law students, lawyers, professors, researchers, administrators, and teachers.

Pages: 226 Price: \$43.75 ISBN: 1-56534-122-8

Reviewed by Michael W. Simpson, J.D., M. Ed., an Oklahoma mixed-blood lawyer and educator currently studying educational policy at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Email: mwsjd85@aol.com

Senge, Peter; Scharmer, C. Otto; Jaworski, Joseph & Flowers, Betty Sue (2004). *Presence: An Exploration of Profound Change in People, Organizations, and Society*. Cambridge, MA: The Society for Organizational Learning.

As organizational leaders, we first became familiar with Peter Senge through his seminal work, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (1990), in which he conceptualized the five disciplines of learning organizations, including personal mastery, mental models, systems thinking, team learning, and a shared vision. Subsequently, Senge joined with other scholars (Nelda Cambron-McCabe, Timothy Lucas, Bryan Smith, Janis Dutton, and Art Kleiner) to suggest specific strategies for transforming schools into learning organizations, in *Schools that Learn: A Fifth Discipline Fieldbook for Educators, Parents, and Everyone Who Cares About Education* (2000).

In the process of transforming our schools into professional learning communities, many of us have sought Senge and colleagues' (2000) wise counsel. Along the way, we celebrated our successes, adjusted our practices, and persisted through the trying times. Despite our comprehensive understandings of change processes and our tireless efforts, many of us have struggled mightily, frequently questioned our resolve, and sometimes doubted our capacity to complete these vital journeys. Hence, it is time for us to return to Senge and his colleagues for further guidance.

In his latest book, *Presence: An Exploration of Profound Change in People, Organizations, and Society*, Senge joined colleagues C. Otto Scharmer, Joseph Jowarski, and Betty Sue Flowers in sharing their individual and collective stories of self-examination and transformation through which each became *present*, or assumed the required state of mind for leading a sustainable transformation effort. In so doing, each author led, or helped others lead, his or her organization to previously unimagined levels of excellence.

In the first step of the *presencing* process, termed *suspending*, the authors challenged transformational leaders to identify the limits of their thinking, perceiving, and seeing. Herein, leaders come to realize that "most change initiatives that end up going nowhere don't fail because they lack grand vision and noble intentions. They fail because people can't see the reality they face" (p. 29). Essentially, we as leaders, and those we lead, are limited by our experiences, assumptions, and commonly held attitudes, which are rarely challenged or called into question. In order to identify our current realities, we must quiet our minds, carefully choose our words, and change our frames of reference from, "here is what I think," to "here is what has led me to see things this way" (p. 33). This type of thinking requires profound courage and collegial trust as

leaders demonstrate the power of disclosing their limits.

Once leaders have identified the realities that they face, they are prepared to *redirect* their thinking by clearly focusing on the generative processes within their organizations. Here, they become aware of the fact that their organization's most pressing problems lie not out there or within the system, but in their persistent thought patterns and the limits of their attitudes and experiences. In order to accomplish this, we as transformational leaders must learn to patiently ask questions that will lead us to understand the patterns in our past failures and work to alleviate the thinking and behaving that led us to our current set of circumstances. An important question to consider at this stage in the process is, "What am I doing—in my actions, thoughts and feelings—to maintain these patterns as they are?" (p. 50).

The next steps are perhaps the most challenging, and likely the most important, *letting go* and *letting come*. In letting go, Senge and colleagues call on transformational leaders to surrender their perceived and expected needs to control. Here again, leaders become consciously aware of their thoughts, thus allowing them to experience a comfortable, almost effortless flow in leading their organizations toward excellence. Herein lies the letting come, or leading according to a higher purpose rather than a tedious set of tasks. At this point, Senge and colleagues inform us of the need to forgo our tendencies to focus on the disconnected parts of our organizations, and to begin focusing on the interconnected wholes, thus enabling leaders to overcome the unintended consequences of incessantly imposing solutions to the symptoms of rather than the actual sources of persistent problems.

Having identified our current realities, recognized the generative processes within our organizations, relinquished the need to control, and initiated a focus on wholes, we as transformational leaders have *crystallized* our intentions, or learned to see our "reality more clearly, without preconceptions or judgments" (p. 136). This realization allows leaders to act decisively and with clear intent by "tapping into and focusing on larger intentions" (p. 141). When this occurs, leaders move from "producing results to encouraging the growth of people who produce results" (p. 145).

The next step in the presencing process is *prototyping*. Here, leaders come to understand that it is only through trial and error, by doing and failing and trying again, that their creative, and perhaps most effective, solutions can manifest themselves. At this point, leaders become less sensitive to criticisms and pressures, instead learning to "listen to and set aside negative reactions" that naturally come with "not [always] getting it right" (p. 152). In acting and failing with a sense of purpose, creative leaders learn to listen to their inner voices, and to act according to the resulting intuition.

Finally, the seven-step process, defined by Senge and colleagues as *The Theory of the U*, comes to fruition in the *institutionalization* step, wherein the presencing process moves from a good idea to a natural way of leading, perceiving, and behaving. According to the authors' research, transformational leaders who realize this complete sense of presence behave according to their instincts, which are directed by a higher purpose, and perpetuated through an ability to see wholes rather than parts.

Packed with guiding ideas and practical examples, *Presence: An Exploration of Profound Change in People, Organizations, and Society* serves as a terrific resource for leadership teams as they work collectively to achieve NCLB standards. The authors' comprehensive writing styles and references to literature beyond the educational community provide opportunities for deep reflection in study groups composed of educational leaders, those charged with preparing future leaders, and teams of classroom teachers.

References

Senge, P.M. (1990) *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*. New York: Doubleday.

Senge, P.M., Cambron-McCabe, N., Lucas, T., Smith, B., Dutton, J., & Kleiner, A. (2000) *Schools that learn: A fifth discipline fieldbook for educators, parents, and everyone who cares about education*. New York: Doubleday.

Pages: **289** Price: **\$27.00** ISBN: **038551624X**

Reviewed by Rod Rock, Ed.D., Principal, Unionville-Sebewaing Area Elementary School, Unionville, Michigan

Siljander, Raymond P. & Reina, Jacqueline A. & Siljander, Roger A. (2005). *Literacy Tutoring Handbook: A Guide to Teaching Children and Adults to Read and Write*. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.

Authors Siljander and Reina offer practical advice for organizations interested in starting or refining an adult tutoring program. The title and cover image including a child are somewhat misleading because most of the material in the book really addresses adult literacy concerns and how to help adults become functionally literate. Under this focus the authors have offered a wide range of instructional material which can be used to address the adult focus.

The authors begin with a look at the current literacy problem in the United States. The reader is provided with an array of statistical data outlining the literacy rates in the US, causes of illiteracy and the cost burden placed on society due to the problem. The authors do an excellent job describing the differences between literacy and intelligence. The introductory material is provided to help tutors understand why tutoring is needed and the many circumstances that may lead to the lack of opportunity for less fortunate adults to learn to read effectively.

The remainder of the book focuses on program rationale, tutor reference material and teaching strategies, and program administration. There are brief descriptions of individual lesson plans as well as a review of phonemic awareness, phonics, writing and grammar. The Appendix contains material to support tutoring practices such as, books and web sites that are available to tutors (many authoritative sites and books are absent from the list, for example The National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL) and National Institute for Literacy/Partnership for Reading—Adult Education), a phonics chart to help students understand individual letter sounds (the letter x is represented by the word X-ray which isn't an accurate representation for that letter sound), alphabet flashcards as well as handwriting practice sheets.

As a current administrator and tutor for a children's after-school reading program, I found the chapters on Tutor Reference Information (ch. 9) and the Introduction to Teaching Grammar (ch. 10) to be very informative and useful. The practical advice and recommended strategies will help tutors cover a variety of academic material with the tutees. The two chapters cover a great deal of information in a very readable and understandable fashion.

I have several critiques of the book as well, for example, the authors fail to provide concrete examples of the necessary forms and/or evaluations that would need to take place or be administered in order to determine student needs. The authors mention an intake interview and intake application without qualifying what is included in this process (p. 35). I also take issue with the authors perception that the cost of implementing such a literacy program will amount to "little more than a petty cash fund" (p. 37) when research suggests otherwise. For instance, Wasik (1997) suggest the following: "The primary drawback of tutoring is the high cost of providing these services to children."

Even a low-cost volunteer program such as, Book Buddies developed by Marcia Invernizzi and Connie Juel and their colleagues at the University of Virginia, cite cost at about \$600 **per student**. Many volunteer programs can be supported with a variety of community grants (such as those offered by Target Stores and Wal-Mart Stores) which the authors fail to mention.

Wasik also notes that

programs that used certified teachers as tutors appeared to obtain substantially larger impacts than those that used paraprofessionals. Further, in the programs that used paraprofessionals effectively to help children learn to read, a key aspect was that the paraprofessionals were highly trained and the program was highly structured with specific tutors manuals, student materials, and training procedures, so that paraprofessionals were provided with information that guided their decision making in tutoring children in reading.

The authors suggest that a successful program need not have professional support (p. 35), which I think is very misleading to the potential organization and the tutor who would begin working with a student.

Although the tone of the book is very straight forward and extremely easy to read, and the authors do a good job to convey that the potential success of a program can center on tutor preparedness and tutors "doing their homework," I think there are other books that may offer more insight into the realities of tutoring, especially for children, than are offered in this book.

Suggested Materials on Literacy Tutoring

There are several models to follow, such as:

- *Book Buddies: Guidelines for Volunteer Tutors of Emergent and Early Readers* by Francine R. Johnson, Marcia Invernizzi & Connie Juel. New York: Guilford Press, 1998.
- *Help America Read: Coordinator's Guide to Help America Read/A Handbook for Volunteers* by Gay Su Pinnell & Irene C. Fountas. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1997
- *The Howard Street Tutoring Manual: Teaching At-Risk Readers in the Primary Grades* by Darrell

Newer editions to the field are:

- *You Said Yes! Support Materials for Volunteer Literacy Tutors & A Supervisor's Guide to You Said Yes! How to Recruit, Train, and Sustain Literacy Tutors* by Patricia A. Oliver & Mary L. Wheeler. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2005
- *Tutoring Adolescent Literacy Learners: A Guide for Volunteers* by Kelly Chandler-Olcott and Kathleen A. Hinchman. New York; London: Guilford Press, 2005.

References

Wasik, B. (1997). *Volunteer Tutoring Programs: A Review of Research on Achievement Outcomes*. Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed At Risk (CRESPAR), Washington, D.C., Retrieved online at www.csos.jhu.edu/cresp ar/techReports/Report14.pdf

Pages: **204** Price: **\$32.95** ISBN: **0-398-07586-7**

Reviewed by Renee Baxter, M.S.Ed. in Literacy, and an after-school reading program director in Illinois.

Snow, Catherine; Griffin, Peg & Burns, M. Susan (Editors). (2005). *Knowledge to Support the Teaching of Reading: Preparing Teachers for a Changing World*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Written specifically for teacher educators, *Knowledge to Support the Teaching of Reading: Preparing Teachers for a Changing World* uses the cycle of learning, enactment, assessment, and reflection to explore the knowledge base that all teachers, regardless of subject discipline or grade level, need to develop students' reading skills. This book is a product of several years of work by the Reading Sub-Committee of the National Academy of Education, to explore effective teacher education programmes.

Proficient readers quickly and accurately recognize words and can comprehend subject-specific texts (focus on vocabulary and language structure unique to subject discipline). Metacognition, or thinking about thinking, is also evident in skilled readers. Chapter 2 discusses the importance of teaching reading strategies as students progress from kindergarten to high school. These include scanning and skimming the entire text, reading section headers and bolded words, and varying reading speed. The editors add that students' cognition, motivation, knowledge, and background experiences need to be considered when teachers lesson plan.

Chapter 3 explores the role of teachers in promoting reading for English as Second Language (ESL) learners, students whose English is not the standard dialect, and those living in poverty. Cultural and linguistic diversity in teacher education programmes needs to be emphasized to ensure that future teachers have high expectations for all students, rather than hold stereotypes or prejudices that can lessen student achievement. Teachers need to provide high quality reading instruction so ESL students learn the second language without loss to their native language, while students whose dialect differs from the norm or who live in poverty are not disadvantaged.

An entire chapter is devoted to explicit reading instruction for special education students, with exceptionalities such as hearing or vision impairments and language disabilities. Three language problems are identified: lexical retrieval (speed and accuracy) of decoding words; phonological awareness (recognize and analyze word sounds); and weak vocabulary development. Earlier research forms a basis for some content. Vocabulary development and reading comprehension are correlated (from Pressley, 2000). When vocabulary is assessed in grade 1, it is a greater predictor than decoding skills in grade 11 (from Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997). Hence, special education students must have opportunities to read, write, listen, and talk. Students should be allowed to choose what to read, including the Internet, e-mail, and CD-ROMS. High expectations transform the traditional "highly sequenced drill and practice of isolated, decontextualized skills" to that of "using literacy as a tool for communication, obtaining information, or experiencing pleasure" (p. 172).

Assessment is highlighted as a component of the inquiry model. With the increased emphasis of assessment (e.g., due to high-stakes testing), preservice education programmes need to convey to future teachers what purposes assessment serves (e.g., to promote student learning) as well as what high quality assessment looks like. Assessment includes formative, peer, and self- assessment. Writing (e.g., essays, reflection, responses to open-ended questions) and portfolios can assess student comprehension, while inviting students to engage in critical thinking. The teacher's role is to provide descriptive feedback and to model exemplary responses.

Knowledge to Support the Teaching of Reading: Preparing Teachers for a Changing World, primarily intended for teacher educators, should also be of interest to classroom teachers enrolled in graduate education programmes and reading specialists. Although reading strategies such as graphic organizers are stated, there are no instances of student exemplars or blackline masters. Thus, the book remains at a theoretical rather than a practical level so I am hesitant to recommend it to “in the trench teachers” who want immediate classroom strategies. Chapters 3 and 4 were particularly well written, emphasizing high expectations for all students. Chapter 2, the bulk of the book, was densely written at times.

Pages: 304 Price: \$30.00 ISBN: 0-7879-7465-X

Reviewed by Louis Lim, a PhD student in mathematics education at York University in Toronto, Canada. Louis has taught high school mathematics for the past decade, and is the 2005 recipient of the Ontario Association for Mathematics Education’s “Exceptional and Creative Teaching in Secondary Mathematics”.

Story, Ruth Townsend & Greenwood, Cathleen F. (2006). *Grammar Lessons You’ll Love to Teach: Highly Motivating Lessons—With Pizzazz—That Help Kids Become More Effective Readers, Writers, and Thinkers*. New York: Scholastic.

How can English teachers entice children to become motivated to learn grammar, given its dependence on so many rules? How can one ensure students understand grammar terms like “preposition”, “predicate”, and “participle” without making the teacher and the students feel like they are wading through treacle? Cross-cultural motivation researchers (e.g., Hess & Azuma, 1991) report that American classrooms epitomize a particular style of teaching—one intended to motivate students for just such as challenge—through presenting content that is fun and personally meaningful. Indeed, in the US it tends to be the teacher’s responsibility to entice learners by offering material that appeals to their innate curiosity and maintains their interest. Teachers in middle school looking for a way to make their English grammar lessons much more compelling can now tap into a wealth of pedagogical knowledge and motivational expertise offered here by Ruth Townsend Story and Cathleen Greenwood. What made this workbook particularly interesting to me is that these authors deftly steer their readers away from “edutainment” for its own sake, ensuring that fun is the *vehicle* that propels students toward greater mastery of grammar, but with learning firmly in the driving seat.

This book is divided into five parts. Part I sets the stage by “Establishing the Context,” in particular outlining the authors’ own experiences as teachers, for whom grammar lessons frequently resulted in students’ “moans, blank stares, and window gazing” (p. 12). In this section they explicate upon the setting up of what they call the Grammar and Snacks Club, of which more shortly.

Parts II, III, and IV comprise lesson plans related to specific parts of sentences or speech, together with most of the materials required to execute those lessons. Each plan is presented according to the same format: a brief introduction, an outline of the new knowledge and abilities that students should have acquired once the lesson has been accomplished, a list of required materials, and clear, step-by-step instructional suggestions. For example, Part II of this book is largely devoted to describing the use of each student’s Personal Skills Record and associated materials. It is sometimes hard not to be skeptical of the use of the word “motivating” in book titles, but here Story and Greenwood live up to their claim of providing lessons geared toward motivating reluctant students to truly appreciate the personal power that mastering grammar can give them. Providing students with tools with which to a) understand the teacher’s edits of their work, and b) correct their own frequently-repeated grammatical errors before submitting new work to the teacher, is consistent with helping them develop the self-efficacy postulated by Bandura (see Pintrich & Schunk, 2002 for a review) to underpin the goal-directed behavior synonymous with motivation.

In these three Parts, readers are introduced to approaches such as using songs, poems, games, and stories (including grammatical examples from the Harry Potter books) so that learning grammar is not just more enjoyable but also seen to be relevant to students’ young lives. However, it was also gratifying to find frequent reference to the importance of modeling what is being taught. Students who are motivated to demonstrate the skills modeled by their teachers thus produce the behavioral, cognitive, and affective changes that we associate with learning. Additionally, Story and Greenwood—by emphasizing that some lessons inevitably must be repeated, and that it is unrealistic to expect students to learn what is tantamount to a foreign language in one sitting—may help teachers realize that the “quick-and-snappy” (Hess & Azuma, 1991) approach inherent in much American teaching does little to facilitate deeper learning. As the authors state on page 44 with respect to mastering the use of pronouns, “Patient explanation, repetition, memorization, and opportunities to practice are the way we learn any language, including Grammarspeak.” Finally, in terms of the book’s format, Part V addresses the issues of assessment and evaluation of student work, which so frequently get overlooked. In this section, readers will find invaluable suggestions and samples of rubrics they can use to ensure continual motivation of students by grading their performance

consistently and fairly.

Not surprisingly, given the authors' emphasis on teaching students "grammar with humor as well as academic rigor" (p. 109), there are nice, witty touches peppered throughout this book that should cause even the most world-weary, stressed-out English teacher to smile. If anything promotes the importance of mastering grammar it is Story and Greenwood's wonderfully engaging, easy-to-read-and-understand style of writing. Nevertheless there were some references that I found rather too saccharine for my taste, such as the authors' tendency to talk about "grammar goodness." I also think that setting up a Grammar and Snacks Club, with its "Official Song" to the tune of "Pop Goes the Weasel", "Members' Guidelines for Grammar Goodness," and designated cheers (p. 18) may need to be eliminated, or at least modified according to the students' age group and other demographic factors, in some contexts. I also wonder what motivational theorists would say about the "snacks and prizes" (p.21) offered to Club members, given the evidence that certain types of extrinsic motivation (e.g., rewards such as Hershey's Kisses) have been found to detrimentally affect intrinsic motivation (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002).

However, these are minor criticisms compared to the wealth of excellent ideas offered by two highly-experienced and knowledgeable experts that will undoubtedly inspire many English teachers to pep up their teaching of grammar, thereby helping to enhance their students' reading, writing, and thinking.

References

Hess, R.D., & Azuma, H. (1991). Cultural support for schooling: Contrasts between Japan and the United States. *Educational Researcher*, 20(9), 2- 8+12.

Pintrich, P.R., & Schunk, D.H. (2002). *Motivation in education: Theory, research, and applications*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Merrill Prentice Hall.

Pages: 128 Price: \$17.99 ISBN: 0-439-70070-1

Reviewed by Elizabeth Smith Alexander, a doctoral student in the Department of Educational Psychology, The University of Texas at Austin. Elizabeth's research focus is the cognitive-motivational construct of hope. She is particularly interested in the language of hope and how individuals' hopefulness might be measured through their writing and speech. Ultimately, through being exposed to effective hope-enhancing interventions, Elizabeth hopes that adolescents at risk of educational failure may be encouraged to stay on and achieve their high school diploma.

Thompson, Frances McBroom (2005). *Math Essentials High School Level: Lessons and Activities for Test Preparation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

It should first be noted that this book consists of 90 lesson plans organized around 30 objectives that are commonly tested on standardized tests. Under each objective there is first a manipulative activity usually involving objects of some kind. The second activity involves pictures or diagrams related to the first activity and the third activity allows student to practice independently at an abstract or symbolic level. After each objective there is a worksheet with multiple-choice questions, and a multiple-choice test is included at the end of each section.

The intended purpose of the book is to give teachers activities and lessons to help prepare their students to perform well on standardized tests. The book contains practice worksheets for each objective and individual teachers are granted permission to copy the book for their classroom. In addition to the lesson plans there are brief sections that identify possible student errors and practice tests with multiple-choice items similar to those commonly found on standardized tests at the state or national level. The possible errors listed include statements such as "When asked to match a pair of equations to their graphs, students incorrectly find or graph ordered pairs." Though students often do make this error, the text does not address why students might make that error or what instructional strategies would decrease the incidence of those type errors. This is typical of the possible testing errors sections throughout the book.

Math Essentials is divided into 4 sections: Algebraic Thinking and Applications; Graphs, Statistics and Probability; Linear and Quadratic Functions and Their Properties and finally, Geometry and Measurement with Applications. Under each section 6 to 11 objectives are listed and there are three lessons for each objective. Some representative objectives are: Apply ratio and proportion to solve geometric problems (4.3), Find solutions to linear functions of the general form $y = ax + b$ (3.1), and Solve a linear equation involving one or two variables (1.2).

A strength of the book is in giving a structure for moving students from the concrete to the abstract. This is consistent with Jerome Bruner's idea of students moving through enactive, iconic and symbolic modes. The

directions to the teachers describe what the students should be doing at each stage in the lesson and lessons are well organized and documented.

The scope of the objectives are limited, but as a supplemental text, the book offers a sequence of activities that would reinforce students' knowledge of the listed mathematical ideas. The topics included would fall under the umbrella of the NTCM standards but many mathematical topics are not addressed in the objectives, and 30 objectives form a limited list of mathematics addressed and assessed in schools. For example, the NCTM's Number and Operations standard is not addressed. The book itself is not intended as a classroom text or curriculum.

Math Essentials may be a useful source of activities for teachers but the book only offers lesson sets that must be integrated into an existing curriculum or program. If a teacher is currently using manipulatives, having class discussion and using other reform tools, the activities in the book would readily integrated into the classroom. If teachers are not incorporating these reform techniques into their classrooms then the manipulative activities might be difficult to implement without first changing the culture of the classroom.

Alan Haskvitz reviewed Thompson's *Math Essentials, Middle School Level: Lessons and Activities for Test Preparation* (2004) and he quoted that text as stating

Teachers must be accountable for what they are teaching to students. The alternative instructional methods and assessment techniques presented in this book will greatly assist teachers as they seek to align their classroom instruction with their district and state mathematics guidelines and to measure the progress their students make (p. xix).

Haskvitz then notes that no evidence is provided to support this claim. This claim is reasserted verbatim in *Math Essentials for High School* on page viii, again with no supporting information.

The book works well as a source of individual activities in a classroom that is in transition from a traditional to a reform approach. There is sufficient work with manipulatives, students are asked to discuss their thinking and share solutions, but there are still enough worksheets, teacher directions and answer keys to keep traditional teachers within their comfort zone. The book reinforces the idea that knowing mathematics means answering multiple choice questions on industrial-grade tests.

References

Bruner, J. S. (1966). *Towards a theory of instruction*. New York: Norton.

Pages: **384** Price: **\$20.76** ISBN: **0787966037**

Reviewed by Dr. Steve Lovelace, University of Wyoming, Secondary Mathematics Education.

Wagner, Tony & Kegan, Robert (2006). *Change Leadership: A Practical Guide to Transforming Our Schools*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

In 1983 *A Nation at Risk* kicked off the educational reform movement. Requirements changed for students and teachers, standardizing curriculum was to be initiated, and testing was put into place. Later, around 1986 changes included technology, parent involvement, and teacher empowerment. The 1990s brought President Bill Clinton's changes including charter schools, block scheduling, accountability, and standards. Now we have George Bush's "No Child Left Behind." Reform is nothing new to education, but even with new initiatives, programs, standards, and testing, administrators, teachers, parents, and governments, from local to state to federal levels remain frustrated with the school systems. *Change Leadership: A Practical Guide to Transforming Our Schools*, is a comprehensive, practical, useable book for not only talking about change, but making change. This book provides exercises that have been field-tested, real examples, and takes a systems approach to making change.

The book is easy to read, well laid out. Each chapter provides exercises for change leaders to use for themselves and their schools. A website is given where the exercises can be printed for ease of use, they are also in the appendices. The book begins with a foreword by Tom Vander Ark, Executive Director of Education for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Not only does Vander Ark set the stage for the reader to know they are about to embark upon reading a sensible guide that can actually work to promote change, but he reminds us that, "making systems of schools work for all kids is the most important economic development, social justice, and civil society issue of our time" (p. xiv).

In the preface, the authors empathize with readers in how difficult it is to make change in schools while operating schools. The empathy that comes through the words sets an atmosphere of understanding and

compassion that helps the reader feel as if they are sitting in the same room discussing the subject of change, not just reading about it. The authors also describe how the book is laid out and explain the tools and icons used in the diagnostic tools and exercises. There are suggestions for learning labs and internet links for further reading. The icons throughout help make this a very reader friendly book. For example, there is an "individual icon" that represents tools intended for use by individuals, "groups icon" for group exercises and a "caution icon." The caution icon is used for exercises that, during field testing, the authors found might be challenging for some users. This symbol signals the reader to consider their comfort and skill level with the material to see if they can help others with it or feel it is necessary to ask someone else to help them out.

The book lays out a "systems change framework" for making change in schools. In looking at Systems Thinking, as part of System Thinking Theory discussed throughout the book, the authors detail how the parts fit into the whole. In thinking systematically it is easy to see how reform ideas of the past have not considered or incorporated ways to make change in all of the parts of school systems that lead to positive change as a whole. *Change Leadership* provides change leaders the tools to start with the parts so that the change is well done and can work.

Each chapter begins with an introduction; there are break-out questions, and exercises. Each chapter ends with endnotes so that readers can explore further on their own the ideas and concepts in each chapter. The book could easily be read by change leaders, then used in meetings or incorporated into workshops with teachers, faculty, and staff at schools. For example, Chapter 4 is titled, "Generating Momentum for Change." This chapter explains how time and money are not the only requirements for change but that cooperation is key. An example is given regarding a school district that was given a large grant for professional development, yet meetings were ineffective and there was no tie between professional development and effective classroom teaching. At this point the authors break down the parts of the whole to explain how to go from ineffective to effective by creating priorities. More examples show how these changes work. Isolation to collaboration is also a large part of this chapter. Exercises and examples help teachers and administrators see the importance of working together to make effective change.

In the concluding chapter the authors make the point that it is important to, "bring together the challenges of both organizational and individual change,"(p. 193) in order to successfully improve schools. The importance of creating an atmosphere of change that includes all involved parties is driven home. This is a complete, holistic guide to making change that works. Something the book does a great job at reminding readers is that we not only need to look at the parts of the whole system but as they state on page 228, "if your progress is slowed or stuck, consider that your light needs to shine more broadly, not more intensely." Just as the authors set the stage for compassion and empathy in the beginning of the book, they end in the same manner with a quote from the Chinese poet Du Fu and remind us to, "drink deeply—within the work, and within yourselves" (p. 229). The last paragraph again tells readers that the authors care and understand how difficult this work truly is. At the end of the book the reader feels empowered and ready to make change. The idea is to read the book through, work through the exercises and then as a change leader take the ideas to your school and begin with all involved parties to make important change to improve education for all students.

References

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001: An Act To close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility, and choice, so that no child is left behind. Public Law 107-110. Retrieved April 15,2006 from http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/useftp.cgi?IPaddress=162.140.64.21&filename=publ110.107&directory=/diskc/wais/data/107_cong_public_laws.

United States. National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983). *A nation at risk: the imperative for educational reform : a report to the Nation and the Secretary of Education, United States Department of Education*. Retrieved April 15, 2006 from <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/NatAtRisk/title.html>

Pages: 256 Price: \$27.00 ISBN: 0-7879-7755-1

Reviewed by Natalie Zayas, MS, Faculty, California State University, Monterey Bay, Seaside, California. Natalie is a lecturer at California State University, Monterey Bay in the Department of Science and Environmental Policy, she is also a doctoral student at Fielding Graduate University, Santa Barbara, California, where she is pursuing an Ed.D. in Educational Change and Leadership. She also teaches science classes for children in the summers.

Weiner, Lois (2006) *Urban Teaching: The Essentials*. Revised edition. New York: Teachers College Press.

In this latest edition of *Urban Teaching: The Essentials*, Lois Weiner presents a compelling narrative of the

rewards and challenges of teaching in urban schools. In the context of her experience as a classroom teacher primarily in the New York City school system, Weiner provides practical skills and realistic anecdotes accompanied by compelling words of wisdom from which all classroom teachers can learn. For an audience of prospective teacher candidates and new teachers, *Urban Teaching* provides the necessary bridge between theory and practice that many novice teachers crave in order to be successful in the classroom.

Each chapter reads as Weiner intended - "a series of conversations with a friend who taught in city schools for many years and loved her work" (p. 3). From tips on how to negotiate unjust school policies and procedures to wrangling with the woes of violence in the classroom, Weiner shares an uncensored account of the "exhausting, exhilarating, frustrating and fulfilling" ups and downs of teaching and learning in urban areas. Additionally, *Urban Teaching* unapologetically addresses common challenges of teacher retention and student achievement within the ever politically charged landscape of multiculturalism, culturally relevant pedagogy and social justice.

Many are responsible for the success and failure of teaching and learning and Weiner's *Urban Teaching* is not reticent about identifying the stakeholders in education who can be positive and/or negative agents of change. Weiner suggests it is critical classroom teachers remain at the epicenter of an influential sphere through what she characterizes as personal and individual reflection. In *Urban Teaching*, Weiner explores this through her perspective on:

- Dealing with the hurdles characteristic of teaching in urban school systems
- Managing your responsibilities as a classroom teacher
- Negotiating relationships with other teachers, administrators and the Union in urban settings

The last three chapters, "Your Students", "Managing Your Classroom" and "Your Moral and Political Obligations" present the most powerful components of essential understandings for new teachers in urban schools. Weiner guides novice teachers through, practical, step by step approaches to effectively planning and producing achievement oriented instruction while providing humane, yet realistic classroom management. Careful to not steer the new teacher into a one-dimensional framework, Weiner presents a multi-dimensional platform in which teachers can make informed decisions that are informed by the pleasures and pain of teaching and learning in urban schools.

Without a doubt, every beginning teacher should read *Urban Teaching: The Essentials*. This text not only reminds prospective and new teacher candidates that they can make a difference in urban schools but it also conducts a frank and candid conversation about the essential skills and knowledge necessary to be successful and effective. As the sole text or a complement to several texts during the preservice experience, *Urban Teaching* is a must-read for all teacher educators and new teachers.

Pages: **103** Price: **\$15.95** ISBN: **0807746436 0-8077-64643-6**

Reviewed by Tasha Franklin, Ph.D, Title 1 Staff Specialist, Office of Federal Programs, Baltimore City Public Schools.



~ *ER* home | *Reseñas Educativas* | *Resenhas Educativas* ~

~ overview | reviews | editors | submit | guidelines | announcements | search ~