



education review // reseñas educativas

a multi-lingual journal of book reviews

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reseñas educativas (Spanish)
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Brief reviews for June 2006

Adler, Mary & Rougle, Eija (2005). *Building Literacy Through Classroom Discussion: Research-Based Strategies for Developing Critical Readers and Thoughtful Writers in Middle School*. New York: Scholastic.

Horace Mann once commented that the Common School, when "...improved and energized... may become the most effective and benignant of all the forces of civilization" (Noll, 2003). In Mary Adler and Eija Rougle's book, *Building Literacy Through Classroom Discussion*, both employ elaborate, well-written and thorough research-driven strategies in an effort to improve literacy in adolescents in middle school. The author's assumptions are minimal as evidenced in their unified, in- depth attention to details relating to activities by way of transcripts, descriptions and visual representations. The format of the book includes helpful troubleshooting tips as a literary device to help readers visualize the concepts being introduced. The authors assert that a discussion-centered classroom is a student- centered classroom, teeming with the constant flow of activity. Further, a student-centered classroom is a culture-centered classroom with the type of discussion centered framework (dialogic architecture) that changes the traditional teachers' role and leads to more progressive thinking among their middle school pupils.

Readers are encouraged to apply researcher, Judith Langer's "four stances" as a strategic approach in the dialogic development in literature. Langer developed a "scale" of perceptions that is comprised of four major chords in which participants in her study were asked to verbalize their thinking while utilizing a Read Aloud process. Langer noticed four consistent behaviors which became known as behavior stances, or ways to construct envisionments of literary text. The four stances are:

- Initial understanding
- Developing ideas
- Learning from the text
- Taking a critical stance (p. 91)

The authors use examples effectively throughout the book in the form of transcripts in an effort to convey what a middle school dialogic classroom would look like. Transcripts offer a snapshot of a typical lesson where the teacher is a facilitator, participator and observer (pp. 74-5) of dialogic interaction. The purpose is to give educators a model to work from in their classrooms, "mapping" conversation in an observer capacity (p. 76).

Dialogue is used in many facets of classroom practice. It is useful in the construction of thought processes that integrate writing, reading and the skill of being able to express oneself through oral presentations (p. 81). Ultimately, the authors craft a book that addresses augmentation of reading skills in the classroom through a series of higher order thinking techniques. They assert the importance of students having the ability to share ideas and thoughts.

"The movement to improve the quality of learning begins with freeing teachers and others to become facilitators of learning" (Rogers & Frieberg, 1994). Whether the discussion is S. E. Hinton's *The Outsiders* or an adaptation of E. B. White's *Charlotte's Web* for the earlier grades, *Building Literacy Through Classroom Discussion* offers insight into effective methods for instilling higher order thinking in the minds of students.

Adler & Rougle address characteristics of envisionment building on page 89. Envisionment building is not fixed or definite in terms of looking for a specific answer. Using a comparison/contrast T-chart format, envisionment building is described as a technique that follows the way a mind works. It is nonlinear in nature and deals with local and global concepts of understanding. The lowly study guide is easily turned into a more advantageous envisionment guide in this concept of curriculum building, thus aiding educators in their planning and meeting academic goals. This is especially true since envisionment guides offer the sort of independent thinking focus that study guides do not. Envisionment allows students to take ownership of the learning process by empowering them to take control over what they learn. Envisionment also prevents a topic from becoming superficial. In essence, students are encouraged to speak their mind, taking risks in the process.

Scaffolding is discussed as a healthy alternative to stereotyping. To help scaffold discussions it is recommended that teachers (1) pose an open-ended question, (2) use student responses to guide discussion or "scaffolding in action," and (3) consider Langer's four stances (p. 96).

Certainly, Adler and Rougle leave no stone unturned in urging teachers to add paired reading, journals and poetry to their repertoire of strategies to get students talking and reflecting about texts they've read. Paired reading allows peers to help one another gain insight into a particular part of a text, or in some cases the entire text. I have successfully used paired reading as a tool to get my primary students to increase their understanding in my classroom as well. They also advocate allowing students to use sticky notes to engage text more critically.

Not only would I recommend this book to middle school teachers and administrators, I see it as a necessary tool for building upon the experiences of students that could be adapted at the elementary level, to create the sort of value system for reading we educators deserve to see in the populations we serve!

References

Mann, H. (2003). The education of free men. In J. Noll (Ed.), *Taking sides: Clashing view on controversial educational issues*. (pp. 74-77). Guilford, CT: McGraw-Hill/Dushkin.

Rogers, C.R. & Freiberg, H.J. (1994). *Freedom to Learn* (3rd Ed). Columbus, OH: Merrill/Macmillan

Pages: **216** Price: **\$21.99** ISBN: **0-439-61650-6**

Reviewed by Seth J. Batiste, Doctoral Student in Educational Leadership & Cultural Studies at the University of Houston. Mr. Batiste is interested in research that assesses SAT scores and their relationship to first year minority achievement in a First Year Experience/Mentorship Program.

Allen, Jennifer (2006). *Becoming a Literacy Leader: Supporting Learning and Change*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

While literacy coaches and specialists have been embedded within school sites and have served at district levels for some time, their role has recently changed to become more complex and varied in terms of providing assistance and support to teachers and students. The possibilities for making the best use of literacy leaders within a school setting are explored in this book that is filled with practical how-to's for working as a literacy specialist in an elementary school setting.

Detailed suggestions, from a resource room map and ways to entice teachers into making use of the facilities to daily/weekly/monthly time schedules and supplies lists and budgets are included. Allen provides brief vignettes of classroom scenarios to create a complete understanding of methods she is using and also of her relationship with the teachers and classrooms she serves.

Pages are filled with practical applications such as sample teacher letters, criteria for teacher and student selection in an intervention program, student profile sheets, schedules, timelines, surveys, and forms. Agendas, diagrams, lists, resources, and tips for working with busy teachers within and outside the school day are offered and framed within stories and samples of teacher and student work. The specificity of her descriptions and examples of working with teachers will be greatly appreciated by literacy leaders, administrators, and teachers themselves. Additionally, she offers specific agendas and mini lessons along with references to popular professional literature by well-known experts such as Ralph Fletcher and JoAnn Portalupi, Donald Graves, Georgia Heard, Katy Wood Ray, and Lucy Calkins. The book includes a multilayered appendix with popular titles that teach reading comprehension and writing skills, along with a listing of professional books suitable for teacher study groups.

Allen provides details in how to work with teacher groups to promote independent as well as collaborative thinking about best teaching practices in literacy. She explains, through stories and descriptions of in-service activities, how she builds communities of teacher-learners within the study groups she facilitates. In addition, she offers her own philosophy about influencing school reform initiatives. Besides shared leadership, she advocates teacher choice in selecting personal professional growth activities and is decidedly passionate about teachers, not programs, being the key to increased student learning and achievement. She emphasizes the importance of collegial dialogue — something many busy educators have little time for — and the power of “think time” for teachers to sort out new ideas and safely try out new practices.

She has teachers teach the language arts through becoming active readers, writers, and discussants themselves. Perhaps one of the most intriguing strategies she uses is one where she encourages teachers to practice their own writing skills as a means of perfecting their teaching of writing through exploring “the seven stories of their lives” with snapshots in time. Writing lessons are framed and practiced with personal writing and then transferred to the classrooms using the teachers’ own writing as samples/models. This seems to have provided a turning point in her relationship with the teachers with whom she was working and in their growth in becoming excellent teachers of writing.

A somewhat disconcerting piece for some readers might be her references on several occasions to a budget that is able to afford professional books for teachers’ personal ownership, videos, snacks, and other supplies beyond the reach of many. While she explains that she has written grants, this may not be something to which other literacy leaders have access and they may become frustrated with ideas they cannot implement without additional financial support.

Also missing from the suggestions is the common literacy leader dilemma of having to assist a failing teacher who does not want assistance. Allen focuses on those teachers on staff who are productively engaged and who may encourage their reluctant colleagues as their enthusiasm and success become apparent. Unfortunately, postponing engagement with recalcitrant teacher-learners is not always a viable option for literacy leaders within a school site.

This book will be of primary interest to those who are embarking on or who are currently serving as literacy coaches or specialists at school sites. However, it also gives clear guidance to administrators who are often at a loss in understanding how to best use this potentially valuable resource.

Although Allen presents a somewhat limited perspective of literacy leadership based only on her own personal techniques and methods in serving as a literacy leader in her two schools, her reasoning for her decisions is heavily referenced in research-based theory and practices. Her efforts are grounded in mutual respect and empathy for the difficult job of assuring that all students become literate, motivated learners.

This is a quick, easily read book filled with useful and engaging ideas. Allen’s voice offers the reader a conversational, collegial tone that is never condescending and that models the very style she seems to find so successful in her work in schools. It is easy to see why her colleagues trust her; she speaks with conviction, understanding, and empathy for the difficult job of ensuring that all students attain adequate and optimal achievement in literacy.

Pages: 183 Price: \$18.00 ISBN: 1-57110-4199-4

Reviewed by Joan M. Taylor, Ph.D., Title I Program Coordinator for Washoe County School District and Adjunct Faculty for College of Education, University of Nevada, Reno. Joan has recently co-authored three texts *Reading First in the Classroom* (Pearson/Allyn & Bacon); *Improving Student Writing, K-8*; and *Literacy Assessments: Practical Tools for Teaching and Learning in K-8 Classrooms* (both with Corwin Press).

Bhagat, Chetan (2004). *Five Point Someone – What Not To Do at IIT!* (Indian Institute of Technology) New Delhi: Rupa & Co.

This novel tells the story of three IIT students who went on a collective quest to beat the system by taking some shortcuts that saved their time and in-turn gave them time for having fun. They felt that fun is their birthright and they should have it even at the cost of their grade point averages. The resultant low grades made these intelligent students seemingly dullards for the first time in their lives. Interestingly, the events and the feelings sketched in this book inherently question the institutional system that evaluates students based on relative grades. This makes the book important for me as a Faculty member to take lessons and understand how the system can be efficient in meeting its purpose without keeping students from realizing their true potential in an enjoyable manner. Teaching and learning effectiveness is a major theme in reading

this book.

The acknowledgement confirms the book to be a work of fiction, yet the author has deliberately thrown cues to make the reader think that all the characters and events of the book are real with only the names masked to retain the identity from the reader. The importance of this is evident when the reader goes through the contents page and confirms that the book is about crazy days at college with classes, assignments, friends, fun, drink, girl troubles and grades. This book is a good read for every man who is a student, or has been a student ever. This book takes you through the unadulterated fun of college life, its share of friendship, love life, and being a bad boy.

The author indicates time and again his dream of getting into IIT and how the dream turned to a nightmare once he made it to IIT. It is the kind of perception every student will generally have as they adjust their dreams to a reality that doesn't seem enjoyable anymore. As a Faculty, I recommend this book to students and teachers alike. As a Student, I found myself sympathetic to all the negative turnout of events for the author and his two friends, and at some point realized that similar things have also happened with me albeit at a different magnitude. Being a mechanical engineer myself, I understand how annoying theorems, facts, figures, formulas, exams, assignments and viva-voce can be. Yet, you don't have to be a mechanical engineer, or even an engineer to enjoy this book and take lessons from it. This book is a perfect refresher to our understanding of the human side of the institution and its students, with all its imperfections, autocratic temperament, irrational grind, meaningless egos, and maybe even immorality. This book is definitely not a moral science story.

An incident from the beginning illustrates the point. Prof. Dubey asked the class, "...can anyone tell me what a machine is?". After not getting satisfactory answers, he clarified, "It (Machine) is anything that reduces human effort." His way of mesmerizing the class with such a short and efficient definition of 'machine' is short-lived when one student, Ryan says, "Sir, what about a gym machine, like a bench press or something? That doesn't reduce human effort. In fact, it increases it." Reacting to this, the Professor retorts, "Are you saying I am wrong? Watch it son. In my class, just watch it." With more than forty exams for each semester on an average, the friends found themselves loathing the system. The friends refused to be pushed by the system and decided to steal time for a movie over preparing for the surprise quiz. The effect of this was that, all the three - even the intelligent Ryan - found themselves at the bottom of the class with (relative) grade point averages of just above five (of a possible ten).

I recommend institutions buy this book and use it to show that they can take some creative criticism after all. As Faculty at a Business School, I see direct lessons for achieving teaching-learning effectiveness.

Pages: **270** Price: **\$17.95USD** ISBN: **81-291-0459-8**

Reviewed by Rajnandan Patnaik, ICFAI Business School, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad, India

Burke, Peter J. & Krey, Robert D. (2005). *Supervision: A Guide to Instructional Leadership*. Second edition. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.

Supervision: A Guide to Instructional Leadership is replete with interesting and useful information. Burke and Krey do a good job providing theoretical explanations for and about instructional leadership. The book is organized along the same lines as the instructional supervision concept itself. Purpose, patterns, processes, and products precede integration in their discussion of instructional supervision.

This is a second edition book proclaiming to be different from the original by emphasizing more detail surrounding the design components. Most textbook oriented books are not easy reads, and this one is no different. It is packed with academic detail, but is not a handy "how-to" book for teachers and lay people, as suggested in the preface. Most material in the book is information covered in most supervision of instruction classes at the college level. It would be a very good text for supervision courses or a resource for districts developing a supervision model.

The reader will find the suggested activities at the end of the chapters very useful. An informative read for the people directly involved in the supervision process, but an interesting, easy to follow guide, it is not.

The text would be an excellent resource to systems considering a change in their supervisory process. A new model of supervision must be created if we are to meet all the accountability standards, and this book can be the foundation of change efforts to improve student and staff performance.

Pages: **447** Price: **\$89.95(hardcover); \$63.95(paper)** ISBN: **0-398-07584-0(hardcover); 0-398-07585-**

9(paper)

Reviewed by David E. Lee, Educational Leadership and Research, University of Southern Mississippi.

Capuzzi, David & Stauffer, Mark D., Editors (2006) *Career Counseling: Foundations, Perspectives, and Applications*. Boston: Pearson.

Co-editors Capuzzi and Stauffer have compiled a timely text for master's level students and practitioners that not only examines the historical perspective of career development, but also investigates the rapidly changing global effects on the workforce caused by challenges such as downsizing, outsourcing, specialization, and mobility. It draws on the expertise of a number of nationally and internationally known authors in the area of career development. The book utilizes case studies in most of the chapters to help connect the reading with practical application. Websites are included at the end of many chapters to provide further information. The eighteen chapters of the book are divided into five sections including Foundations of Career Counseling, Skills and Techniques, Contextual Perspectives on Career and Lifestyle Planning, Career and Lifestyle Planning with Specific Populations, and the Epilogue.

The book begins by tracing the history of career counseling through nine stages derived from the works of Mark Pope and Roger Aubrey. It succinctly covers a span of over one hundred years of the development of career counseling in a logical progression including "key players, legislation, theorists, institutions and professional organizations, licensure and accreditation issues, and world events" (p.3). It then examines different theoretical approaches including trait and factor theories, developmental theories, cognitive learning theories, psychodynamic approaches, and theories of embedded career. This part also includes a discussion of ethical and legal issues in career counseling.

A chapter titled "Toward a Holistic View", written by Jane Goodman addresses the concept that career and personal counseling are interrelated. Utilizing four case studies, Goodman discusses barriers, pathways, finding meaning in work and career, integrating spirituality in the workplace, the effects of hope and optimism on career decision making, and approaching decision making process. She also discusses the postmodern approaches of narrative, integrative life planning, and constructivist theories. The use of the case studies throughout the chapter provides the reader with an understanding of the different approaches.

Part II of the book provides an overview of the skills and techniques utilized in career counseling. It begins with a brief overview of psychometric concepts that are part of the knowledge base necessary when using assessment instruments. A case study demonstrating the use of the Self Directed Search with a 17 year old male helps the reader new to using assessments understand the process. Following this are chapters discussing the topics of comprehensive development plans; program promotion, management, and implementation; and supervision, coaching and consultation.

The move to provide career information using technology began in a time before the invention of personal computers or the World Wide Web. Deborah Bloch describes the formation of the Association of Computer-Based Systems for Career Information (ACSCI) in 1978 and the primitive equipment utilized at that time. She provides a description of chaos and complexity theories and their application to career development and then moves into the sources of career information. She suggests that this chapter be read at the computer to allow the reader to be able to explore sites while reading. The chapter is filled with web site addresses for use by career counselors and their clients. It would have been a great convenience if the chapter had been provided in the form of a CD with links. She explains the history and use of career information delivery systems (CIDS) and computer-assisted guidance systems (CACGS), occupational information systems, and educational information systems. The section of the chapter devoted to job search information includes information on using internet job search sites, using technology to respond to resume requests including creating scannable resumes and sending resumes by e-mail, using web-based resume listing services, and using corporate web sites for career information.

Part III of the text provides an overview of career counselors in the settings where they work; in schools, in mental health and private practice settings, in vocational rehabilitation settings, counseling with couples and families. In Part IV, the focus is on career and lifestyle planning with specific populations. Among the topics covered are gender; workplace issues for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons; visibly recognizable racial and ethnic minority groups; and clients with addictive behaviors.

Barbara Richter Herlihy and Zarus Watson investigate gender issues in career counseling including the underlying causes of gender inequities, the outcomes of gender role stereotyping and its consequences for boys and girls, and gender differences in career decision making. They discuss issues today's men and

women encounter such as two career families, balancing work and family, child and elder care, and the stress and health concerns that sometimes result from the competitive workplace. Chris Wood examines the career counseling needs of clients with addictive behaviors utilizing Prochaska and DiClemente's transtheoretical model of behavioral change and Miller and Rollnick's Motivational Interviewing. He provides the counselor with "a repertoire of tools to help them further positive change in clients and avoid the potential pitfalls posed by resistance" (p. 470).

The Epilogue explores career and lifestyle planning for counselors themselves. Suzanne Simon looks at the concept of viability and its role in the counselor's life. She reminds the practitioner that the personal and professional roles are linked and require the counselor to be aware and reflective of that link to be most effective both professionally and personally

The area that is lacking in this text is information pertaining to working with older clients and those transitioning to retirement. With the aging of the population in the United States and more people working longer or returning to the workforce after retirement, this is a growing segment of the population that will benefit from the services career counseling. The needs of this population are different than that of the younger clients. Career counselors will need training and information on how best to meet the needs of these clients.

In some edited texts with chapters written by different authors, there is a tendency for repetition of material and a disjointed feel to the information. That is not the case with this book. Capuzzi and Stauffer have compiled a text that flows easily and presents up-to-date material throughout. Whether discussing the history and theories of career counseling, the skills and techniques necessary to be effective in career counseling, the contextual settings of the career counselor, or career and lifestyle planning with specific populations, there is continuity throughout that provides the reader with the knowledge base necessary for successful career counseling. The case studies and websites provide a text that is useful for both the student in the classroom and as a tool for the practitioner.

Pages: **510** Price: **\$97.67** ISBN: **0-205-43108-9**

Reviewed by M. Jeanne Reid, Doctoral Student, The Ohio State University.

Coil, Carolyn (2005). *Teaching Tools for the 21st Century*. Third Revised Expanded Edition. Marion, IL: Pieces of Learning.

Carolyn Coil's totally updated, revised, and expanded edition of *Teaching Tools for the 21st Century* is a good introductory manual as well as a useful handbook for primary teachers getting their feet wet in their first year teaching. New teachers are often overwhelmed by the education theories and concepts they need to absorb. Coil felt the need to create a "tool," which she defines as "any instrument or device used to make the work of one's profession or occupation easier, more effective, or more efficient" to help teachers incorporate theories and concepts into their classroom teaching.

To accomplish this, Coil formulates an innovative reflective thinking tool called the "Coil 4-I Planning Model"; Imagination, Ideas, Information, and Implementation to help readers grasp the information in her book. "Imagination" is our best brainstorming of new ideas. The "Ideas" motivate us to realize what can be done and how can it be done. Then, gathering "Information" comes along to help us see how the ideas might be implemented in students' learning and teachers' daily practice. Last, "Implementation" is the action step we should take to put everything into practice. An important consideration—this Coil 4-I Planning Model can be utilized in teachers' teaching **and** in students' learning.

Coil discusses and offers tools for a vast array of topics including learning styles, Bloom's taxonomy, multiple intelligences, and so forth. This topical arrangement allows reader to read just the sections that interest them. Coil begins with an overview of teaching creatively. She discusses the needs of 21st century students, and offers four keys for teaching.

1. "Flexibility," which refers to accepting the differences in learning styles, learning modalities, strengths/weakness in the multiple intelligences, pace of learning and lesson presentation, time needed to complete a task, students interest and ability levels,
2. "Resources" points out the importance of sorting through and re- evaluating teaching resources frequently,
3. Let students feel a sense of ownership when planning classroom activities or assigning assignments by giving them different "choices", and

4. "Planning" lessons that will meet the individual needs, learning styles and learning modalities.

Coil's *Teaching Tools for the 21st Century* offers helpful tools for reflective learning that are unique to this books such as the: "Questions to Consider Box" for preview and "Reflections Box" for review. Coil also challenges teachers to reflect upon their own classroom practices. Each chapter is full of activities and practical ideas, tips, and suggestions on how to foster great teaching and learning. The author capitalizes on her practical experience to validate her conclusions.

The book can be purchased with an accompanying CD that includes both PDF printable and customizable WORD files of Student Activity, Teacher Reflection, and Teacher Information pages that readers are granted permission to reproduce for their classroom use, a practical and worthwhile tool to add to their selection of teaching textbooks/reference books. Indeed, *Teaching Tools for the 21st Century's* greatest strength comes in the many immediately useful tips and ideas shared. For example, the book includes a list of movies and videos that show the heart of teaching and a good teacher's characteristics, 30 strategies for working with LEP (Limited English Proficiency) /ESL (English as a Second Language) students, 14 strategies for working with culturally diverse students and families, and 10 steps to successful conflict resolution.

While Coil takes much effort to make *Teaching Tools for the 21st Century* interesting and inspirational however, little attention is given to theoretical discussions of the teaching and learning process. The book is exactly as presented a collection of tools, but little did the reviewer expect that **NO** teaching and learning theory references would be included in the book. As an Educational Psychologist, this reviewer felt that neither the teaching / learning process theory presentation nor information about its implementation and application measures up to be sufficient. Coil offers teachers a time to reflect and think by listing many questions at the beginning of each chapter. However, this would be more helpful if later some of those questions were addressed by the author in the text. Furthermore, while diagrams and different forms are presented in each chapter, clear instructions are not given on how to utilize them. Consistency is also important for the overall formats throughout the book and this was especially lacking in the word fonts. Lastly, author Coil might want to include classroom management theory and practice in her next edition since there is a discussion on conflict management and conflict resolution in the current edition. It would be very beneficial to teachers if self-regulation theory and its practice were introduced as well. It also wouldn't hurt to bring up some unsuccessful teaching experiences from other teachers to help teachers understand challenges they might face, deal with, or avoid.

In conclusion, Carolyn Coil's *Teaching Tools for the 21st Century* encompasses both theory and practice aspects of teaching tools. The mix of education theories, practical suggestions, and experience sharing keeps the material interesting, relevant, and readable. The book is filled with useful tips and valuable ideas. Despite some poor formatting, I would recommend this book for primary teachers and educators without hesitation.

Pages: 184 Price: **\$26.95(book Only); \$36.95(book & CD)** ISBN: **1-931334-72-2(book only); 1-931334-72-2(book & CD)**

Reviewed by Ya-Hui Kuo, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Department of English, Wenzao Ursuline College of Languages, Taiwan, R.O.C.

Coil, Carolyn (2005). *Standards-Based Activities and Assessments for the Differentiated Classroom*. Marion, IL: Pieces of Learning.

At times, despite the challenges of learning a new concept, we have the experience that allows us to take a shortcut to our destination.

What is it?

Imagine yourself driving along in an area with which you are unfamiliar. The road you are on is a fast paced highway. Most of the other drivers around you are familiar with the area and are speeding along ahead of you. You don't know where your turn is and the cars around you are only adding confusion and make you even more nervous. You feel like pulling over and giving up.

Do you have students who sometimes feel like this in your classroom? A student who is struggling with a concept can feel like this in class. Classmates who are familiar with the concept or have quickly grasped the concept are speeding along ahead of those who are struggling. The student who is behind others feels intimidated and ready to give up.

Today's educators are faced with a generation of learners who are challenging us to think about how we deliver instruction. Moreover, brain research confirms what experienced teachers have always known:

- No two children are alike.
- No two children learn in the identical way.
- An enriched environment for one student is not necessarily enriched for another.
- In the classroom we should teach children to think for themselves.

Based on this knowledge, **differentiated instruction** applies an approach to teaching essential content in ways that address the varied learning needs of students with the goal of maximizing the possibilities of each learner.

Differentiated curriculum moves teachers away from the "one size fits all" curriculum that really fits no one.

Explore it!

Carolyn Coil does a marvelous job in preparing a soft cover book that is not only instructive, but also inspiring for new and practicing teachers working toward a transformation of how we deliver instruction that connects with individual student's learning strategies. *Standards-Based Activities and Assessments for the Differentiated Classroom* offers all educators regardless of content area, practical, user-friendly ideas, activities, and assessments already planned, developed and ready-to-use with content standards in mind. Additionally, the activities and assessments appear in this book as templates so teachers can write their own. There is a customizable CD that makes planning and writing them easier. Teachers already practicing differentiation will garner new ideas for both student activities and ways to assess products, performances, and outcomes.

Classroom environment, good planning, and constant assessment are the ingredients of differentiated instruction.

Use it!

This book is organized into sections and then alphabetically by topic. Three of the most popular strategies for differentiation that Coil has shared at teacher workshops are presented in this book. They are already written and ready to use. Teachers can use them, modify them, adapt them, or take ideas from them and write their own using the *Activities and Assessments* CD. The three formats included in this book are; 24 "Tic-Tac-Toe" activities and assessments, 10 "Teaching Tools Individual Lesson Plans" and assessments, and 15 "Tiered Lessons or Units" with assessments. Teachers can easily access topics or subjects that most closely match the topics and units they are teaching. Next, they locate their state or national academic standards and correlate them with the activities and assessments selected. Most activities are appropriate for grades 3-9, though there are a few targeted for early elementary and several for high school students.

At the end of each section of this book you will find a set of step- by-step guidelines for writing your own differentiated activities and assessments using the format featured in that particular section. In each case, there are blank reproducibles that are user-friendly to use as well as the companion CD. This book encourages all teachers to try differentiation. It is a timesaver and provides teachers with a way to enrich their curriculum and offer more exciting learning opportunities for all students. Differentiated curriculum moves teachers away from the "one size fits all" curriculum that really fits no one and encourages students to become more responsible for their own learning and to recognize and use their own strengths, thereby helping them become lifelong autonomous learners.

Teachers have an obligation to give every student an opportunity to learn and succeed. This cannot be achieved by providing the exact same learning experiences for everyone. Every person has a different approach to learning. As a preservice teacher educator I will engage my students with these quality activities and assessments so they can enter the classroom with a sound knowledge-base of the practice of differentiation and realize that this is a philosophy that works for **all students**.

Pages: **162** Price: **\$31.95** ISBN: **1-931334-28-5**

Reviewed by Anita Iaquina, Assistant Professor Elementary Education, Robert Morris University. She currently teaches all reading and language arts method courses along with content area reading, educational psychology, elementary social studies, and has taught children's literature, cultural diversity, issues and trends in education, creativity in the elementary classroom, and assessment to name a few.

Cook-Sather, Alison (2006). *Education is Translation: A Metaphor for Change in Learning and Teaching*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

The metaphors for teaching are many. In *Education is Translation: A Metaphor for Change in Learning and Teaching*, Alison Cook-Sather offers fresh insights into a subject long explored within the educational, psychological, and philosophical literature. Drawing upon a novel combination of social science theories as well as translation studies, the author weaves together her own personal story of learning German with three case studies of education as translation. Together, these elements yield fresh insights into the educational experience.

The author's central argument is that the metaphor of translation encourages us to consider education in terms of continual and evolving change. Education is not about a fixed set of connections between ideas and individuals, she notes, but about promoting new relationships mediated by the process of learning and the learner. The effects of this process are highly personal, distinctive, and ongoing. She begins the book by introducing her own story of "living translation" as she studies German. She then spends a second chapter analyzing the metaphor of education as translation from both historical and philosophical perspectives and comparing it to alternative metaphors. An Appendix supplements this discussion with additional examples of other widely-used metaphors for education.

The next three chapters provide case studies of education as translation drawn from more formal and conventional contexts: college sophomores enrolled in a reading and writing course, a professional development workshop on learning with new media, and a teacher preparation program. One of the book's central themes has to do with the complexities, even the impossibilities, of translation, which is distinguished from transliteration or the word-for-word re-rendering of statements in one language into another. In each chapter, Cook-Sather makes clear the highly personal nature of education, what may be gained or lost in translation, the necessary struggles, and always open-ended quality of these experiences.

In the last chapter, Cook-Sather takes a second look at the features of collaboration, reflection, and transformation central to the three case studies, wrapping up by returning to her own story of learning German. She emphasizes here that the representation of education as metaphor suggests the liminal space in which the student is both the "thing translated" and "the translator," concluding that "This desire to change is at the root of metaphor, of translation, and of education" (p. 149).

This book provides an intriguing and reflective analysis of its subject at a time when many individuals seem to have confused learning of the most narrow, technical, and superficial sort with true education.

Pages: 208 Price: \$49.95 ISBN: 978-0-8122-3889-1

Reviewed by Margaret Smith Crocco, Teachers College, Columbia University

Hollingsworth, Patricia & Lewis, Gina (2006). *Active Learning: Increasing Flow in the Classroom*. Carmarthen, Wales: Crown House.

Flow—what it is and how to achieve it—is an excellent subtopic for a book on active learning. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1990, p.4) describes flow as “the state in which people are so involved in an activity that nothing else seems to matter; the experience itself is so enjoyable that people will do it even at great cost, for the sheer sake of doing it.” Teachers everywhere strive to create an atmosphere in their classroom in which this type of intrinsic motivation and focus will flourish.

Hollingsworth and Lewis provide an excellent introduction to flow. They explain that flow takes mental and emotional energy. It is a state of consciousness in which one is totally immersed in the activity at hand. The goal, essentially, is to make the kids forget that recess is coming up. They suggest that this is possible with high-interest active learning lessons that set out concrete, attainable goals; that vary in the pace of the activities; that use art and movement, and which engage all five senses.

Unfortunately, the final two-thirds of the book is made up of lesson plans that do not deliver on the promises of the introduction. Most of the lessons have been written by different individuals. The lessons are meant to be appropriate for diverse age ranges (often K-8), but writing for this broad a range only results in vague activities (i.e. “Drawing Faces,” p. 76) with limited learning objectives. On the other hand, some of the lessons with vague objectives are at least more creative than the traditional work: A language arts activity accompanying a reading of *Charlotte's Web* asks students to complete a worksheet with true/false and multiple choice questions.

Missing from this collection is any kind of cohesion between the lessons. Nor is there instruction in how to use the given ideas as the core of integrated curriculum. For example, a suggested social studies lesson is to have students dramatize historical events. The stated learning objectives are that students learn the facts related to a particular event, research the people and clothing of the period, and practice their public speaking. No mention is made of the science, math, or literacy tie-ins that could easily be incorporated.

In sum, there are some interesting ideas contained in *Active Learning: Increasing Flow in the Classroom*, but the lesson plans are not sufficiently developed for use as is.

References

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. Harper & Row: New York.

Pages: **195** Price: **£16.99** ISBN: **190442459-7**

Reviewed by Marcy Zipke, PhD candidate at The Graduate Center, CUNY. Marcy's specialization is literacy processes and instruction. Her research is on the contribution of metalinguistic awareness to reading comprehension. She has worked as an adjunct instructor of literacy and social studies courses as well as a substitute teacher at the preK-5 level.

Lenburg, Jeff (2005). *The Facts on File Guide to Research*. New York: Facts on File, Inc.

The Facts on File Guide to Research by Jeff Lenburg is a compact reference book containing a comprehensive collection of web sites, printed reference materials, and research tips, geared primarily toward secondary school students, entry-level college students, educators, and other researchers. The book is divided into four main sections and three appendixes:

- Section I—Researching Your Topic
- Section II—Finding Sources of Information
- Section III—Finding Sources by Subject
- Section IV—Using Your Sources
- Appendix I—APA Style
- Appendix II—MLA Style
- Appendix III—The Chicago Manual of Style

Section I ("Researching Your Topic") contains helpful hints on selecting a research topic, planning one's research activities, and finding and using sources. All researchers can benefit from the general ideas presented in this section, especially the steps for selecting the research topic and the preliminary steps for determining the plausibility of the topic for research. The list of resources available in multiple formats (e.g., microfilm, paper, CD-ROM, and Internet) is more than sufficient, and the subsection on evaluating the quality of sources is invaluable, particularly with the proliferation of the use of the Internet for research.

A comprehensive list of information sources, categorized by both medium and source type, is provided in Section II ("Finding Sources of Information"). It includes discussions of archival collections, organizational databases, biographical information, CD-ROM collections, electronic databases, electronic journals, e-mail discussion groups, newsgroups, general references, government publications, university and special library collections, news sources, and web sources. Lenburg presents and reviews 15 web search engines, 16 web metasearch engines, 8 web directories, and 50 topical search engines. Included are many of the more popular search engines (e.g., AltaVista, HotBot, Excite, Google, and Yahoo!) and several lesser known yet interesting search engines, such as KartOO, a metasearch engine that returns results in a visual display consisting of a series of interactive maps with related topics. For the younger readers, three "kid-safe" search engines are evaluated (Ask Jeeves for Kids, KidsClick!, and Yahoo!igans!). Lenburg also provides search tips for web research and links to three web search engine tutorials. The wealth of source information in this section could be daunting, but each source has been further subdivided into general categories (e.g., business, education, law, media studies, and social issues), which makes each list more manageable. And although Lenburg could have simply provided a list of reference materials and web sites, he has also included a brief description of each source, further easing the reader's navigation through the source lists.

Many of the sources already listed in Section II are also included in Section III ("Finding Sources by Subject"), in which Lenburg groups all sources, regardless of medium, under 18 different subject areas (e.g., aging, criminal justice, ecology and the environment, religion and theology, and women's studies). Sources crossing subject areas are listed more than once as appropriate. The benefits of this section are most apparent once the research topic has already been selected, as the reader can then focus on the subject

heading related to the topic. The search for an applicable subject area might be more difficult for those cases in which a student's topic is not specifically encompassed by one of the 18 subject headings. However, using the lists presented in both Sections II and III, in conjunction with Lenburg's Expanded Table of Contents, the student should be able to find ample sources of information relevant to his or her research topic.

Section IV ("Using Your Sources") contains helpful instructions on avoiding plagiarism through the use of proper quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing, and citation techniques. Lenburg also provides links to eight web sites containing additional information on these techniques. Appendixes I, II, and III cover reference formats for the most common reference style guides—APA, MLA, and The Chicago Manual of Style. Given the ever-changing nature of these reference styles, Lenburg's links to current style guide sites are useful.

While *The Facts on File Guide to Research* could be used by any student from elementary school through college, several cautions are in order:

1. Especially for elementary school students, some of the web sites could be deemed controversial. For example, Amnesty International's site contains articles on torture and the death penalty. Links to sites containing material of a political, commercial, religious, and graphic nature are often automatically blocked by school districts' Internet filters, but web sites should still always be scanned for appropriateness by a teacher or other adult prior to the student's use.
2. Of a total of 963 unique web sites tested by the reviewer, there were 102 links that did not work exactly as listed in Lenburg's book. Forty-five of these 102 were located quickly by following new links provided directly on the screen (e.g., links to the home page or to renamed pages). Another seven sites were located by correcting minor typographical errors in Lenburg's book (e.g., transposed letters, missing slashes). Three web sites were currently under construction and therefore only temporarily unusable. The remaining 47 links (less than 5% of the 963 total links tested) resulted in "document does not exist" or "document not found" error messages, with no alternate links provided.

Given the large number of web sites contained in *The Facts on File Guide to Research*, the book would lend itself very well to publication in electronic format (CD-ROM or Internet) so the reader could link directly to these sites. Although the Expanded Table of Contents and the Index are complete and adequate tools for locating information contained in the book, an electronic version would allow the reader to search for and locate key items more quickly.

This book, despite the minor suggestions and notes of caution voiced above, would be an excellent addition to any teacher's classroom, school media center, or researcher's library.

Pages: **560** Price: **\$45.00** ISBN: **0-8160-5741-9**

Reviewed by Cindy Sikkenga, who is working toward her Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership through the University of Central Florida in Orlando. In addition to a general interest in leadership theory, she has a specific interest in educational leadership vision, the topic of her dissertation.

Levinson, Edward M., Editor (2004). *Transition from School to Post-School Life for Individuals with Disabilities: Assessment from an Educational and School Psychological Perspective*. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.

In *Transition from School to Post-School Life for Individuals with Disabilities*, Levinson and a group of school psychologists first discuss the importance and difficulty of accurate assessments for students with disabilities. With the current emphasis on as much community involvement as possible for persons with disabilities, it is more important than ever for assessments to go beyond the basic paper and pencil tests to recommend the best possible post-school placements.

In the past, the student with a disability would likely be referred to a sheltered workshop for their post-school life. The current trend is to reduce the number of persons in workshops and increase the numbers who go directly to work in the community. Many school districts have active programs to place students with disabilities in community based employment while still in school, making graduation, usually with some form of special diploma, contingent upon satisfactory community work.

The first chapter, written by Levinson, emphasizes the importance of accurate assessment and briefly discusses the assessments available. The remaining eight chapters written by school psychologists focus on different forms of assessments and how they might be used to accurately suggest post-secondary placements for students with disabilities.

Daniel Cane and Mark Nevill discuss traditional IQ tests and a brief appendix provides summary information about the most common tests. Cane and Nevill argue that while such tests are still a useful tool, "research has validated a lack of specificity that prevents transition teams from successfully matching a student's unique abilities to jobs" (p. 58).

Deborah A. Houck looks at the use of achievement tests in the assessment and post-school transition for students with disabilities. This chapter also includes a valuable appendix with information about some of the most frequently used tests. Houck argues that achievement tests can be valuable tools in the assessment of students with disabilities, but the test must be chosen careful to be valid and reliable for the population being tested. Houck further suggests that achievement tests are most useful in identifying areas of instruction to be completed before the student leaves school.

Kelly E. Keith and Kirsten L. Stiffler examine the use of personality testing in the assessment of students with disabilities and their use in post-school transition recommendations. There is also a very brief chart at the end of the chapter that summarizes the most common tests. Personality is such a complex area and when applied to specific workplace situations, might be more dependent upon supervisors and coworkers than upon the specific job assignment. Keith and Stiffler do an excellent job of discussing the various assessments, but fail to make specific suggestions about how they might be used to assist students in post-school choices

Megan Costanza and Nichole Lehman focus on vocational testing and include an appendix of common vocational testing instruments. Costanza and Lehman conclude that:

Interest inventories and aptitude tests should be part of a multimethod approach to vocational and transitional assessment. It is critical to consider the student's cognitive ability, social skills, personality characteristics, career maturity, as well as other factors discussed in this book. When conducting vocational and transition assessments this comprehensive approach should underlie and guide transition plans in order to increase the success and satisfaction a student will experience in an educational program or occupation. (pp. 141-142)

This paragraph summarizes the point of the book very well.

Heather Beauchamp and Kathleen R. Kiewra deal with two separate assessment considerations, career maturity and self-advocacy skills. Career maturity is a measure of how well the student understands what is involved in a career choice. Most individuals, disabled and non-disabled alike, "think" they know what they would like as a career, but once into a job, find it is not what they thought it was. There is a brief table of career maturity measurements but, reliability/validity has not been demonstrated. As a hands-on job coach for adults with disabilities, this reviewer has found that the second or third placements worked best, because the person being served and the coach learned from the earlier experiences.

Beauchamp and Kiewra also deal with self-advocacy, which is a very big item with state and national accreditation agencies for those who serve persons with disabilities. Beauchamp and Kiewra do not identify any formal assessment tools for these skills beyond interviews.

M. Alicia Jenkins and Leslie A. Latoche investigate the assessment of life skills. These skills are important in getting along at work, avoiding danger and especially important in independent living for persons with disabilities. There is an extensive appendix of possible assessments. Frequently, students with disabilities are not very "street wise," and can be put in danger by this lack of knowledge and experience. These skills are very important to assure the person with a disability the highest possible level of independence.

Finally, Jennifer J. Smith and Kristen Young focus on the transition from secondary to post-secondary education for students with learning disabilities. Most post-secondary institutions have an "Office for Students with Disabilities" that can be a great help to such students. Also, the aptitude and achievement testing will carry more weight in these choices than they might in selecting an occupation. Secondary students should all be made aware of the resources of the post secondary institution they select and be willing to utilize them.

The best use of this book would probably be a college course for education professionals but in-service teachers, other professionals, and parent/advocates will find it very helpful in assisting students with disabilities make the best possible choices. Levinson and his team have written a useful book for two groups, those who would assess students with disabilities and those who would use the results of those assessments. This book makes it clear that the task of assessment of students and the recommendations made for their post school is very complex. In a perfect world, school based professionals would read this book and develop assessments that work for students with disabilities. In that same perfect world, parents of students with disabilities would read this book and ask the schools to use some of the tools suggested to

assess their children, and post-secondary professionals would read this book to develop an understanding of the limitations of some of the assessments upon which recommendations for post-secondary placements are made.

Pages: **300** Price: **\$61.95(hardcover); \$41.95(paper)** ISBN: **0-398-07480-1(hardcover); 0-398-07481-X(paper)**

Reviewed by Billy M. Rhodes Ed. S., Habilitation Employment Coordinator, Brevard Achievement Center, Rockledge, Florida

McDermott, Irene (2006). *The Librarian's Internet Survival Guide*. Second Edition. Medford, NJ: Information Today.

The *Librarian's Internet Survival Guide*, Second Edition is comprised of a collection of articles excerpted from Irene McDermott's column "Internet Express" in *Searcher* magazine; McDermott is a librarian who works at a reference desk at San Marino (CA) Public Library, and her work there serves as inspiration for her writing. Because each chapter is itself adapted from one of McDermott's articles, it is possible to read the entire book from start to finish or to read any of the chapters that best addresses a particular interest. Overall, this book is easy to read and particularly accessible to people who do not have technical backgrounds or much experience with computers or the internet. It includes a useful array of resources that library media teachers and their colleagues who assign online research to their students will find useful when preparing course assignments; it also provides a practical orientation to computers and the internet for those interested in developing their own online resources.

McDermott's writes in a conversational, humorous style that makes the topic easily accessible. The book is divided into two sections: part one, "Ready Reference: Resources for Patrons" aims to provide resources that would help answer questions that patrons of a public library (or a school library) might have. Chapters in this section include "Searching and metasearching the internet," "Finding people," "News," "Quality reference resources," "Internet sites for kids," and "Free full-text references." Resources in languages other than English are included in the full-text resources; unfortunately, the "Internet sites for kids" chapter lists resources only in English, but they are nicely categorized by subjects that will assist teachers and students (e.g., Math, Science, Language Arts, etc). In addition to providing useful search alternatives (that are targeted to specific subjects and audiences) other than Google, the chapter on searching and metasearching provides both an overview to the publicly accessible internet as well as tools for discovering "the deep web," subject-specific search engines and searchable databases that are not available through large search engines such as Google; it should be required reading for any teacher who wants to teach students how to search the internet for academic information (and for administrators who might use the web to find information relevant to their schools).

The second section of the book, "The librarian as information technician: working with the medium and the machine" provides resources for those interested a practical education regarding computers and the internet. Topics covered include teaching the internet, managing web pages, making the web accessible to the disabled, and keeping up with changes on the web. Those interested in gaining a deep knowledge about creating web pages might be interested in buying a different book targeted at web designers, although the full-text online resources and reference works McDermott includes will rival the content in any web creation manual.

Although aimed primarily at librarians (and having a distinct purpose of providing information that one might ask a librarian for help finding), this book should assist teachers and anyone who helps students find information online to better understand (and teach) what they can find online. Particularly notable are the good explanations of technical terms: McDermott provides useful information even for expert computer users; however, this book might be too basic for advanced searchers or specialists (for example, those who don't need to know how to attach a file to a web email message). Although the information in it will be dated quickly, it seems that McDermott is committed to keeping the information fresh by publishing new editions as needed.

Pages: **298** Price: **\$29.50** ISBN: **1-57387-235-0**

Reviewed by Patrick Newell, University of California-Davis, School of Education.

McGee, Lea M. & Morrow, Lesley M. (2005). *Teaching Literacy in Kindergarten*. New York:

Guilford Press.

This is one in a series of uniquely practical books written by well known authors in the field of literacy to address the needs of first year teachers or experienced teachers who are teaching a new grade level for the first time. One interesting feature of the grade level books in this series is that they all have the same organizational structure. This book, like others in the series has chapters on the characteristics of students at that particular grade level, goals for literacy instruction, and descriptions of optimal physical environments for promoting literacy, descriptions of student assessment and ideas for addressing different ability levels, an example of a typical week, and numerous resources for teachers listed in the appendices. The reader friendly text and numerous examples help this book meet its goal of being a practical resource book for teachers.

What makes this book different from other practical books for teachers is that it explains the theory and research behind recommended practices. Therefore, a positive aspect of this book is that teachers learn not only ideas of what to do, but also why and how children benefit from those ideas when they are put into practice. One of the few surprising statements this book makes is "The purpose of this book is to provide information for teachers on appropriate instructional activities and routines that will guarantee that all children develop the critical foundational skills they need in order to be successful in first grade and beyond" (p. 62). With this guarantee, the authors are destined to become millionaires and all other researchers focusing on kindergarten literacy might as well focus on other topics. Other than the aforementioned statement, the rest of the book contains logical research based practices that are in high demand in today's classrooms.

The fact that the practices in this book are firmly based in research is not surprising given the backgrounds of the authors, who are both well-known professors of literacy. Currently, Lea M. McGee is a professor of Literacy Education at the University of Alabama. She has published numerous articles in journals such as *The Reading Teacher*, *Language Arts*, and *Reading Research Quarterly*. Dr. McGee is also a past president of the National Reading Conference. Lesley Mandel Morrow is a professor at Rutgers University's Graduate School of Education. Dr. Morrow's research focuses on early literacy development and the organization and management of language arts programs in regards to children and families from diverse backgrounds. Dr. Morrow has written over 200 publications, including journal articles, book chapters, and books. Dr. Morrow is a past president of the International Reading Association.

In summary, this well organized teacher-friendly book contains many examples of student's work, resources, and practical ideas. The authors, who are leaders in the field of literacy, did a good job of presenting a great deal of theory in a compact, easy to read format and have met their goal of making a useful book for practitioners.

Pages: **258** Price: **\$45.00(hardcover) \$25.00(paperback)** ISBN: **1-59385-153-7(hardcover) 1-59385-152-9(paperback)**

Reviewed by Christine Wiggins, Department of Teaching and Learning, University of Utah

Muldaur, Sheila (2004). *Genre Assessments of Poetry and Plays*. Proficient Reader Record Series. Katonah, NY: Richard C. Owen Publishers.

This book provides detailed information about what teachers should know about assessment in two genres, poetry and plays, and includes forms for assessing and evaluating students. The assessment tools can be used by teachers as an effective way to help students understand lessons. There are two benefits of using assessment tools. First, classroom data is available to reveal students' levels of reading. Second, data can be used in both summative and formative ways so that the assessments will lead the teacher "to develop instructional activities that are at the point of need for the students" (p. vi).

The features of poetry can be used in several different ways. The author believes that reading poetry is an essential part of a reader's experience at every grade level. Teachers can have a role as learning partners with their students when they encounter poetry together. Muldaur also strongly believes that practicing reading plays aloud is a valid learning opportunity in classrooms. As a result, the author asserts that developing a universal method for instruction for poetry and plays is needed and she provides "the teacher next learning steps" and determines "proficiency levels that demonstrate student achievement" (p. 2).

In the first chapter, Muldaur gives directions for administering, evaluating, and using the data from the Proficient Reader Record. The author briefly explains each of three processes. First, administering data involves assessing reading process and assessing genre understandings. The author introduces Running Records: A Self-Tutoring Guide (Johnston, 2000) to help teachers in this process. Evaluating data is the

second process. Muldaur provides readers with a rubric that “can be used to score a student’s understandings of the reading process in any genre and some general information for scoring understandings of any genre” (p. 5). In the last process. Muldaur presents several forms to help, including class composite-pre- and post-proficiency levels, assessing reading process, and assessing genre understandings.

The main subject of chapter two is understanding and evaluating student responses to poetry. Because poetry makes greater challenges than other genres, Muldaur provides the readers with several tactics and questions that help students to understand and investigate a variety of poetic forms and styles. These include: can the student identify the genre of poetry and articulate the features of poetry, such as imagery, form and rhyme? The author explains each tactic with three parts: what the teacher needs to know, listening to and recording student responses, and evaluating student responses.

Chapter three leads teachers to “understand the characteristics of plays, to consider two divergent student responses, and to explore the analysis and scoring of those responses using the rubric” (p. 33). Again, the author provides the readers with several essential tactics and related questions that help students to understand and investigate a play. On the other hand, the teacher should analyze the information coming from a student to discover what the student understands, what the student is beginning to understand, and what the student does not yet know.

There are three appendices of forms for duplication. These include assessment forms for poetry, for plays and for other data collection. These forms will help teachers to evaluate students’ knowledge and understanding about poetry and plays in classrooms.

I believe that the use of the Proficient Reader Record with any poems and plays will produce higher levels of student learning development and assist teachers to evaluate student achievement.

References

Johnston, P. H. (2000). *Running Records: A Self-Tutoring Guide*. York, ME: Stenhouse Publishers.

Pages: 95 Price: \$23.95 ISBN: 1-57274-667-X

Reviewed by Jong-Chae Kim, a Ph.D. student in the Department of Sport Management, Recreation Management, and Physical Education at the Florida State University. Kim also holds a M.S. degree in Kinesiology (Major in Sport Management) from Texas A&M University. Email: jk04c@fsu.edu

Ong, Lance O. (2004). *From F to Phi Beta Kappa: Supercharge Your Study Skills*. San Francisco, CA: Chromisphere Press.

Author’s intentions

Lance Ong had poor study skills in high school, which carried over into his first venture into college. He states, “I blamed external circumstances for my own mistakes, laziness, and failure to concentrate... Thousands of dollars were wasted discovering my own ignorance. Yet I had no idea how to improve myself” (p. 4). Years later, Ong returned to college, and “merely sought to pass my classes, learn well, and obtain my diploma to acquire a good job. I kept the techniques ... that I thought would work and also added some new strategies” (p. 6). This time Ong did very well, with his efforts culminating in six academic honors, a bachelor’s degree, and a two-year 3.92 grade point average. In *From F to Phi Beta Kappa*, Ong intends to write “everything I wanted to know as a struggling student but had to figure out on my own” (p. 7).

How well the aim has been accomplished

Ong’s book is easy to read, and organized well. He separates his book into three main sections: “College and You,” “Techniques that Work,” and “Keeping a Balanced Perspective.” All three sections provide insights that made me wish I’d read the book as I started my university life as a student. “College and You” gives general mentoring information: seek your potential, find your major, work hard and wisely, persevere, set goals. “Techniques that Work” includes core study principles, analyzing syllabi, calendaring deadlines, class participation, ideas on note-taking, presentations, and preparing for exams, and meeting with your teacher during office hours. “Keeping a Balanced Perspective” reminds readers that knowing that you can’t always achieve perfection, and rewarding yourself for jobs well done (and after each hurdle of the course has been overcome) is a way of maintaining good mental health.

Noteworthy aspects of the effort

I enjoyed reading Ong's *From F to Phi Beta Kappa*, and intend to give a copy to my daughter who has gone back to school as an adult learner. Ong has 23 illustrations and 15 tables in his 241-page book that help the learner visualize exactly what he is saying in his text. One figure shows his sample of notes highlighted for an exam review, while another shows a picture of a text prepared with tape flags for an open-book exam. Simple and common-sensical – but for someone who hasn't thought of doing this, it's wonderful.

Ong's writing is organized and divided into appropriate short chapters. The Appendix contains checklists for his complete strategy, and includes course criteria, exam preparation, graduation criteria, file organization, and general approaches to being a good student. I especially like the checklist approach to being a good student, with checkoffs for "plan your time to produce your best work," "take the time in college to explore, define, and develop yourself," "know when to have fun and when to study," "know when to stop and smell the roses," "know when to give yourself a break," "realize the value of today," and "see the big picture." I've already attained three degrees, but these aims are relevant to everyone, regardless of whether they're students, graduates, or people at any stage of life.

Pages: 241 Price: \$16.95 ISBN: 0-9744274-0-3

Reviewed by Betty G. Hubschman, Associate Professor and Director of the Human Resource Development Graduate Program at Barry University in Miami Shores, Florida. Her major research interests are mentoring and coaching, technology, performance evaluation and improvement, work-life balance, and organizational change.

Raider-Roth, Miriam B. (2005). *Trusting What You Know: The High Stakes of Classroom Relationships*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey- Bass.

"How do the relationships of school life shape students' capacity to trust what they know?" With this initial question, Miriam Raider-Roth declares her intent to unveil the complexities of relationship, trust, knowledge, and power inherent in the classroom. Her study began as a question regarding how the relational dynamics of self-assessment work affect the capacity of students to trust what they know. It evolved into an in-depth examination of how the many facets of relational trust encountered in the classroom are linked to both cognitive and affective knowing.

A highlight of this beautifully written book is the "I poems" (or "voice poems") the author uses to get to the crux of what the four sixth-grade students she interviews are saying. These poems, which are an outcome of the "Listening Guide" method of interview analysis, take the students' own words, which at times present as a stream of consciousness, and extract only those words that are spoken in the first, second, and/or third person. The "voice poem" is then composed by laying these words out in one, two, or three columns (depending on the number of voices the student used) and in the order in which they were spoken. Voice poems are Raider-Roth's method of transforming rambling, sometimes difficult to understand student narratives into powerful poetry that reflects the richness of thought and emotion the students are attempting to express:

I	You
I am learning	You know You know You might not be Usually you are You have
I mean	You just gotta You know You'll think You're really not learning You know You're not learning

I am
 I am learning
 I'm gonna learn
 I'm gonna learn

In this book, Raider-Roth argues that “resilient, trustworthy relationships in school are the bedrock of learning”. With her conclusion – that we need to view learning through a relational learner paradigm so as to shift away from competition and standardization and towards collaboration and personalization – she succeeds in reframing the entire accountability and assessment debate that is raging in the field of education today. *Trusting What You Know* uses student voice to make a powerful argument for putting the focus on the building of healthy, trusting relationships in school.

Pages: **211** Price: **\$30.00** ISBN: **0-7879-7165-0**

Reviewed by Harriet R. MacLean, Ed. D., Middle School Principal. Dr. MacLean is the principal of Walter T. Helms Middle School in San Pablo, California. Her research interests include student motivation and issues affecting the success of young adolescents in middle school.

Sloan, Megan S. (2005). *Trait- Based Mini-Lessons for Teaching Writing in Grades 2-4*. New York: Scholastic.

This practitioner’s book explains the six writing traits – ideas, organisation, voice, word choice, sentence fluency and conventions, plus the idea of presentation, as the specific characteristics that make good writing. It includes mini lessons for teaching these writing traits across all stages of the writing process – pre- writing, drafting, revising, editing and publishing.

Six chapters are dedicated one to each of the traits, beginning with the key characteristics of each trait in an attention grabbing box, an explanation of the trait and the importance of it in the writing process, and then a series of specific lessons and follow up activities to teach the trait effectively. There are also excerpts from books to demonstrate good examples of the specific traits and a bibliography at the end of each chapter of books in which you might find examples of these. The bibliographies however seem to feature books familiar to an American market, which perhaps limits its useable value to an international teaching audience.

Assessment features as a separate chapter and provides examples of self-assessment, portfolios, reflection, peer assessment and teachers’ anecdotes. Appendices at the end include lesson and assessment reproducibles, which are always welcomed by busy teachers.

The lively book has been written by someone who has tried the lessons and feels passionate about encouraging children to write. Sloan encourages teachers to make the lessons their own and adapt them anyway they see fit, to make them work for their students. She suggests that by motivating students with the teaching of these traits, teachers might empower students to become effective writers and enjoy the writing instruction process wholeheartedly while fostering a love of writing

Pages: **128** Price: **\$17.99** ISBN: **0-439-22247-8**

Reviewed by Stephanie White, Christchurch College of Education, N.Z.

Smith, Michael W. & Wilhelm, Jeffrey D. (2006). *Going With the Flow: How to Engage Boys (and Girls) in Their Literacy Learning*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Going With the Flow: How to Engage Boys (and Girls) in Their Literacy Learning, is an insightful, practical text. Grounded in Csikszentmihalyi’s conception of flow theory, its main argument is that adolescent readers can benefit from the application of four main principles: “a sense of control and competence, a challenge that requires an appropriate level of skill, clear goals and feedback, and a focus on the immediate experience” (p. 3). “Flow” experiences involve total engagement such that the participant is oblivious to distraction. Csikszentmihalyi’s principles are derived from common characteristics of these experiences. Based on their own research with adolescent males and reading, authors Smith and Wilhelm identify a fifth essential principle: the need for social interaction in learning.

Smith and Wilhelm begin with an explication of these principles, clarifying the links between flow experiences and literacy. It is evident that optimal learning takes place during flow experiences. Unfortunately, their work indicates that adolescent males demonstrate minimal interest in literacy, so there is little possibility that their engagement would reach a level approaching “flow.” The authors do not belabor the notion of fault in this matter; refreshingly, they focus on the needs of these students as well as the means to meet them where they are. Once the conceptual framework has been established, the book is structured to incorporate educational theory and instructional recommendations interspersed with classroom anecdotes and functional exemplars.

Smith and Wilhelm emphasize the need for students to develop “a sense of competence and control in literacy activities” (p. 17). Each chapter of this engaging, highly readable book revisits their research and reviews relevant previous discussions. Chapter 3, for example, entitled “Teaching So It Matters,” briefly recaps the principles of flow and their connections to literacy, and then presents ideas for creating conditions conducive to the characteristics of flow by “organizing the curriculum conceptually around inquiry questions” (p. 55). Specific goals for the chapter are introduced, then followed by a set of anecdotes that illustrate the significance of these goals and provide a context for their realization. The section of Chapter 3 subtitled “Making it Matter” begins as follows:

In Chapter 2 we shared a quote from Rev that haunts us to this day: “English is about NOTHING!” His pointed assertion was echoed in various ways by many of the boys about almost all of their school activity. They just did not see the purpose or importance of what they were being asked to learn (p. 55).

This chapter goes on to describe how to design inquiry units, providing step-by-step instructions accompanied by examples and anecdotes. To assist teachers in developing inquiry-based curricula, the authors offer “Tips for Composing Guiding Questions,” illustrations of culminating projects, and a constructive adaptation of Wiggins and McTighe’s *Understanding by Design*. Curriculum models are coupled with comments and explanations that elucidate connections between theory and practice. After describing how to develop an inquiry-based curriculum, Smith and Wilhelm (who amiably refer to themselves as “Michael” and “Jeff” throughout the book) succinctly problematize the curriculum “coverage”, the role of textbooks, and assessment. The chapter concludes with a section entitled “Learning How to Learn,” in which the purpose of inquiry-oriented instruction is reinforced with an anecdote showcasing a student voice.

Jeff has a fond memory of the time a seventh-grade student named Erika came to visit him at the end of the last day of school. He had organized the curricula for that whole year around inquiry.

“Well, Mr. Wilhelm,” she asked, “what have we not learned this year?”

Jeff laughed.

“I mean it,” she said. “If we have learned how to ask questions, find information, read, develop new information, organize and analyze it, represent, share and revise it, and then use it in the world, then what have we not learned?”

Erika was arguing that she had learned how to learn and how to assess her own understanding. And if she knew how to do that, what could she not do? (p. 79)

This passage highlights the appealing nature of the authors’ prose, as well as their facility with intentional associations. The structure of this chapter is representative; each chapter blends seamlessly, replicating the kind of “flow” experience they hope to foster in the classrooms of their readers.

Going With the Flow: How to Engage Boys (and Girls) in Their Literacy Learning draws on canonical educational research like Dewey, Bourdieu and Vygotsky and makes connections to current reform movements espoused by authors like Wiggins, Gee, and Schmoker. The text ends with a compelling discussion of how the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation conflicts with the tenets of effective education described. This book is unique in its engaging incorporation of both theory and classroom application, and would be useful to educators who seek to engage students (boys and girls) fully and meaningfully in literacy activities.

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Reviewed by Julie Gorlewski, a doctoral student in Social Foundations of Education at the University at Buffalo who is certified in Secondary English Education and Elementary Education. She teaches English and is director of the Academic Learning Center at a suburban high school in Western New York.

Sullivan, Jane & Madden, Midge (2004). *Teaching the Elements of Powerful Writing Using Great Fiction and Nonfiction Models: 15 Motivating Lessons That Teach Focus, Sequencing, Structure, Word Choice, Elaboration, and More, Grades 3-5*. New York: Scholastic.

For the administrators and teachers looking for a tool that will help teachers teach writing and students prepare for high stakes tests, stop here first! Written mainly for teachers of grades 3 – 5, *Teaching the Elements of Powerful Writing: Using Great Fiction and Nonfiction Models* is a wonderful tool for teaching writing skills to any struggling student. Sullivan and Madden have written a thorough, thoughtful, and detailed guide to developing writing skills in students by modeling their own writing process, using strong examples of good writing, breaking down skills into genres, and practicing both as a group and individually. In 15 lessons divided into three sections, students learn how to write a memoir, how to compose a piece of well-written fiction, and how to write nonfiction work such as the "Personal Interview," and the "Persuasive Essay." Without "teaching to the test," *Teaching the Elements* covers all the basic writing skills that students need to know to score well on most standardized achievement assessments. It is well worth a look.

A thorough introduction gives the reader an understanding of the purpose of the book and its potential as a tool for teaching writing. The authors recommend using the book as a model, reading it with "...a critical eye, juxtaposing your unique classrooms with those described in our chapters" (p. 8). Each lesson starts with a "Preparations and Materials Needed" list and includes Steps and Purposes for teacher understanding, as well as narrative and samples to follow. The step-by-step procedures are not meant to be a script, replacing the individuality of the teacher, but are written so that even the novice teacher, or writer, can teach (and learn) strong writing skills.

The book begins by explaining what a memoir is and what it is not. Deeper than an autobiography, or the standard "What I did last summer" essay, the memoir teaches students to find a moment in time and to expound upon it. The authors take us through sequencing, staying on topic, creating dialogue, using leads, and using your senses. Students learn to web, rewrite, and proofread for grammar mechanics as they produce well-written, meaningful stories that tell something of themselves.

The next chapter takes a step-by-step approach to teaching the skills for writing fiction. The authors define the characteristics of fiction and provide examples of good fiction in Children's Literature. Lessons in this chapter include Writing from a Plan, Seeing the Scene, Stretching the Moment, Creating Characters, and Color-Coding Dialogue. Exercises include using Story Map Templates, Descriptive Text, Sketches, and Outside/Inside Charts. "As readers, we get to know characters very well from the inside out. But the writing? The how-to? Creating believable characters is much more difficult to achieve. (This lesson will) teach students how to create three-dimensional characters in their fictional writing" (p. 63). Once a student connects with a character, especially one they have created themselves, they will want to write more, and more passionately.

Next the book tackles the real world of nonfiction writing. Again, the authors define the characteristics of this type of writing and use examples of well-written nonfiction children's literature. Lessons in this chapter include Learning the Personal Interview, Note-Taking Strategies, Studying the Structure of an Information Piece, Planning a Persuasive Essay, and Writing a Literary Essay. The authors present some excellent ideas on how to generate interest and involvement in students while teaching them critical writing and thinking skills that will carry them through their whole educational career. Interviewing with well-prepared questions, note-taking strategies, and, of course, writing the essays themselves will take students well beyond this lesson and prepare them for high school, college, or the business world.

A weakness of this book is that the authors do not extend themselves to the higher grade levels. While each lesson has a suggestion for adapting to First and Second grade writers, these lessons could easily be adapted to middle school students, as well as to any struggling writer. Having worked with struggling writers in the middle schools, I find this book a resource I would use, even as is, for up to eighth grade or higher, especially with a heavy English as a Second Language population. The steps are clear and easy to follow and almost any teacher could teach writing skills from this text.

Strengths include the easy to follow steps, clear and concise instructions, and the authors' purpose stated at

each step. This brings a clarity and understanding to the teacher as to the importance of the step being taught. Another strong point includes the three appendices. These include "Some Books and Magazines to Use as Model Texts for Writing," "Some Books With Ideas for Teaching Writing," and, best of all, "Complete Texts of Students Writing Samples" (p. 4). "Through Alex's Eyes" was my favorite.

Teaching the Elements of Powerful Writing: Using Great Fiction and Nonfiction is a great tool for teaching writing. As an administrator, I would recommend it to my teachers for their students. As an English teacher, I find the steps and exercises logical, easy to teach and easy to learn from without intimidating me or insulting me. With experience, I can use what I want and adapt where I see fit. As a novice, or in my case, someone who has been out of the classroom for some time, I would rely on this text for lesson plans and test preparation. I believe it can be a powerful tool for teaching powerful writing.

Pages: 127 Price: \$17.99 ISBN: 0-439-51781-8

Reviewed by Scott W. Norman, M.A.Ed., a first-year graduate student at Florida State University. Scott is an on-line instructor for Western International University, with 19 years education experience as a middle and high school English and history teacher and as an administrator. He has worked with all grade levels, both private and public schools and is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership.

Tippeconnic Fox, Mary Jo; Lowe, Shelly C. & McClellan, George S., Editors (2005). *Serving Native American Students. New Directions for Student Services, No. 109. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.*

The title alone is enough to catch my attention and to make the book a worthy read. I struggle in graduate school to get any recognition of American Indian peoples in the history of education and to counter the tidbits that may sneak in that simply make American Indian peoples instruments of white privilege or mere victims of boarding schools—two views which may get some coverage in multicultural classes.

The authors suggest the book as a sourcebook and a source of conversation for college administrators, high school counselors, graduate students and faculty, tribal educators, tribal leaders, and Native American students and parents. I would suggest that we make it available to every professor, chair, and dean in any college or university. Perhaps Jossey-Bass can offer a deep discount for orders in large volume. The mere presence of a book like this counters the "Indian is dead" or "That was a long time ago" statements heard on campus.

The book sets a good tone as it opens with a prayer offered by Dr. Henrietta Mann that instructs us to "balance thinking with the mind with thinking of the heart, so that we can be loving, compassionate human beings respectfully walking on earth" (p. 5). To serve native peoples, we must be more than mere intellect, but full human beings

The references provided after each short and readable chapter serve indeed as a useful sourcebook. In fact, I suggest they serve as a checklist to build a service library. As a resource book, it provides coverage of the history of American Indian higher education, retention research, the voices of native parents and tribal leaders, ways of knowing, lessons for the mainstream colleges from the tribal colleges, the voices of native faculty and staff, and closes with a summary of recommendations. The book also serves as a source of conversation.

One important conversation is upon identity. Perry G. Horse is commended for taking on a very difficult and controversial chapter. He correctly points out that the matter is multifaceted, complicated by political, legal, cultural, and personal factors. Simply mentioning white privilege and why whiteness needs to be identified and encountered makes the chapter exceptional. Readers must keep in mind that not all tribes determine membership by blood quantum. The Cherokee in Oklahoma look to those that signed the white man's allotment papers. Many more traditional, more Cherokee-blooded persons and their descendants have been excluded. Readers may wish to hear more about Black Indians. Also, the identity issue is often used to marginalize persons with controversial views.

The identity issue helps us understand one goal of the book, which is that the American Indian experience is diverse and complex. By including the voices of American Indians, we can begin to recognize this diversity and complexity. This complexity should not be feared. For the ultimate lesson to be learned is one of respect. Everyone can learn that each individual is different and more than just a single member of a group entity. Everyone occupies historical, social, and cultural spaces. Educators need not be experts in the various

American Indian cultures to respect all our students. We should be encouraged to learn more both from others and our students so that we might serve them.

We need more work on American Indian student theories. Models that judge retention in 4 to 6 year continuous terms may miss the point of how to serve native students. Models that call for integration into the college community and assume distance from home or tribal community may not best serve native students. Models that ignore the “non- traditional” nature of even traditional native students may miss the opportunity to serve. (Waterman, 2004) This book helps us to start to develop and value a process that may eventually lead us to serve our Native American students.

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Pages: 109 Price: \$27.00 ISBN: 0787979716

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

Wilson, Lorraine (2006). *Writing to Live: How to Teach Writing for Today's World*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Australian Lorraine Wilson's work is laser-focused on the goal of a better world through critical, democratic educational practice in language arts classrooms. This book is remarkable for combining its clearly articulated theory and philosophy with detailed descriptions of classroom strategies, including many samples of children's writing demonstrating how activities play out. Although examples come primarily from early grades, there is no reason a creative teacher of older students could not easily adapt ideas to upper grades.

Readers should pay particular attention to the first paragraph of the book, which clearly states the purpose Wilson pursues in every word of the seven chapters that follow:

This book is for educators who hope for change in the world; who wish for greater compassion and understanding between the world's peoples; who understand the need for a more equitable distribution of the world's resources; who believe in the need for global agreement on environmental issues; who understand that democracy is more than a political system where the wealthy have unfair influence in the nomination of electoral candidates. How we as teachers envision the world shapes how and what we teach in our classrooms, for our vision shapes our perceptions of our students and the futures we wish for each of them. (p. 1)

While each chapter incorporates different foundational material—critical literacy, writing as social practice, text types and genre, learning with and about language, prerequisites for writing in pursuit of social justice, democratic classrooms—each contributes significantly to common goals of building caring learning communities where every child is valued, and to nurturing every child's sense of having power in the world to identify and to right wrongs. Wilson promotes “writing the world” as a means to “righting the world.”

On the whole, the book has several impressive strengths. First is Wilson's ability to present extraordinarily complex ideas, like critical literacy, in clear and accessible language, making the book wonderfully reader friendly. Second, it's clear that Wilson's understanding of writing process is deep and thorough; this means not only that that all activities are true to a process approach, but also that the author cautions readers not to draw common but mistaken conclusions (that grammar or phonics are never taught, for example). Third, the text offers a plethora of practical, easy-to-implement strategies that are adaptable to a wide range of classrooms. For example, as a way to begin a personal relationship between teacher and students as well as to set a positive tone in the classroom, elementary students write letters to the teacher explaining why the teacher is “lucky” to have them in class. Surely older students would also enjoy this activity focusing on their strengths, and their teachers would similarly benefit by gaining insights into individual personalities. Ideas for social action—like writing to magazine publishers to challenge gender stereotypes in advertising, or to television personnel to protest the treatment of an overweight performer—are also easily adaptable to a wide range of classrooms.

Teachers who share Wilson's vision of teachers as architects of a more socially just world will find this text an invaluable map of the journey toward it; and, the map is reliable, because the author does an extraordinary

job of knitting together and embedding a solid theoretical base informed by several important learning, language and writing theories. Teachers who once shared Wilson's idealistic view but have become tired and disheartened trying to implement it without sufficient support will find a new mentor here, one who will not only remind them of their original goals but inspire them with a new sense of possibility and a wealth of practical advice. While the classrooms depicted are likely to afford teachers far more freedom than many currently experience, this book is also for those teachers sorely constricted and disheartened by growing demands for accountability and insistence that they teach-to-the-test. The book is full of idealism brought to life, and so it may inspire discouraged professionals to resist more energetically and actively than ever the dismal dismantling of child-centered learning that currently squanders the potential of both children and teachers.

I agree with Brian Cambourne, who writes in the Foreword: "Lorraine Wilson's book can reverse this cycle of professional disempowerment." Readers who spend the few dollars that this book costs and the few hours that it takes to read will be repaid a thousand fold in insight, inspiration, and classroom ideas.

Pages: **160** Price: **\$18.50** ISBN: **0-325-00837-X**

Reviewed by Patricia H. Hinchey, Associate Professor of Education, Penn State

Wood, Karen & Mraz, Maryann (2005). *Teaching Literacy in Sixth Grade*. New York: Guilford Press.

Teaching Literacy in Sixth Grade is one in a series of books arranged by grade levels for literacy practitioners. It was written by outstanding educators who are knowledgeable about research, theory, and practice. This segment of Tools for Teaching Literacy shares the common structure of other grade-level books in the series and includes the following: the nature of the sixth-grade learner, appropriate goals for literacy, physical environment for literacy, assessment and differentiation, an overview of literacy routines over the course of one week, and learning resources. The organization of the book is to be commended, since it provides the big picture of what it means to teach literacy in sixth grade.

Wood and Mraz provide a practical, user-friendly resource on sixth grade literacy instruction for practicing and preservice teachers. Based on the middle school concept and the most current research, the book offers a glimpse of the professional life of a sixth grade teacher. Ms. A, a new language arts/social studies teacher, is a fictional composite of several real teachers. Through Ms. A and her colleagues and mentors, the reader discovers what it means to teach in a developmentally responsive middle school that houses multiple interdisciplinary teams. Among the book's noteworthy features is the acknowledgement of early adolescents' characteristics at this turbulent time of their lives. Acknowledging these stressful changes is crucial in planning and adapting literacy lessons to meet students' needs.

In the same vein, Ms. A demonstrates the planning she must do to meet curriculum standards and to provide a supportive literacy environment in her classroom. The book provides a clear definition of standards-based education and includes examples of state-specific standards, as well as standards set by professional literacy organizations. In light of those standards, Ms. A works to develop an effective literacy program that responds to unmotivated readers, considers classroom organization, and incorporates trade books for use in the content areas. Additionally, she plans with a colleague for an integrated English/Social Studies unit, so that students will easily be able to make cross-curricular connections.

Assessment is the next topic. Not only does Ms. A plan assessments that meet the requirements of her state and district, she also evaluates student progress to inform her instructional decisions. Ms. A involves her students in the assessment process by talking with them about their dispositions toward reading, their use of strategies, and assessment of their own progress. Tied to assessment is the issue of home-school communication, which Ms. A looks to accomplish in a productive, collaborative way.

In Chapter 5, the authors share a week's worth of practical lessons and strategies for vocabulary and comprehension. While not a comprehensive list of strategies, the ones used by Ms. A connect lessons day by day, so that the novice teacher can get a clear view of how and when to implement strategies for specific purposes in a continuous and connected fashion.

Meeting the needs of diverse learners also garners a full chapter. Diverse learners, as suggested in the book, are students of differing ability levels. While the chapter focuses on strategies that help struggling learners, it may be a disappointment to new teachers searching for instructional techniques for culturally and linguistically diverse students. The authors present ways to engage all students and maximize participation, but with a lack of attention to specific strategies that may help English Language Learners and students of different dialects acquire vocabulary and understand concepts. The growing population of English Language

Learners (ELLs) in the United States has given rise to a vital need for quality teacher preparation for serving culturally diverse students (Watson, Miller, Rutledge, & McAllister, 2005). Yet because most pre-service teaching programs fall short in that area, teachers have not received adequate training to help ELLs succeed academically (Meskill & Chen, 2002). For this reason, it seems important that more emphasis be placed on cultural diversity as an integral component of literacy instruction.

Flexible grouping is the next focus, and the authors defend the need for varied grouping arrangements in a classroom. Their attention to research findings on the importance of group work adds credibility to their advice. Wood and Mraz acknowledge the apprehension that teachers often feel toward deviation from the teacher-directed model, and they offer ways to make the transition to group work more manageable. This discussion comprises yet another strength of the book, because it presents specific ways to make grouping a successful component of classroom instruction. Lastly, Wood and Mraz offer a useful, annotated list of literacy resources that can be useful to teachers.

Teaching Literacy in Sixth Grade provides the reader with a vision of how excellent teaching should look under the most ideal teaching conditions. Ms. A teaches in a well-designed middle school that maintains a strong focus on needs of young adolescents. Student teams are relatively small and the school follows a flexible block approach. The strong middle school concept that is evident throughout Ms. A's school is meant to instruct but can also be problematic. For new teachers in less-than-ideal schools, e.g., those without block scheduling or interdisciplinary teaming, this resource has its limits. This means that some aspects of Ms. A's instruction, such as team teaching, may be difficult, if not impossible to carry out. On the other hand, this book can serve as an inspiration for teachers to adapt Ms. A's ideas and methods to their own individual situations. It is therefore important to keep in mind the purpose of the book, which is to provide an introduction to teaching sixth-grade literacy. In that respect, the book serves as a valuable tool for the novice teacher.

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Reviewed by Carol J. Delaney, Assistant Professor at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. Carol's teaching experience includes intermediate, middle, and high school reading. She now teaches middle and secondary literacy courses to pre-service and in-service teachers.



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