Brief reviews for November 2008

Aaron, P. G., Joshi, R. Malatesha & Quatroche, Diana (2008). *Becoming a Professional Reading Teacher.* Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Pages: 360   Price: $59.95   ISBN: 978-1-55766-829-5

As a comprehensive guide to the dynamics of literacy, *Becoming a Professional Reading Teacher*, provides preservice teachers with the skills, knowledge, and strategies needed to become effective reading teachers. Free from complex terminology, this textbook provides research-based instructional methods and programs to (a) teach and develop literacy skills (i.e., phonemic awareness, comprehension, and word recognition), (b) attain skill mastery, and (c) assess student progress through formal, informal, and qualitative testing. The authors discuss factors that influence literacy acquisition and provide strategies to teach students with learning deficiencies.

Each chapter begins with a brief summary and a list of the main ideas. These main ideas are followed by a series of questions preservice teachers will be able to answer after reading the chapter. Throughout each chapter, important terminology is italicized and/or printed in bold. The authors use examples to demonstrate discussed topics, and provide additional sources to expound upon various instructional techniques. Chapters end with a list of assignments, such as observations, journal readings, and hands-on projects; in which preservice teachers can apply the skills and knowledge acquired from reading the chapter.

Overall *Becoming a Professional Reading Teacher* adequately prepares preservice teachers for many of the challenges they will encounter while teaching literacy skills to their students. To further enhance its adequacy, the text should be accompanied by a supplemental aide (i.e., practice book, activity book, etc.) that expands on the instructional strategies and assessment practices necessary to meet the needs of students who have exceptionalities. With inclusion in full swing, future literacy teachers could benefit greatly from instructional material that assist them in teaching reading and writing skills to the special education population.

Reviewed by Chastity Wilson, a doctoral student in the Department of Special Education at Southern University A&M College in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. She is a middle school special education teacher and a member of the Research Association of Minority Professors and Louisiana Middle School Association.

Avergon, Diana J. & Avergon, Eugene B. (2007). *Packet for Painters, What's Your Style?* Fort Atkinson, WI: Nasco.

Pages: 18   Price: $15.75   ISBN: n/a

Packet for Painters, What's Your Style? is a series of 14 lessons focusing on painting for high school through adult age students. It covers different aspects of exploring painting, including Montage, photo-realism, textural relief, watercolor and more. These lessons do not emphasize step-by-step processes, but each includes a focus, objectives, resources, materials, and procedures and makes the assumption that the end user has previous art knowledge and know-how.

The packet introduces ways for individuals to explore different artistic painting styles in hopes of fostering a personal painting style. The compact one sheet lesson is a plus as well as the beautiful example images for

each lesson. These lessons reference some processes and artistic objectives but do not articulate specific educational objectives for the classroom. An experienced art teacher could easily use these lessons with students who already have a foundation in the elements and principles of art as well as art processes.

It is my opinion that these lessons would be harder to implement for the novice teacher as they are aimed at teachers and learners who are fairly advanced in their study of art. They use specific terms that are not necessarily familiar to new art educators or the often introductory students that a high school art class would include. One example is the term "colorway," which refers to the color scheme for a design, and is used in one of the lessons without explanation. These lessons do not include state or national art standards, and one would most likely have to add them if using them in the public schools.

I tried out several of these lessons with my pre-service teachers who have art backgrounds and they found them engaging and fun to do. As well as the actual art making, they especially liked the one-page format and the "Resources" internet search list which helped them make connections to artist techniques and art history. All-in-all the lessons are quite appropriate for the moderately or very experienced art teachers and provide for the more advanced art student a means of connecting with different paintings styles.

This packet is a perfect way for art teachers to cultivate the painter in their art students.

Reviewed by Dr. Heidi C. Mullins Assistant Professor of Art and Art Education University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

Bergen, Randee (2008). *Teaching Writing in Kindergarten: A Structured Approach to Daily Writing That Helps Every Child Become a Confident, Capable Writer.* New York: Scholastic.

Pages: 160   Price: $19.99   ISBN: 978-0-545-05400-3

Teaching Writing in Kindergarten provides a structured year- long approach for implementing writing instruction in the Kindergarten classroom. Consistency and daily opportunities for practice are emphasized in this teacher-authored guidebook. The book is filled with writing samples that portray some impressive work from children at different skill levels and with varying backgrounds. The samples reinforce how this instructional method can be used for every child at his or her own pace.

The book begins with a list of "10 Guiding Principles for Teaching Writing in Kindergarten" and "The Yearlong Plan" to allow the reader a quick reference and outline of the overall program. The principles reinforce a daily commitment of 25-30 minutes of writing time, maintaining high student expectations, and publishing student writing. The Yearlong Plan is divided into four segments (August-September, October-January, February-April, and May) and displays how students can move from drawing a picture and writing a one-word label, to supporting journal writing and publishing.

Other pertinent features of this work include detailed sample lessons for teaching guided writing and journal writing, communicating with parents regarding progress, and a Kindergarten Writing Scoring Rubric to use as an assessment tool. A step-by step procedure for publishing student books and hosting an author celebration night are an added bonus for keeping the process fun and relevant.

The precise structure and routine provided in this book make this program easy for teachers to implement from simply reading the book. The calendar and detailed teaching instructions provide a cookbook approach for teaching writing to this age group. This is a practical and user- friendly book for all Kindergarten teachers.

Reviewed by Dr. Jennifer Dennis, Assistant Professor, Department of Education, School of Education and Behavioral Sciences, Cameron University. She received her Ph.D. in Education Administration, Curriculum and Supervision from the University of Oklahoma in 2005 and currently teaches graduate courses in educational leadership and secondary education at Cameron University. Her current research interest is in authentic instruction.

Darling-Hammond, Linda (2008). *Powerful Learning: What We Know About Teaching for Understanding.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey- Bass.

Pages: 274   Price: $26.95   ISBN: 978-0-470-27667-9

Linda Darling-Hammond does not disappoint in her book, *Powerful Learning*. She begins the book by introducing a well-researched, reference-packed body of ideas relating to effective teaching and assessment

practices in modern classroom communities. She recognizes society's higher expectations for teachers and students and argues that the focus of today's schools should be teaching for understanding rather than teaching specific content knowledge for end-of-year exams. She maintains that educators are equipping students for jobs that have not yet become a reality in this age of ever-changing technology. They cannot do so effectively by using methodologies of the past. As teaching and learning evolve, so must the ideas and practices of teachers and students.

Subsequent chapters by multiple authors address incorporating effective teaching practices within specific discipline areas of reading, mathematics and science. The main theme that is woven throughout the text is teaching for understanding. This is done by using key principles: active, in-depth learning; authentic, formative assessment; collaboration; attention to prior knowledge and experience; conceptual teaching with integration; and the development of metacognitive skills (or thinking about one's own thinking).

Educators must expect children to develop the ability to analyze problems by using critical thinking skills, write and speak effectively to communicate ideas, and solve complex problems using a variety of skills and resources within group settings. Effective teachers are described as people who view learning as developmental and hold the belief that all students can learn and will learn from experience and feedback. These teachers integrate instruction and assessment in the planning phase, systematically use cycles of active learning (doing) and reflection, and allow students to continually improve on their class work. Today's teachers are required to have a sophisticated understanding of the art and science of teaching in order to promote inquiry/project-based/discovery learning in a more student centered classroom community. These teachers must also become savvy curriculum integrators to strengthen student understanding and connect student projects to key concepts. This type of instruction involves a much more complex method of teaching than direct instruction using textbooks or lectures and requires a paradigm shift for educators. They must get past viewing inquiry or student-centered learning as unstructured and therefore unproductive and commit to: creative planning, structuring learning environments that are conducive to collaborative group learning, creating ongoing authentic assessments, and redirecting student learning to meet goals and expectations. Teachers must plan for instruction that focuses on active learning in real-world contexts rather than busy seatwork that emphasizes rote memorization of facts.

Teaching for understanding includes ongoing assessment that differs from traditional assessment practices. Meaningful assessment that provides solid feedback for students and teachers of inquiry based learning projects is not something that can be purchased from a textbook publisher. Pre-packaged assessments that focus on the author's goals for instruction rather than the teacher's and students' cannot effectively measure what was learned because they do not take into consideration the students' interaction with integrated resources, ideas developed in discussion, creative problem solving solutions, and the integration of multiple disciplines. Instead, assessments and instruction are created together and aligned with curricular goals and classroom objectives with the student in mind.

Assessment evolves beyond the end-of-unit exam and expands to include informative assessments throughout learning, the use of project rubrics which clearly outline and provide scoring guidelines specifically describing the quality of work expected from the students. Formative assessments are also used, but more along the lines of helping students revise and understand their work. They also serve as self-reflection tools by teachers to assess their ability to meet students' needs. Students also benefit from the use of a self-assessment procedure because it allows them to review how they've handled the responsibility of their own learning. The emphasis for formal assessments should be on the students' use of learning processes rather than on a final product receiving a traditional letter grade. The feedback for students is much more effective when it helps them revise their methods of learning for the future.

This type of instructional and assessment design is a far cry from previous practices of the teacher acting as a coach carrying a secret playbook while students were left in the dark to receive instruction in a transmission-of-knowledge model. Effective instruction today is viewed as a collaborative effort between teacher and students to achieve common goals that are known to everyone. The responsibility of learning is placed in the hands of the students rather than resting on the shoulders of the teacher as a "font of all knowledge."

In reading, the goal for students is what is coined by the authors as "mindful engagement." Students are expected to use a framework to read for understanding; incorporating the use of prior knowledge, the organization of knowledge, and self-monitoring strategies. Mindful engagement includes cognitive, reflective, and personal investment aspects of reading. Effective reading teachers believe in teaching for mindful engagement by facilitating rich talk about text, the direct teaching of reading strategies, and helping students view reading as an interdisciplinary learning tool. The book includes case studies on successful schools that have adopted these mindsets. There are also sample scenarios of how real-world teachers integrate reading, writing and science so readers get a feel for what it looks like and how to make this happen in their own classrooms.

Other authors within this text define the goal for teaching math as teaching for sense making rather than the memorization of formulas or algorithms. Mathematics includes content and process and should be introduced more realistically as problem-based learning that requires meaningful application and use within context. The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics developed standards for teachers that should be used as a guide for planning instruction and assessment. Teachers must receive appropriate professional development and support related to these standards so they can effectively teach and integrate mathematical concepts across the curriculum. Administrators must find the time and resources to support these teachers as well.

The focus of science instruction should be for students to understand science well enough to apply scientific concepts and ideas to solve real- world problems. The authors cite relevant research documenting U.S. students falling behind students in other countries in applying scientific knowledge in meaningful applications involving critical thinking and problem solving. They maintain that students must be able to use and interpret what they know to generate and evaluate explanations while actively participating in discourse and experimentation. Like mathematics, the authors argue that effective scientific instruction does not focus on memorization of factual data or creating dioramas of natural phenomenon. Like reading, science instruction needs to focus on students' prior knowledge and experiences. Students must create and conduct their own experiments. This type of learning also demands the use of higher-order thinking skills. The text includes ideas for teaching science using hands-on strategies and promotes teaching science through the use of discourse and conceptual teaching.

Linda Darling-Hammond concludes her book just as it began, with directions for teachers and administrators on how to create schools that develop understanding by using the key principles that were illustrated throughout the text. She also briefly touches on how these schools are organized and managed so that current practitioners may glean ideas for redesigning their schools to support this type of learning. The tables in the appendices are further documentation of how to teach for understanding, and include examples and references. This text is thorough, well-referenced, and comprehensive when it comes to explaining to educators how to re-think their daily practices and impact student learning in more powerful ways.

Reviewed by Dr. Jennifer Holloway, an assistant professor in Cameron University's Department of Education.

Devries, Beverly A. (2008). *Literacy Assessment & Intervention for K-6 Classrooms.* **Second edition. Scottsdale, AZ: Holcomb Hathaway Publishers.**

Pages: 565   Price: $56.00   ISBN: 978-1-890871-82-6

A veritable tome of research and resources, Beverly DeVries' second edition of *Literacy Assessment & Intervention for K-6 Classrooms* will certainly be welcomed by many elementary school teachers. More than one-third of its 565 pages are devoted to resources and reproducible blackline masters; the book is designed to be something that teachers actively use rather than simply read and put on a shelf. While the book is written primarily for pre-service elementary teachers and explicitly positions the reader as an undergraduate education major in a couple of places, experienced educators may benefit from it as well, as DeVries synthesizes pertinent literacy research in a very user-friendly form.

Starting out with theoretical models of literacy development and instruction, DeVries takes the reader on a tour of relevant research, including research on English learners. While the first chapter seems disjointed at times, vacillating between a presentation of literacy research and specific instructions for writing a personal philosophy of teaching, the rest of the book is very clearly organized and laid out. Five of the 14 chapters are based on reading components of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, text comprehension, and vocabulary), including separate chapters for comprehension of narrative and informational text, and the remaining chapters focus on the literacy event (teachers, students, text, context), assessment, word identification, writing, spelling, tutoring, and teacher-caregiver-community collaboration. While the book places slightly more emphasis on No Child Left Behind and National Reading Panel (2000) areas of literacy than other authors addressing struggling readers and writers (e.g., Allington, 2006), overall the presentation feels balanced and comprehensive.

While much of the research cited and many of the tools presented in DeVries' book appear elsewhere, there are several unique strengths of *Literacy Assessment & Intervention for K-6 Classrooms*. One is the sheer amount of synthesis that has been put into this book. DeVries goes out of her way to cite recent, relevant research both from scholarly and practitioner sources in a balanced approach between phonics-based and holistic epistemological stances. Each chapter compiles research and presents it in a straightforward manner, giving the reader a "one-stop shop" that includes a wide range of perspectives from the knowledge base on each literacy component, as well specific instructional interventions and other resources. As I read the book, I was hard-pressed to identify gaps where I felt certain authors or perspectives were being left out of the

discussion on each topic.

The information on English learners is especially helpful in this book. Seamlessly woven into the book are both theory about and strategies for working with students for whom English is a second language. In addition, every chapter ends with a "Reflective Learning" scenario that prompts the reader to think about how she or he would assess and instruct English learner students on that particular literacy topic.

While DeVries reprints and adapts some familiar assessment and instructional tools in *Literacy Assessment & Intervention for K-6 Classrooms*, there are many, many unique, useful resources included in the book. Embedded in each chapter are numerous graphic organizers, checklists, rubrics, and other examples of instructional and assessment tools for use in a classroom. I found the standards-based checklists and rubrics particularly helpful. The teachers I have worked with as an instructional coach have had a difficult time finding examples of informal standards-based assessments for classroom use, and DeVries offers several useful ones. In the Appendices, one finds an additional 195 pages of templates and resources a teacher may use, many of them developed by DeVries expressly for this book. Although the book comes with a somewhat hefty pricetag, the appendices and other resources easily justify the cost, as they are something a teacher would come back to again and again each year.

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Reviewed by Scott Ritchie, a PhD student in Language and Literacy Education at the University of Georgia and former elementary school teacher. He has also served as a district K-5 Instructional Coach offering in-house professional development to teachers in all subject areas, with a particular focus on literacy instruction.

Fennessey, Sharon M. (2008). *Language Arts Lessons for Active Learning, Grades 3-8.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Pages: 128   Price: $21.00   ISBN: 0-325-00984-8

From "Punctuation Pantomime" to staging "The Talk Show," Fennessey puts the action into active learning! Fennessey is an experienced elementary and middle school language arts teacher and drama specialist. *Language Arts Lessons* derives from activities she has successfully used in her own classroom, written in lesson plan format for easy implementation by teachers who may be new to participative learning strategies.

Chapter 1 provides a rationale, along with detailed descriptions of various strategies, and management tips for the teacher. A classroom atmosphere of cooperation, confidence, and mutual respect is necessary to the success of active learning strategies, and Chapter 2 provides lessons that build these qualities; the author recommends these to start the school year. The activities in remaining chapters address various aspects of language learning. Chapters are organized into such categories as "Activities to Promote an Understanding of Story Elements" or "Activities to Develop Oral Language and Reading Fluency," facilitating the matching of lessons to classroom goals.

Fennessey emphasizes that these lessons are not in addition to the language arts curriculum, but support core aspects of this curriculum. The correlation of lessons to national standards might have further emphasized this fact. Still, as Fennessey points out, the dramatic presentations on which many activities are based do provide a purpose to the repetitive reading often prescribed for building fluency. Activities such as these will get students' attention, and teachers know that students do not learn unless they are paying attention.

Many of these activities are dramatic in nature, but teachers with limited experience using dramatization need not fear trying them out. Fennessey has structured the lessons in such a way as to make them easy for a beginning teacher to follow. Each activity begins with a "focus" statement (or goal), a "purpose," "benefits," and "materials needed" section. The appropriate grade level is indicated. A description of the activity follows. Each activity ends with a "teacher to teacher" section where Fennessey provides helpful tips and tricks for

making each lesson successful. Fennessey recommends starting slowly with a few of the simpler activities, and as teachers and students build comfort levels, more complex activities can be added. She also encourages teachers to be willing to experiment and try new things, even as they expect their students to do.

Because of the group work inherent in participative and active learning, this book will be useful to teachers who employ cooperative learning strategies. It is highly recommended for any teacher who wants to liven up the classroom with activities that energize students while addressing curriculum standards.

Reviewed by Christina Cicchetti, M.S., Ed.S., Education Services/Reference Librarian at Rivera Library, University of California Riverside.

Gillham, Bill (2008). *Observation Techniques: Structured to Unstructured.* London: Continuum.

Pages: 112   Price: $29.95   ISBN: 978-0-8264-9629-4

Let me begin by acknowledging Gillham's purpose in writing this book as noble. He recognized the problems inherent in most research methods texts and attempted to address them by offering a book that addresses a research method while simultaneously focusing on its practical utility. Even that recognition in itself is commendable. The book, as evident by its title, focuses on a discussion of observation techniques in research, and Gillham does well to acknowledge and discuss a representative range of these techniques.

However, from there, I take issue with much of the book (and, more so, what is not in the book). For instance, until late in the book when it is mentioned only in regard to visual ethnography (e.g., photography), there is no mention of the fact that individuals may behave differently when they know that they are being observed, thus affecting the validity of the observation. This stands as true in both "participant" and "nonparticipant" methods, as Gillham calls them. Other problems with observational methods in general are likewise overlooked, such as the fact that mental processes are unable to be observed and must thus either be inferred, which is inherently problematic, or omitted from consideration, which is likely to lead to deficient results.

Additionally, the book would very much have benefited from specification of the purpose of the observations being addressed. Observations are used for a seemingly endless array of purposes, all of which have very different implications, and it seems as though Gillham attempts to address them all. This, of course, is problematic, given the inherently different nature of various observational purposes. For example, the entire process of observation—including, but certainly not limited to, the context, the participants, and the observers themselves—vary widely depending on whether one is observing young children in a classroom setting, executives or other employees in an organization, disabled individuals, drug addicts, or, as Gillham himself is currently investigating, "the practice of street begging in Glasgow" (p. 10).

Nevertheless, although for this reason I argue that no topic or purpose is fully explored as comprehensively as it needs to be in order for the reader to gain even a practical knowledge of the methodology, Gillham does briefly recognize some important issues inherent in (nearly) all observational purposes. These include issues of validation, the importance of both frequency and duration of behavioral incidents and also of the observation itself, the distinctions between covert/overt and open/closed observations, and the need for "an initial period of 'open' observation" (p. 23) (prior to constructing a structured observation). There is also brief mention of the issue of rater cognitive overload, and although such recognition is good, in observational practices this is an issue of such key import that it warrants a much greater examination, as do rater issues in general (e.g., Saal, Downey, & Lahey, 1980), which are so often misused that they have arguably become one of the prime problems in observational research.

Gillham structured the book in a rational and effective manner, addressing the observation continuum from structured to unstructured—and rightfully noting that, except in extreme circumstances, the "polarized distinction is false" (p. 5). For a substantial part of the book, however, Gillham maintains that observation can be used as an experimental method, a grossly misleading statement, given that contriving a situation in which individuals then freely interact is a far cry from actively manipulating and having complete control over a variable, as is necessary for a true experiment. At points, it seems as though Gillham recognizes this problem, but then he goes on to use the term "experiment" unqualified. Another type of observation that Gillham addresses is self-observation, and, notably, he recognizes the importance of this technique. Again, I value Gillham's recognition of such issues, but feel as though self-rater issues were underdeveloped in the book. In particular, the author offers no empirical evidence in support of such self-reports. Such additions (e.g., Goffin & Gellatly, 2001; Thornton, 1980) would clearly be of interest and importance to any researcher looking to support the appropriateness of his or her own research.

Nonetheless, I appreciate Gillham's recognition of the potential ethical implications of observational research.

He presents various and interesting ethical dilemmas, although some of these dilemmas are also moral, and he would have done well to have noted the important distinction between ethical and moral behaviors. In this section Gillham also rightfully addresses the issue of informed consent, and also makes short mention of a 1984 UK Data Protection Act. However, Gillham amazingly manages to write the entire ethics chapter without including a discussion of institutional ethics committees or review boards, which are necessarily concerned with much more than just the handling of personal information, which is what the Data Protection Act governs. This is a noteworthy omission, since it is these institutional ethics committees and review boards which are certainly at the bureaucratic heart of all ethically-based, institutionally-funded research.

Overall, Gillham does well to recognize the importance of contextual factors and the interaction between a person and his or her environment. He also rightfully describes some limitations of observational research methods, and recommends that complementary research methods be used in conjunction with them for a more comprehensive research design and methodology. However, the complementary research methods that he suggests are, for the most part, much of the same, in that they are all reliant on biodata or are some other type of personal inventory.

In sum, this book is undeniably well-intentioned. It meets part of its goal of giving an overview of observational research methods, but is far too broad of an overview to be of much practical use to an observational researcher in any discipline, as it fails to address various issues of large-scale import in such methods. Although I appreciate what Gillham was trying to do—that is, to write a practical, useable guide, versus textbooks which are rarely user- friendly—I think he may have taken the textbook problem to its opposite extreme. The book largely reads like a nonfiction work of interest to social researchers, and is relatively interesting in its storytelling, but, similarly to textbooks, arguably has limited utility, as its discussions of observational methodology are too broad and too superficial to be of much practical use to a serious researcher.

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Reviewed by Maura Mills, a doctoral candidate at Kansas State University, Manhattan, Kansas. Ms. Mills is also a part-time instructor at Highland Community College, and an intern at Indiana University NorthwestÕs Assessment Center.

Pollard, Andrew (2008). *Reflective Teaching: Evidence-Informed Professional Practice.* **Third edition. London: Continuum.**

Pages: 590   Price: $49.95   ISBN: 9780826493408

As someone who almost always reads a book from cover to cover, I had to check this tendency when faced with the complex 590-page *Reflective Teaching* text. This book is designed to support school-based teacher education training and is made for browsing and troubleshooting as specific problems arise. Pollard and his colleagues Julie Anderson, Mandy Maddock, Sue Swaffield, Jo Warin, and Paul Warwich have created a bible on the many aspects of reflective teaching. The book is divided into three parts: becoming a reflective teacher, being a reflective teacher, and beyond reflective teaching. The bulk of the text focuses on the act of being a reflective teacher; more than 350 pages are devoted to considerations surrounding this. Chapter titles in this section include "Relationships. How are we getting on together?" and "Assessment. How are we monitoring learning and performance?"

The stated goal of the book is to increase the quality of education for children. A teacher who is familiar with the aspects of teaching discussed in the book definitely will have a firm grasp on the many factors necessary to improve education for all students. The text is focused on the context of teacher education in the United Kingdom, but there is much useful information here for pre-service teachers and their mentors almost anywhere.

One feature that adds to the complexity and meticulously-researched nature of *Reflective Teaching* are the links to websites and other readings at the end of each of the 18 chapters. Some of the key readings can be found in a companion text, *Readings for Reflective Teaching* (2002), and further readings and other activities

from the book can be found on a linked website, RTweb.info. While the various locations of related readings are initially confusing, a glance at the website provides a wealth of free resources related to the book. Indeed, anyone who is considering purchasing the book would do well to peruse the website to become familiar with the chapter titles and diagrams that can be found within the text. The website also eliminates the need to copy from the text itself, as a teacher educator or supervisor might choose to do, because the practitioner activities and other files are available in .pdf format.

Each chapter begins with a map of the topics within the chapter, includes multiple diagrams and charts, and ends with a conclusion, all areas can increase the ease of use for those with precious little time. Among the best features are the Research Briefings, located throughout the book. These briefings provide a quick summary of research findings in areas such as personalizing learning or promoting how to learn, as well as implications for teachers. The chapters flow logically from one to the next. For example, a chapter about student learning is followed by one on curriculum and then one on planning.

Comprehensive texts like this one help those with time and patience locate the answer to their problems, but one possible stumbling point is that these can be in short supply in the life of a pre-service teacher. As opposed to using this book as a course textbook, I would recommend that a pre-service teacher educator, cooperating teacher, or supervisor use the book to carefully select activities for novice teachers as problems arise. Those outside the UK who choose to use this book will have to disregard the occasional sections on induction specific to those contexts, but this not a difficult task.

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Reviewed by Janine Davis, University of Virginia.

Rothstein-Fisch, Carrie & Trumbull, Elise (2008). *Managing Diverse Classrooms: How to Build on Students Cultural Strengths.* **Alexandria, Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.**

Pages: 176   Price: $25.95   ISBN: 978-1-4166-0624-6

If one goes to Google and types the keywords "classroom management," it generates over 6.5 million hits; however, when one types "managing diverse classrooms," there are only 200 thousand hits. This indicates that classroom management is a widely explored topic, while work about how to manage a diverse classroom is still limited. Rothstein-Fisch and Trumbull's goal in this book is to show how culture impacts classroom management. Teachers' personal values and culture play a big part in how they teach. The authors write, "Cultural values and beliefs are at the core of all classroom organization and management decisions" (p. xiii). Rothstein-Fisch and Trumbull's intention is to provide a framework that will allow teachers to utilize their cultural knowledge to effectively manage a classroom. In the process, the authors illustrate how culture relates and connects to classroom management, why it is critical to understand the differences between individualistic and collectivistic societies, and how past teachers have successfully managed culturally diverse classrooms using the framework.

The book is organized into seven chapters and a conclusion. It begins by dealing with the differences between a collectivistic (group-oriented) society and an individualistic society. The authors define culture, classroom management, and set the framework for the rest of the book. They take the discussions of collectivistic society further by discussing the power of the group, especially the role that family plays in students' lives. Rothstein-Fisch and Trumbull include examples of how students in collectivistic society operate in classrooms. "Family is important in all cultures, but in collectivistic families the meaning of family is expanded because the primary developmental goal is a child who will hold family well-being as his or her ultimate priority" (p. 51). Collectivistic parents' view on parental involvement, parent-teacher conferences, and attendance are other topics that are discussed. Next the text discusses the concepts of helping and sharing. Rothstein-Fisch and Trumbull write, "When teachers and other school personnel are not consciously aware of these differences, they may construe students' helping each other not only as off-task and unproductive but, worse, as cheating" (p. 80). They include various examples of how teachers utilize collectivistic cultural values to help provide a strategic advantage and positive benefit in the classroom. Specifically, the authors explore how teachers can establish effective discipline policies and classroom rules based on students' cultural values. They also show how teachers instruct their classes based on cultural knowledge. The book provides different instances of teachers organizing their instructional activities (grouping, participation, and use of discourse) so that students become more engaged in learning, rather than getting into trouble. The last chapter turns attention to assessment and how teachers can also utilize cultural knowledge to properly and

appropriately assess students based on their cultural values. Rothstein-Fisch and Trumbull conclude by briefly discussing how far we have come and where we are heading in terms classroom management. "We lament the fact that most of the theory, research, and literature about classroom organization and management continues to largely ignore the role of culture" (p. 166). With this being said, the authors provide a number of additional research questions that still need further exploration.

This work is based on two very well-known theories, individualism and collectivism (Florisoone, 1938; Wagner III, 1995; Lim, Leung, & Lee, 2004; Huff & Kelley, 2003; Weale, 1981; Oyserman & Lee, 2008). Individualism is mostly valued in western societies, such as Europe, the United States, Australia, and Canada. The theory is rooted in the idea of independence, self-expression, individual rights, responsibility and achievement (pp. 9-10). Collectivism on the other hand, is mostly found in Asian countries, Mexico, Israel, and many African nations. This theory places more emphasis on the group (Wagner III, 1995). In collectivistic society, family is central, responsibility is toward the group, not the individual (pp. 7-13). These two theories have been widely used to understand social behaviors in the work place, the community, and even in school (p. 11); however, their use to improve classroom management is quite new. In fact, Rothsten-Fisch and Trumbull were inspired to write this book because of innovations developed in the "Bridging Cultures Project"—a five year collaborative action research project exploring how teachers' understanding of culture affects their teaching and learning (p. 7). Bridging Cultures had an underlying assumption that cultural values do indeed conflict with school values (Beachum & McCray, 2008). The authors define culture as "the system of values, beliefs, and ways of knowing that guide communities of people in their daily lives" (p. 3). They believe that once teachers understand other cultures' values, it will allow them adopt a self-reflective stance. One sees throughout this work the consistent discussion on how the teachers who participated in the Bridging Cultures Project, shifted their management styles and changed their ways of thinking about meeting the needs of culturally diverse students.

Managing Diverse Classrooms: How to Build on Students Cultural Strengths makes a significant contribution to the cultural foundations of education and multicultural education. First, it provides an array of examples of how teachers can be culturally sensitive to students and effectively manage the classroom without having to know everything about every culture. Secondly, it provides a framework that is based on well-researched theories for educators to employ in understanding the best way to serve non-dominant groups of students. This work benefits administrators as well as teachers. As our society becomes more diverse, educators must learn the best way to reach all students. For administrators, this book provides ideas as to the best and most effective instructional strategies. It also offers ideas on how to assess students formally as well as informally based upon their cultural values. For teachers, this book gives many tips on how to work with immigrant parents, the community, and mostly importantly, the students. As the authors point out, one can become overwhelmed and feel frustrated when it comes to finding the time to learn about other cultures. However daunting the task may be, to be effective, educators must learn something about their students. Understanding the cultural collectivism/individualism framework is an excellent start.

Taken as a whole, Rothstein-Fisch and Trumbull's book is an insightful work for those who are interested in promoting cultural diversity in education. The book is well-organized, it is easy to read and understand. The authors did a fine job of drawing examples from classroom observations, quotes from teachers who participated in Bridging Cultures, and various literatures to support their theories and discussions. This book focuses primarily on the elementary school level, individuals who are looking for ideas for the high school level may find it limiting. Nonetheless, it is a good place to start in understanding how to manage a diverse classroom.

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Zepeda, Sally J. (2007) *Instructional Supervision: Applying Tools and Concepts.* **Second edition. Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.**

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Not so long ago one of my mentors said, "In instructional supervision, there is always the risk of becoming the wolf inside the lamb." Supervision as a process may have many angles of observation (e.g., formal and informal), analysis (e.g., mix method data collection), or interpretation (e.g., action research, constructivism, or the Johari Window approach). Principals, academic staff and supervisors have to stand on a solid base in order to be aware of the different internal and external factors mixed into the always imperfect teaching process.

Sally Zepeda's *Instructional Supervision* is an excellent guide for new and veteran supervisors. She shows how to reach goals that institutions and professionals have in common by clarifying the nature of supervision, its function, its methodology, and some instrumental tools in a comprehensive and practical way. As Zepeda states, "Supervision is a reflective and iterative process that needs to construct a culture on a foundation of collaboration, collegiality and trust to promote the processes that support and actively engage adults in reflexion and inquiry" (p. 20).

In order to reach this goal, Zepeda organizes chapters with a pragmatic structure. Each chapter has both concept and theory framework, and suggested activities that move from theory into practice, like a group processing a reflection. A summary and extensive reference section are also included for each chapter. Zepeda presents fifteen chapters; the first three are related to philosophical, pedagogical, political, and sociological aspects of instructional supervision. A second group of chapters focuses on classroom observation and includes tools (some can be downloaded online) to help supervisors gather data and analyze and design the intervention program for teachers. In this new edition, Zepeda has improved three main aspects of the book by providing additional tools: a) classroom observation tools, b) self-assessment activities for students based in Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) standards, and c) professional development and clinical supervision that is linked with teacher evaluations and professional growth.

One of the authors stronger emphases is, without a doubt, classroom observation tools. Here, Zepeda provides a wide variety of materials on how to gather relevant information and offers strategies for analyzing them. The decision-makers have to identify and analyze information that may reveal not only strengths or weaknesses but also areas for development individually, by peers, or as a group. It is relevant to mention here that the author's sensibility and experience offer a short course in the complex process of educative supervision. The classroom observation section includes thirteen tools structured around three areas: the background, giving general information about the technique; the application of the tool in practice, and some general tips. Most of these tools are easy to use and can inspire improvisation or creation of custom-made techniques.

Each data-collection techniques includes a very concise analysis of its advantages and disadvantages. These tools comprise a comprehensive list of techniques designed to measure wait time, cause-and-effect, the effectiveness of instructional methods, selective versus verbatim data, no-focus data, calling and interaction patterns, transition patterns, cooperative group learning, technology implementation, and classroom traffic. With this information supervisors can select the best procedure to design a supervision program keeping in mind the level of participation of the staff and the teachers themselves. Zepeda reiterates that trust and confidence are the "glue" necessary to build professional relationships between instructors and supervisors. We have to constantly remember that supervision is not only a bureaucratic process, but also a human relationship. Well executed, it will help others to grow and be witness to our own professional process.

The last group of chapters gives general ideas for supervisors on how to design short- and long-term supervision programs. Zepeda knows how powerful involvement and active participation of the supervised teachers is. Among the topics she covers: motivation and supervisory leadership, peer coaching, action research, portfolio supervision, and an alternative strategy for mentoring and induction. Zepeda introduces several ideas from her book *Professional Development* (2008), which outlines "what works where" and explains in detail that professional development is an endless journey of continuous learning. One interesting chapter deals with marginal teachers, where a clear and objective diagnosis is needed to elicit their participation in a process of growth, both personal and as a member of the teaching team. According to

Zepeda, "above all, remain cautiously optimistic while working with marginal teachers" (p. 312).

The culmination of Zepeda's approach is succinctly presented in the last chapter: "Pulling it All Together" in which she presents job embedded learning. She states that "supervision should seek to guide growth and learning where reflection, collegiality, transfer of newly learned skills, and refinement of practices foster common lexicons for better understanding" (p. 354).

This is a book that I highly recommend not only as an informational read but also as a tool to increase understanding and a resource for applying ideas. The intricate social, economic, and political aspects behind *Instructional Supervision* encourages education professionals to be aware of their professional responsibility to grow by helping others to do so. Good reading, and enjoyable!

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