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Brief reviews for December 2008

Angelillo, Janet (2008). *Whole-Class Teaching, Minilessons and More*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Pages: 144 Price: \$17.50 ISBN: 978-0-325-00971-1

Whole-Class Teaching, Minilessons and More by Janet Angelillo describes how to create and refine powerful lessons that have a lasting impact on students. This lovingly crafted book invites teachers to reflect on how well their teaching respects and dignifies children's learning. In her introduction, Angelillo states: "The process of teaching deserves to be an elegant work of art. It requires lessons that students will muse over and live off for a long, long time. And instruction that is significant and wise, not ordinary and common" (p. ix). Teaching is a splendid, almost sacred, process that deserves all of our attention and intelligence. The way we teach shows students that we respect their ideas. The way we teach provides students with the tools they will need to sustain meaningful conversations.

To read this book is to remember why we chose to become teachers: to "search for and find the seeds of greatness in each student" (p. 14). In order to do this we need to talk less and listen more to each other. We need moments of silence during classroom discussions to savor and appreciate others comments and contributions. Silence allows reflection and respect to flourish so that we can hear the "greatness" in each other and ourselves.

Angelillo treats us to a rich and thoughtful discussion of a variety of whole-class teaching structures that promote respect, build community, provide students with ideas that matter, and show how listening is a way to deepen our learning. We are guided to how to create effective minilessons, workshop share times, morning meetings, read alouds, celebrations of writing, and the importance of each one. According to Angelillo, each of these structures teaches children the joy of living in and loving the world of ideas in a way that is caring and respectful of others.

Angelillo's profound faith in teachers and children is evident in every chapter of her book. Teaching is a serious endeavor, she tells us. It must be intentionally planned, rehearsed (as if it were a grand symphony), and refined if we want students to find and expand on their greatness. Finally, by reading student work we will find evidence of minilessons.

Whole-Class Teaching, Minilessons and More gives teachers the gift of seeing ourselves as artists who create the most exquisite art—"the glorious truth of magnificent teaching" (p. 118).

Thank you Janet.

Reviewed by Elisa Waingort who teaches Grade 2 Spanish Bilingual at Dalhousie Elementary in Calgary, Canada.

Collins, Kathy (2008). *Reading for Real: Teach Students to Read with Power, Intention, and Joy in K-3 Classrooms*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers.

Pages: 223 Price: \$21.00 ISBN: 978-1-57110-703-9

It is common knowledge that literacy is a fundamental goal in classrooms and schools. Teachers and

administrators work tirelessly to improve their students' reading ability and comprehension. However, there are many different ideas about the most effective way to reach each child's potential. There are many strategies in curriculum, activities, group size, and other aspects of a reading program. Kathy Collins is a literacy expert and former teacher who has developed a new approach to reading with students. Her book, *Reading for Real*, details a reading plan involving partnerships in the classroom. A simple comparison would be adult reading clubs. Collins stresses that students need to be reading as much as possible in the classroom. Too many times, reading instruction centers around circling letter combinations or making fun hats that go along with the weekly story. The design of Collins' idea is for students to spend time actually reading, and also reading for the sake of enjoyment and engagement. For many teachers, this will be a fresh take on reading instruction.

Collins' book is divided into three main parts. Part one sets the stage for the importance of reading groups. She details the basic outline of how these groups should be structured. They can be easily integrated into the current studies of the classroom. An example is reading groups centered on non-fiction study. This can be a supplement to a classroom unit on non-fiction. Part two discusses the actual details of the reading clubs and how teachers should guide the time. Collins' program is really designed for the students to become independent readers without direct teacher instruction. Of course, there are opportunities for the teacher to inject advice and guide their study, but it is really time for the students to grow with each other. Part three details how to implement specific kinds of reading groups based on different genres. This will be specifically helpful for teachers looking to supplement a certain unit or genre they are currently studying.

One other nice addition to this book is the appendix. In a user friendly approach, Collins provides the very basics of the program. There are also various note-taking masters for students and sample lesson plans. As a program like this may be intimidating for teachers, these helpful additions really help to bring it together when it comes time to use it in the classroom.

Speaking as a classroom teacher, I found that the best part of a program like this is the flexibility. This can be integrated many different ways into a classroom. Collins suggests that teachers use the reading groups five to six times and that they last two to four weeks. There are no set rules of the best way to structure them. It will ultimately revolve around the classroom instruction and serve as a support. Collins gives ideas to go along with these studies. For instance, students can compare notes, draw pictures, perform plays, share background knowledge, and various other comprehension strategies. The bottom line is that students are reading and engaging.

Throughout this book, there is an underlying element that needs to be recognized by teachers. In order for this program to be successful, the teachers need to recognize their role as a mentor. The teacher may be best suited by observing the students interact and then forming mini lessons around any weak areas noticed. Teachers may also hold conferences during this time and work with students on a personal level. However, the main role of the teacher will be setting up a system that allows the students to achieve success with each other. This will include setting up effective partnerships and a system that allows students to read appropriate text.

Collins' book shares a program that would be beneficial and easy to implement in any classroom. The flexibility allows teachers to have the freedom to adjust it to his or her classroom. It can also be utilized to support the current goals and standards, so that teachers do not have to get rid of anything to use this program. But perhaps the most valuable part of this is that it is teaching students to become independent readers. And for teachers, that is really the ultimate goal.

Reviewed by Aaron Lentner, M.A., Azusa Pacific University, and elementary school teacher in Colorado Springs District 11. His interests include classroom management and moral education.

Craig, Susan E. (2008). *Reaching and Teaching Children Who Hurt: Strategies for Your Classroom*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Pages: 224 Price: \$24.95 ISBN: 978-1-55766-974-2

After teaching as a university adjunct for three years, I recently made the decision to leave the ivory tower and attempt, for a second time, to teach reading at the elementary level. Not only did I leave the academic environment of the university, but I also found myself within the walls of an elementary school identified as academically unsatisfactory. Within this school are an overwhelming number of students who hurt—physically, emotionally, and psychologically. I often found myself questioning what I could do as a teacher to help these children; after all, it was their life outside of school that caused them to hurt. Even though I had lectured on the topic of children who hurt at the university; as the reading specialist at this school, I felt helpless. As a result of this professional challenge, I began searching for resources which would tell me how to teach children who have experienced childhood trauma. It was this search that brought me to Susan E.

Craig's *Reaching and Teaching Children Who Hurt: Strategies for Your Classroom*. With the guidance of this strategy-filled book, I was able to initiate a supportive school environment that met the complex learning needs of my students.

Reaching and Teaching Children Who Hurt does not aim to resolve the diagnostic complexities of childhood trauma, but instead has two other purposes—it provides teachers with an overview of the issues associated with exposure to family violence and it provides trauma-sensitive ideas about how to instruct children who have experienced family violence. Craig bases her book on research, which has established that exposure to violence changes how children learn. Violence impacts children's language development, memory capacity, reading skills, and writing ability. It even impacts children's ability to establish meaningful relationships with others. These impacts have adverse consequences because early experiences shape children's assumptions about how the world works. Moreover, children are constantly adjusting their perceptions to match their abusive experiences of the past or even perhaps, the present.

In this book, Craig's readers are provided with clear explanations of current research illustrated through instructive vignettes. Readers are also provided with research-based instructional strategies that address how to:

- implement a perspective that is trauma-sensitive across an entire school
- adapt instruction to address the special needs of children exposed to family violence,
- establish predictable routines and schedules which provide a sense of safety, and
- assist students in building relationships with others.

For example, Craig brings to mind that

the ability to learn things sequentially allows children to complete tasks in an efficient, logical manner and to bring linear order to otherwise chaotic daily experiences. The ability to retain information in a linear sequence of past, present, and future enables them to use previously learned information to set goals, plan for future events, or predict future outcomes (p. 26).

As a result, Craig suggests that that teacher provide children with numerous opportunities to practice sequencing events such as timelines, before and after pictures, and various writing exercises to order things sequentially.

Through my personal experiences I have learned that teaching children who hurt is difficult. However, *Reaching and Teaching Children Who Hurt: Strategies for Your Classroom* has increased my knowledge of teaching this specialized population and has also provided me with additional strategies to use in my classroom. This strategy-filled book will certainly assist other educational professionals as they create supportive, trauma-sensitive classrooms.

Reviewed by Stephanie A. Grote-Garcia. Stephanie is a Reading Specialist who works primarily with students who are identified as dyslexic. She is also a doctoral candidate and adjunct at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

Feigelson, Dan (2008). *Practical Punctuation: Lessons on Rule Making and Rule Breaking in Elementary Writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Pages: Price: ISBN: 978-0-325-00906-3

Dan Feigelson has written a book, as the title implies, to make sense out of punctuation so that the how and why to punctuate is made more transparent and practical. He has a knack for taking a common rule and engaging students in a process of discovery and exploration to find meaning in using punctuation for language clarity and appeal.

Written for use with students in the elementary grades, this book caters to what students like best...hands-on learning. The numerous suggestions and activities take the student from rules to usage, stressing throughout how punctuation enhances and why it is important.

Students are usually taught a rule and told to apply it to a written product. They move to the next lesson more as a function of timing and sequence than a journey of learning. Feigelson encourages teachers and learners to take the process further, to reflect on usage and how it enriches language. He accomplishes this through get-up-and-move activities as well as talk-it-over sharing experiences. His more novel extension is the development of a reflective process that encourages the students to think more deeply to discern subtle and not so subtle changes that are made when one experiments with the insertion of punctuation. He avoids merely having an end-product where students create around the punctuation lesson.

Clearly defined lessons are provided to address instruction across the elementary years. Students analyze famous and not-so-famous words of others as well as their own to glean how marks of punctuation matter to readers and writers.

If you are looking for creative lessons, Feigelson's book may be just what you are after. He guides you through learning that will foster great enthusiasm for the power of punctuation.

Reviewed by Kathleen Fite, Professor of Education, Texas State University-San Marcos.

Kindle, Karen (2008). *Teaching Vocabulary in the K-2 Classroom: Easy Strategies for Infusing Vocabulary Learning Into Morning Meetings, Transitions, Centers, and More.* New York: Scholastic.

Pages: 128 Price: \$17.99 ISBN: 978-0-439-02426-6

Karen Kindle does an excellent job of explaining vocabulary infusion. During my tenure as an elementary teacher, I searched and searched for answers about my student's difficulties with vocabulary. For years I wondered why some children seem to understand while others did not understand what appeared to be very simple tasks. I searched for strategies to help the child who could read orally beautifully and never stumble over any word, yet when asked questions about the reading the child would respond with answers not even on the topic. Another source of concern is problem solving. Problem solving activities were and are major challenges for some young learners in the mathematics class. Many times it is simply that the learner does not grasp the meaning of the vocabulary in the problem. This is a book which has been needed for years.

The book is very research based but written in an easy to read style. One fear I have is that because it can be read almost with the comfort of reading a novel, teachers/parents will not take the book seriously. Some sections of the book seem almost like a cookbook of activities but yet it differs from the usual how-to book or collection of activities, as Kindle points out why and how each strategy will be successful. This is a book that all professionally young educators of grades K-2 should have in their hands. It is a very reader (teacher/parent) friendly book of activities. Kindle offers many suggestions but does not advocate that this is the only way to teach. Parents of struggling readers could use the strategies with great success. The book would also be excellent for parents who are homeschooling their children.

Many children do not come to school with rich experiences and have a very limited use of words. This is especially true when English is not the child's first language, but it is also true for many children from low income families. In order for children to be successful, they need to grasp of meaning of the words they encounter in school. Just being able to say, spell or write the word will not guarantee children will also understand what the word means. Kindle's work makes one question: are the say the word, write the word five times, spell the word orally, etc. activities really the best strategies for teaching vocabulary? These strategies for infusing vocabulary into the K-2 classroom discussed in this text are for long term or life long learning, they are not for the child to do this week and then forget.

Kindle realizes that time is very limited and instruction must be as focused as possible. She advocates assessing students to determine their needs and to promote their language development. By assessing in informal situations, such as listening to their verbal interactions in the learning centers, one will be able to plan and provide meaningful lessons infusing vocabulary.

Kindle advocates that one should make every moment count. She suggests that infusion be part of the day in every way from calendar time to recess to dismissal. I believe that many of the children in a program such as this will continue to be vocabulary-aware throughout their waking hours. These activities will be the ones used by children when they are "playing school." One activity (game) which the children are sure to use is "If you're happy and you know it—Grass style." In this game, the children use the familiar tune and add motions and their own words connected to the grass or outdoors. They will sing verses such as—Munch like a caterpillar (pretend to chew), Hum like a bee (make a buzzing noise), Hop like a rabbit (hop up and down), etc.

Each of the seven chapters has many "down to earth" activities using commonly available materials, for example, a box of crayons. The book seems to step beyond the ordinary vocabulary program and put meaning into the activities. When teachers follow Kindle's suggestions, students will learn. She offers idea after idea for the classroom teacher. These suggestions are not boring worksheets but fun activities to help the student connect each vocabulary word to his/her world. The infusion activities suggested are for the entire curriculum from music to math and are not to be kept just in the language arts class.

I cannot think of anyone who would not benefit from this book. It is one that I wish I could have had years ago. Kindle has written a book that definitely fills a void. She fills that void in a very good way; with her strategies more children will be able to be successful in building their vocabulary.

Lane, Barry (2008). *But How Do You Teach Writing? A Simple Guide for All Teachers*. New York: Scholastic.

Pages: 240 Price: \$25.99 ISBN: 978-0-545-02118-0

In this remarkably funny yet instructive book on the art of teaching how to write, Barry Lane instills new life into what would otherwise seem to be a mundane subject. After reading this practical teacher's guide, anyone who presupposes that teaching writing should conform to benchmarks or standards such as grammar, syntax, plot and character development, genre and editing will be amazed at how much joy and wit Lane brings to his craft. All rules and existing laws of literacy are thrown out in favor of such truisms as "An interesting story without an interesting character is not an interesting story" (p. 97) and "A strong horse will pull any cart" (p. 23) with regard to the positive correlation between children's reading levels rising in proportion to their interest level what they are reading. Lane advocates tirelessly for two things to stimulate young readers: creative, adaptive teachers and more interesting books so as to captivate their students.

In fact, poking fun at existing classroom pedagogy, Lane writes about the easiest way to start or find a new writing program for any writing teacher is to get up and look in the nearest mirror. He lauds this new program as having unlimited potential, having a vast knowledge base and being free of charge. However, the key is how to unlock this reservoir of knowledge and disseminate it in the classroom. Traditional ideas on preset assignment-based writing must be discarded and replaced by student choice of topics to write about and open-ended assignments whereby students can explore their own ideas. Lane states that all writing lessons come after teachers "hook" their pledges into become willing and ready writers. If all else fails, a good teacher will sit down, write and model writing for his or her students.

Inserted in the pages of a seemingly endless supply of humor in this guidebook, Lane offers readers concrete, creative and real ways to enhance student performance in writing both fiction and non-fiction. Beginning from his almost universal law of literacy that learning how to write is learning to tell the truth about something, Lane feeds teachers a constant stream of unconventional yet highly effective writing tips and tools, including empowering students to use their own ideas and imaginations, with a minimum of lesson-prompts from the teacher without a total loss of authority in the classroom. Encouraging less regimentation or linear information flow, either top-down or bottom-up between teachers and pupils, and a more free-flowing classroom model after "Feng Shui-ing" the normal patterns of communication works wonders. Students write for one another more than as grudging task completion.

Bad writing, or examples thereof, merit equal attention in this book as displays of good writing do. Everything including the author's own bad poetry and book reports from his early childhood are fair game. Lane even shares a few passages from his book report on Super Bowl winner Joe Namath, a great pro football quarterback, who he mistakenly refers to as an intelligent, caring writer. Another example is the botching of the title of his father-in-law's obituary in a newspaper, which read "Merchant Seaman Richard Worth Dies." Mr. Worth was an engineer who inspected safety standards in nuclear plants for most of his adult life. How absurd!

All in all, Barry Lane's book is a "must read" for anyone who wants to learn the good and the bad about the art of writing. One can only benefit from it.

Reviewed by Jim Lewis, Baylor University.

Leaf, Ronald; McEachin, John & Taubman, Mitchell (2008). *It's Time for School! Building Quality ABA Educational Programs for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders*. New York: DRL Books.

Pages: 274 Price: \$39.95 ISBN: 78-0-9755859-3-1

Sequence and order create an excellent blueprint for a successful program in any and all areas of education. The authors offer precisely such a guide in *It's Time for School! Building Quality ABA Educational Programs for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders*. The book provides a building block approach that identifies strategies including training and expectations to show what a quality program would look like in working with students with Autism Spectrum Disorders. Successful education programs in special education and all the nuances of the autism specialty area require a great deal of knowledge, experience, and guidance. This book provides a clear blueprint of What, When, Where, Why, and How to approach such an important component of

today's educational horizon.

Viewed from the eyes of a novice, the book leads a methodical journey that looks into the varied aspects of building, maintaining, and evaluating a quality ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) program. The strength of the book is the clearly delineated roles and responsibilities of all the stakeholders involved in the program's creation. *It's Time for School* builds the framework for a program, including the school, classroom and teacher. Placement models equip educators to make mission appropriate decisions about and for students. Functional assessment models include appropriate terminology to be used and when they are to be used is also discussed. The appendices include excellent training materials, checklists, and specific suggestions that are designed to fit discrete trial teaching and monitoring methodologies for all school personnel including counselors and especially special education teachers. School principals, especially those new to the position, will find the book valuable in increasing their knowledge base in an area that is so volatile, changing, and litigious.

The intent of the authors was an all inclusive work which is exactly and succinctly what they have provided to the educational community.

Reviewed by Jim Hawkins, Ph.D., Assistant Professor in Educational Leadership at Cameron University, Lawton, OK.

McClure, Ali (2008). *Making it Better for Boys in Schools, Families and Communities*. London: Network Continuum.

Pages: 163 Price: \$33.95 ISBN: 9781855394353

The "boy turn" (Weaver-Hightower, 2003) in educational and psychological research over the past fifteen years has yielded a number of highly regarded books across multiple disciplines in the popular press. Olga Silverstein and Beth Rashbaum's *The Courage to Raise Good Men* (1995), Michael Gurian's *The Wonder of Boys* (1996) and William Pollack's *Real Boys* (1998) are a trio of early bestsellers that set the terms for much of the mainstream discourse that was to come through this publication trend in understanding boys' emotional, physical and social development, as well as the reciprocal influences of these developmental trajectories. Among publications aimed specifically at teachers, William Brozo's *To Be a Boy, To Be a Reader* (2002), Thomas Newkirk's *Misreading Masculinities* (2002), Michael Smith and Jeffrey Wilhelm's *Reading Don't Fix No Chevys* (2002) and Ralph Fletcher's *Boy Writers* (2006) are particularly notable for their solid grounding in the precedent literature and their clear, practical advice for educators.

Now, on the shoulders of these giants, British educational consultant Ali McClure attempts a new synthesis of research findings and best practice recommendations for supporting boys' healthy development. McClure's take on the state of today's young male involves five "Big Issues for Boys": fear, blame, understanding, mentors and passion. McClure argues that a significant obstacle to fulfilling our collective social responsibility to raise boys into healthy, self-actualizing men is a pervasive mistrust of men who might otherwise serve as fine mentors but instead are suspected of harboring inappropriate motives for taking an interest in working with boys. Boys themselves are often labeled and seen through the lenses of toxic stereotypes as thugs, louts and little monsters, resulting in a climate in which many boys' energies and strengths are treated as defects, rather than celebrated as gifts from which dynamic, vibrant personalities might be molded. McClure's mission is thus to help parents and educators achieve a better understanding of boys' unique qualities and to empower adults – particularly men – to become mentors to help boys discover and pursue their passions. McClure promotes a mentorship model she calls SAGE, which stands for SAme GEnder and which involves mixed-age groups of boys working with an adult male mentor over an extended period of time.

Making it Better for Boys is based on a workshop that McClure regularly gives to parents and teachers, and it displays all of the benefits and limitations one might expect given such a provenance. Although the book is marketed for educators, its value is more for a general audience, as many of the references to effective curriculum initiatives and academic organizational structures are distinctly British and are not described in sufficient detail to orient the non-British reader. Readers outside of Great Britain will more likely find greater value in the sections aimed at parents and community leaders, which constitute the majority of the book. Rhetorically, McClure makes her points largely through personal anecdotes, occasionally compelling yet isolated statistics and factoids, sometimes awkward acronyms, and many, many bulleted lists and highlighted one-liners. These techniques can certainly contribute to a memorable speech or workshop. Based upon the comments about her workshops that McClure includes throughout her book, I have no doubt that she gives a great presentation. However, extended prose demands something different, and what can make a lasting impression live can also make for choppy, frustratingly disorganized discourse on the page. Unlike all of the books mentioned in the first paragraph of this review, none of the advice McClure offers is based on her own empirical research. Instead she relies on newspaper reports and secondary syntheses of research in

the popular press as warrant for her claims. Furthermore, citation throughout is sloppy, with many key sources given brief in-text citations but not presented in full in the book's reference section.

Ultimately, what *Making it Better for Boys* offers is good advice, particularly for parents. While some readers might fault McClure for essentializing gender differences, there is little that would be harmful to children, if implemented responsibly, and with the goal of honoring and celebrating each child's unique constellation of idiosyncrasies and talents. However, for a more detailed appreciation of the challenges facing boys today, the interested reader would do better either to consult any of the books cited earlier in this review or to see the recent Hollywood film *Role Models*, which succinctly covers all the points that McClure wishes to raise, but which uses its narrative medium more effectively to address them than does this book.

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Reviewed by Dr. Sean Kottke, Reading/Language Arts, The Robert B. Miller College, Binda School of Education, Battle Creek, MI.

Miller, Debbie (2008). *Teaching with Intention: Defining Beliefs, Aligning Practice, Taking Action*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

Pages: 149 Price: \$21.00 ISBN: 978-1-57110-387-1

Written in an informal, engaging style, and accompanied by numerous student work samples and color photographs, *Teaching with Intention* is intended to serve as a guide for teachers who want to go beyond scripted lessons and teach with real purpose. Author Debbie Miller first asks readers to define their personal philosophy of teaching, and then to think about how they might apply those beliefs when they organize their classrooms and teach their lessons. By providing detailed real world examples, Miller allows readers to see what a classroom that aligns beliefs and practices looks like. While the book is somewhat different from others with a similar theme—especially in terms of Miller's use of accessible language—the reader is reminded again and again of an adage familiar to many teachers and teacher educators, "In theory, there is no difference between theory and practice; in practice, there is."

As I read this book, I found two facets of myself, those of a current teacher educator and a former classroom teacher, literally at odds with another in much the same way that Tom from the *Tom and Jerry* cartoons often did. Faced with a defenseless Jerry before him, Tom would find an angel sitting on one shoulder and a devil sitting on the other, both urgently whispering as to how he should proceed. In my case, voices of the theorist and the practitioner each had their own piece to speak. The theorist (looking neatly dressed and armed with current research) would say, "Yes! This is wonderful!" while the practitioner (looking frazzled and sitting a desk overflowing with paperwork) would say, "Yeah, right."

It could be argued that the theory-practice gap is evident in almost any field, but perhaps it rings most true in teaching. Regardless of years of experience, all teachers struggle with the internal dialogue that arises when they are faced with being behind schedule while at the same time wanting to slow down to ensure their

students are really learning the material being taught. As Miller notes, many teachers find themselves asking, "Am I about covering and getting through, or am I about...giving them [students] the time and tools to understand big ideas deeply and well?" (p. 107). While nearly every teacher would assert their belief that teaching material deeply and well is better for students in theory, the pressing need to get through curriculum makes being able to do so in practice sometimes unrealistic, especially in the era of high-stakes testing. *Teaching with Intention* mentions the theory versus practice dilemma often, but seldom addresses it in a way that provides the reader with any concrete strategies.

For example, Miller's response to the question, "What do I do if district mandates run counter to my beliefs?" is frustratingly vague. She suggests "Take the high road" and "Don't let them defeat you" closely followed by "Do what you have to do [to keep your job]" (p. 20). Another example is with the question "Should I hurry up and finish, or should I take the time for the students to figure this out?" Here Miller offers the somewhat cryptic "At some point we reach a fork in the road," (p. 107) as the resolution. In short, while the reader is often reminded that the author herself has struggled with the theory versus practice dilemma, advice such as "Keep it simple" or "Be in the moment" do little to offer guidance for overworked teachers wishing to become more reflective, thoughtful practitioners. The in-depth vignettes provided from Miller's own teaching to illustrate that teachers *can* achieve "the luscious feeling of endless time" (p. 106) may leave the reader feeling overwhelmed by the work involved to reach this ideal.

However, one exercise presented by the author does bridge the theory versus practice divide quite smoothly—the vision statement. Miller advocates that to be purposeful in their pursuits, teachers must be clear about their teaching philosophy. As a result of reading this book, I recently wrote a vision statement of my own for the first time, and I have found it to be a simple yet powerful exercise which informs my teaching on a daily basis. Unfortunately only two pages are devoted to "defining beliefs" in the book, although Miller notes that it took her "the better part of a year" (p. 17) to write her own teaching philosophy. In addition, Miller argues that simply having beliefs is ultimately more important than the beliefs one holds. This premise doesn't quite ring true if, for example, a teacher states in his/her vision statement something along the lines of "I think students learn best with worksheets."

While *Teaching with Intention* is meant to be optimistic and empowering, many readers will find themselves pulled between listening to the "Yes! This is wonderful!" voice of the theorist and the "Yeah, right" voice of the practitioner. However, this is not necessarily a bad thing, and as such, *Teaching with Intention* is recommended for both teachers and teacher educators who want to work through the age-old theory versus practice struggle. Indeed, if Miller's story and classroom experiences are read and reflected on with the purpose of finding one's own solution to this ongoing dilemma, true teaching with intention might result.

Reviewed by Karrin S. Lukacs, a teacher educator at Marymount University in Arlington, Virginia.

Reeves, Douglas B. (2008). *Reframing Teacher Leadership to Improve Your School*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development..

Pages: 204 Price: \$24.25 ISBN: 978-1-4166-0666-6

In this book, Douglas Reeves outlines not only a new framework and set of guidelines for teacher leadership, but he also provides information about the step-by-step process to implement this framework. Each step of the process is documented with prior research and case examples from schools from a variety of contexts and environments. Written for both teachers and administrators, *Reframing Teacher Leadership to Improve Your School* is a comprehensive guide to school improvement, teacher empowerment, and increased student achievement.

In chapter one, Reeves asserts that action research is the new professional development. Action research produces a direct impact on student achievement, classroom practice, and sustained professional development. Far more than a stand-alone workshop, action research engages teachers directly in analyzing performance data, forming essential questions about that data, and then collaborating to discover answers that are not only logical but also applicable in their classrooms and schools. Essentially, action research applies the same growth mindset to teachers that great teachers apply to their students.

One of the most powerful pieces of evidence supporting action research and this new model of teacher leadership is the example of the Clark County School System in Clark County, Nevada. Comprised of 81 schools and 330,000 students, it is the fourth largest district in the United States (p. 2). Within this district, there are rural, suburban, and urban schools, and the student demographics vary widely from school to school. This district adopted Reeves's framework for teacher leadership and the incredibly positive results are documented throughout the text.

After establishing the basic assertion that action research is the model for teacher leadership and increased

academic achievement, Reeves establishes the need for a new model of leadership. Traditional leaders are retiring more quickly than new administrators are being trained to replace them. With this deficit, a new model must emerge. This requires that schools and districts redefine their hierarchies to identify and include non-traditional leaders. By finding natural leaders in their schools—the teachers other teachers approach with classroom challenges—administrators can formalize already existing structures. These teachers can then become hubs of action research and lead the implementation of professional development and effective classroom strategies. Once this leadership embraces widespread and sustained implementation of improvement efforts, excuses for lack of student achievement are banished and schools become solution oriented.

With the rationale for shared leadership established, Reeves outlines his proposed framework for teacher leadership. It is a seven-step process: recognition, research, results, reflection, reinforcement, rejection, and resilience. Recognition begins with truly confronting the school data and describing the current situation in the school. This step defines the problem in terms of the teachers' concerns—what they see in their classrooms and in their classroom data. Before this step can be fully implemented, it is important that some professional development about data is presented so that everyone understands how to read and interpret it.

The second step is forming a research question based on the data analysis and conducting the research. This research can be done by individual teachers, small groups, or whole schools. The essential characteristic is that teachers are actively engaged in action research. Reeves demonstrates that only through sustained implementation of a strategy—even a strategy that initially appears unsuccessful—can results truly be evaluated. Throughout the implementation of the research, teachers continually evaluate results and slightly modify their techniques if necessary.

At the end of the research study, it is critical that results are fully analyzed, and questions asked. What were the impacts of the strategy on the target area? Were there any residual effects in other areas? Was the research question answered? It is important to note that end of the year test data are not enough on which to base decisions. Formative and teacher-created assessments and observations are critical pieces of data that are often overlooked. Again, teachers utilize the data to frame the effectiveness of their strategies and interventions.

Once the data have been analyzed, teachers need to have time to truly reflect on the process. What did students learn? What did teachers learn? In addition to thinking about the results, teachers must also reflect on the process. This is where the true growth and impact on practice occurs.

Administrators become critical at this point in the process. It is imperative that they recognize and reinforce the findings that teachers have made. This formalizes the process and helps to ensure that the knowledge gained is disseminated. This recognition also includes acknowledging, and in some ways celebrating, failure. Even if a strategy is not successful, that knowledge can positively impact student achievement; sometimes knowing what not to do is just as important as knowing what to do.

The final two stages of the framework are rejection and resilience. In these stages, the school becomes a learning organization. In these cultures, successes are celebrated and effort is recognized. Accountability becomes a tool rather than a threat, and administrators and teachers struggle side by side to improve achievement for all students. Reeves convincingly outlines not only how to achieve this goal but also results that have been achieved in numerous schools when the goal is realized.

Reassuringly, Reeves does not assume that this process is easily implemented. He notes, "change is death" (p. 57) and schools must be able to mourn former models. Chapter five is dedicated to overcoming the three main barriers to implementing this framework: blame, bureaucracy, and baloney. Schools must abandon traditional scapegoats for student failure, such as demographics, lack of resources, or lack of time. In addition to providing suggestions for these specific obstacles, Reeves also provides specific cases of schools with traditionally difficult demographics or schedules that have implemented the framework successfully. Bureaucracy is overcome by replacing the traditional hierarchy of school systems, as described above, shifting the leadership role of the administrator from being the leader to seeking the leader. Finally, baloney—beliefs or practices adhered to without any evidence of their effectiveness. Because of the intangible nature of this barrier, it can be the most difficult to overcome, but Reeves outlines specific strategies for addressing and conquering baloney at all levels of the organization.

The final chapter is written specifically for administrators at all levels—school, district, state, and national. It provides specific strategies for implementing and reinforcing the framework for teacher leadership. One specific example is to hold a strategy "science fair," where teachers create trifold boards with beginning data on one side, strategies and interventions in the middle, and results and reflections on the other side. This type of activity not only acknowledges and celebrates teachers' work, but also provides a forum for dissemination and collaboration.

Perhaps of most interest to practitioners, are the multiple appendices dedicated to examples of and

resources for implementation of the framework. Appendix A provides actual action research reports from teachers in the Clark County School District; these examples provide teachers with specific examples of successful projects as they begin drafting their own. Appendices B, C, D, E, F, and G provide templates and completed examples of research proposals, scoring rubrics for proposals, research reports, and findings reports. Appendix H provides specific step-by-step guidelines for organizing the "science fair" outlined above. Finally, Appendix I provides a form that teachers can use as they view the "science fair" projects in order to gather valuable information they could implement in the classroom.

In addition to these concrete resources, Reeves has also established a website: www.teacher-leadership.info. On this website, he offers free study guides for this text, additional research support for the framework and its implementation, and electronic copies of the forms in the appendices. It also features a bulletin board for successes and failures as schools implement this framework. Reeves's goal is to begin a dialogue with practitioners and sustain the initial work of this text.

Although this framework for teacher leadership is certainly not easily implemented, Reeves presents a logical, evidence-based argument and step-by-step plan to make it possible. *Reframing Teacher Leadership to Improve Your School* is a tool that every achievement and improvement-oriented teacher and administrator should have in their toolbox.

Reviewed by Heather Bower, a doctoral student in the School of Education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is a former teacher and central office administrator with an interest in school culture and academic press.

Tate, Marcia L. (2008). *Mathematics Worksheets Don't Grow Dendrites: 20 Numeracy Strategies That Engage the Brain, PreK-8*. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press.

Pages: 171 Price: \$70.00(hardcover) \$33.95(paperback) ISBN: 978141295332(hardcover) 978-1-4129-5333-7(paperback)

Marcia Tate has identified 20 strategies that she recognizes as "brain-compatible" and thus able to engage, motivate, and help students to remember mathematics skills and concepts. She cites the works of Gardner, 1983; McCarthy, 1990; Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2000; Jensen, 2001; Sousa, 2006, 2007; Tate, 2003 and Wolfe, 2001 to back her identification of these 20 strategies since "they result in long-term retention of information" (p. ??).

Tate cites the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) *Standards* (2000) and makes use of the latest document the organization developed for the elementary and middle school students, *Curriculum Focal Points* (2006). She utilizes these Focal Points in her examples of activities for each of the 20 strategies featured in this book.

There are twenty chapters in the book, one per strategy; each chapter begins with the definition of the strategy and follows with examples of how to develop it for each grade level, pre-k through eighth grade. A theoretical framework backed by quotes from literature as to why the strategy works is also given. Each chapter ends with a form for teachers to record ideas of how they will incorporate the strategy into their mathematics lessons.

Tate says in her introduction that many of these strategies are part of the repertoire of most lower elementary teachers. Because of their elementary nature I am not sure, even with the theoretical framework Tate provides, that upper grade teachers will think they are useful. The other question that came to mind as I read through the book: will some of these strategies interfere with the development of a deep **understanding** of the mathematics concepts. A number of the strategies are at the recall or knowledge level. An example of one such strategy is in the storytelling chapter where a story is used to help students remember how to solve equations. The story has terms in the equation moving across the equal sign without regard to the mathematical reasons why this is possible. Of course, the examples given are supposed to serve as an impetus for teachers to develop their own activities. Let us hope that if teachers use the book they will incorporate activities that help develop deep understanding of the mathematics being taught. Engaging students is important but once engaged we want students to understand the mathematics. Remembering the rules is not enough.

Tate ends her book with two useful resources: a list of mathematics books that can be read to or by students and a section on lesson plan design to help teachers incorporate these 20 "brain-compatible" strategies into their instruction.

I would recommend this book to teachers who are searching for additional strategies to vary their approach to topics. When suggested, it would be with caution and the suggestion that teachers, especially middle school

teachers to develop activities that go beyond the knowledge level and truly help students grow dendrites by thinking through the processes and gaining an understanding of why these processes work.

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Reviewed by Merle T. Harris, Independent Professional Development Consultant working with the Algebra Project. Presently working in the Petersburg, Virginia School District and in several schools in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Wild, Monique; Mayeaux, Amanda & Edmonds, Kathryn (2008). *TeamWork: Setting the Standard for Collaborative Teaching, Grades 5-9.* Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

Pages: 161 Price: \$18.00 ISBN: 978-157110-711-4

Wild, Mayeaux and Edmonds create credibility in *Teamwork: Setting the Standard for Collaborative Teaching, Grades 5-9* because they have done just that. They were the recipients of the Disney Teacher Award in 2006, being the first interdisciplinary team to earn the award.

The principle seems simple, teachers who teach the same kids should work together, but anyone in education knows that enacting that belief is not so simple for a variety of reasons. Teachers each have individual personalities, character traits, teaching practices and values. Usually teachers have different sets of beliefs in terms of what to do in their individual classroom. An example would be a policy for late work. One teacher might believe that late work should not be accepted because students should learn to adhere to a schedule and follow through. Another teacher might believe that late work should be accepted because the goal is to gauge the student's learning, no matter when it is turned in.

While either policy is valid, the authors believe the most important part of an interdisciplinary team is to discuss these policies and rules to come up with consistency throughout the team. The team must work through those obstacles to create the best learning environment possible for the students. As teachers our viewpoints are only valuable in regards to how they serve to create success for the students. The teachers on a team should discuss, without getting emotional or taking things personally, the reasons for the rules and policies of each of the teachers. With that, the team should come to an agreement as to what should be done across the team for uniformity, so that all work for what is best for students.

The style of the book is accommodating to teachers as it not only provides a researched background for why teachers should work cooperatively with their teaching partners to help the students, but also the nuts and bolts of how to do it. Wild, Mayeaux and Edmonds give teachers insight into their own struggles and strategies, and arm the reader with meaningful "ready-to-use" ideas and artifacts, including letters home,

rubrics and other organizational documents. The authors provide a team of teachers with the background information and resources to become a successful interdisciplinary team, and don't worry – they don't expect us to be perfect at it either!

Reviewed by Erica Aaron, 5th grade teacher, St. Stephen the Martyr School—Blue Ribbon Awardee, Omaha, NE.



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