



## education review // reseñas educativas

a multi-lingual journal of book reviews

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

reseñas educativas (Spanish)  
resenhas educativas (Portuguese)

### Brief reviews for August 2009

**Boushey, Gail & Moser, Joan. (2009). *The Café Book: Engaging All Students in Daily Literacy Assessment and Instruction*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.**

**Pages: 204 Price: \$22.00 ISBN: 9781571107282**

*The CAFE Book* presents a unique, yet practical way to provide effective reading instruction in the elementary classroom. This approach balances careful instruction with meaningful assessment of student learning. The authors, Gail Boushey and Joan Moser, begin by sharing their personal vignettes about the creation of the book. The authors speak from an experienced point of view, describing how this system has improved their teaching. They quickly introduce the CAFÉ concept in a way that teachers will identify with. The CAFE system is an acronym for Comprehension, Accuracy, Eluency, and Expanding vocabulary.

This system includes several components that are described in each of the seven chapters. The CAFÉ approach incorporates individual reading conferences with students, small-group instruction based, and whole-class instruction focused on the needs of the students. The authors provide their rationale for this type of individualized instruction, supported by current research. They share solutions to common classroom assessment concerns including:

- Organizing assessment data
- Tracking student goals to focus instruction
- Implementing flexible groups
- Creating student independence leading to proficiency

Chapters focus on a variety of topics including the essentials of a notebook of anecdotal notes when implementing individual reading conferences, the process for guiding both beginning and advanced readers and whole group instruction. The authors present a systematic progression of steps whenever a new reading strategy is introduced. Detailed explanations of how to conduct conferences with students are included. One chapter titled “Eavesdropping on Some Conferences” allows the reader to do just that. Taking this glimpse into an innovative classroom will encourage teachers to consider many of the practices suggested by Boushey and Moser.

Despite the thorough description of lessons, strategies and assessments, many teachers may still have questions about this approach to reading instruction, such as “What are all of the other kids doing when they are not working with me?” The authors refer often to their earlier book *The Daily Five*, which sets the stage for the reading workshop style, management and lays out a structure for keeping all students engaged in productive literacy work for every hour of the day.

Stories and reflections from the authors are easy for the reader to relate to. Conference dialogue, teacher modeling and scripted outlines for student conferences are integrated within the chapters. The text includes photos, sample forms and lists of children’s books for teaching various strategies. Sample schedules for structuring the literacy block are also included throughout the book. The appendix includes over 60 pages of resources that will allow teachers to implement the suggested reading strategies. All resources are also included in the CD that is included in the text.

The CAFÉ system is not your traditional classroom teaching. The authors present a very student-centered approach. This may be difficult for some teachers to consider. The authors may not convince the traditional basal teachers that this is a feasible system. They do acknowledge that there are obstacles and they present solutions to problems that they have encountered throughout the text.

The authors stress that this system doesn’t require expensive materials or training. It isn’t “one more thing” you need to add on, but a meaningful way to engage in literacy learning with your students. This idea connects to the current need to differentiate through the selection of choices through the CAFÉ menu. This flexible system addresses the essential components of effective reading instruction in a creative and meaningful way.

*The CAFE Book* would be a great resource for teachers looking to try a new approach to teaching literacy. It provides promising practices for teachers to implement at the elementary level. Interesting ideas are combined with concrete examples to reveal a unique way to address literacy instruction and assessment.

## References

Boushey, G & Moser, J. (2006). *The daily five: Fostering literacy independence in the elementary grades*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.

**Reviewed by Jacie Maslyk, M. Ed., Principal, Crafton Elementary School, Pittsburgh, PA. and a doctoral candidate in Curriculum and Instruction at Indiana University of Pennsylvania.**

---

**Carter, Erik W.; Cushing, Lisa S. & Kennedy, Craig. H. (2009). *Peer Support Strategies for Improving All Students' Social Lives and Learning*. Baltimore, MD Paul H. Brookes.**

**Pages: 160 Price: \$29.95 ISBN: 978-1-55766-843-1**

The title of this book is titillating from the onset for researcher and practitioner alike. Rarely does teacher research focus on peer support and even more rarely does it set off evaluating results from the perspective of, not just learning, but social adequacy and well-being. This is precisely what *Peer Support Strategies for Improving All Students' Social Lives and Learning* seeks to evaluate and quantify: no long winded academic debate about the values or sins of inclusion here. The theoretical values of inclusive education are deemed accepted and, after a brief chapter on inclusive legislative provisions around the word, the authors quickly move on to review specific peer-based mechanisms which can and should enrich learners' experiences.

The key appeal of this textbook is its pragmatism. No illusory belief from the authors that inclusion, or peer support, are easily achieved and always successful. A chapter such as "The Practice and Promise of Peer Support Intervention" (p. 7) is thankfully quickly followed by one such as "Identifying Peers Support Participant" (p. 39) and the preoccupations here are not ethereal academic considerations, rather very grounded concerns clearly compiled from grass root experience.

The main contention of this easily digestible book is as straight forward as they come: "Schools are rich reservoirs of natural support. And, students are often among the most over looked and underutilized avenues for supporting inclusive education on any elementary, middle, or high school campus" (p. 39). Having surveyed quite scrupulously the issues that plague the presence of paraprofessionals in the classroom and hinder the benefit of some of their work (p. 9), the authors establish a premise that is reminiscent of Vitgosky 'scaffolding' theory, though surprisingly his work does not appear in the manual's references: peers can offer the best learning support there is, at minimal cost and with no disruption to the child's social integration at school. The authors succinctly summarize their theoretical positioning, "Collectively, findings from these studies are challenging the wide spread - and often exclusive use - of paraprofessionals to support school inclusion and suggest students with severe disabilities may actually have more interactions with their classmates and be more academically engaged when receiving support from their peers" (p. 14).

The arguments of possible detractors who might still doubt the benefits of inclusion are quickly countered with a barrage of references to existing literature showing that the benefits observed are not limited to the child with special needs receiving peer support. The issue of benefits and detriments to students offering support is covered through framed boxes of research and observations within the text entitled "Behind the Strategies" (p.15, 19 and 60) and is rendered very palatable without interrupting the main flow and focus of the book which is not just to contemplate this idea but to help paraprofessionals "Implement(ing) Peer Supports in the Classroom" (p. 69).

Having established their premise with clarity and ample reference to existing literature, the authors seamlessly consider creation, implementation and evaluation of such projects in high school. Chapters 4 through 7 consider exhaustively all practical issues such campaigns can give rise to. The care and detail shown by the authors in considering practical implementation is exemplary and the wealth of this textbook lies without a doubt in its ability to explore pragmatic issues with minutia while presenting up to date, synthetic and comprehensive literature as background. A practitioner interested in pursuing the idea of peer support within his or her school will find within the volume methods to identify suitable peer volunteers (p. 39), material to train these students (p. 53), advice for the paraprofessional surveying the project on issues such as fading adult support (p. 71) and evaluation (p. 94), together with the pro forma documentation that an administrator might require (p. 119). Researchers on the other hand will be able to dig with contentment in the thorough and up-to-date reference section and refresh their current understanding of the notions of inclusion, peer support and emotional well-being of children experiencing difficulties through the numerable "Behind the Strategies" boxes which adorn the text.

One of the only slight caveats one might have regarding the research and the tools presented in this manual would be the absence of specific analysis regarding gender variations in behaviour. Adolescent development theorists have shown discrepancies in the social behaviour of boys and girls in just about every field from risk taking (Homik, 2003) to use of the Internet (Huffaker & Calvert, 2005). One can only hypothesize that there must also be marked idiosyncrasies in the way boys and girls adopt and use social support networks.

In these days when the wider well-being of students with disabilities is finally recognised in legislative policies and provisions (No Child Left Behind Act 2001; Department of Education and Skills, 2004), it is a relief to discover a textbook which explores this in a more than perfunctory or solely academic way. There are many facets which must be investigated

to genuinely identify well-being, adaptation and positive school outcomes in the case of students with disabilities, and peer mechanisms clearly require scrutiny. Standard academic testing is not sufficient to assess needs, implement policies or evaluate success. Too often practitioners find themselves having to implement idealistic policies with few ready made tools. This textbook fills the gap as far as peer support mechanisms are concerned and provides hands on techniques for a teacher or administrator seeking to implement inclusive policies in the here and now.

Much research remains to be carried out when it comes to observing these peer support systems at work and this is perhaps where this textbook is thinner in content. Longitudinal analyses of outcomes have yet to be carried out. The benefits of such support systems beyond the class and their possible development away from the scrutiny of teachers must be studied too. The resilience of students with disabilities beyond high school and their ability to create or find similar peer support networks at later stages of life and education is also a topic that begs investigation. Lastly, in an era marked by the unprecedented use of technology in the classroom and the infiltration of online social networking to all levels of adolescent life (Calvert, 2002; Boyd & Ellison, 2007), it is doubtful that these numerous new tools have failed to have a major impact on how peer support groups are formed and used by students with disabilities. Perhaps this could be discussed in a future chapter in the next edition?

## References

- Boyd, D..M., & Ellison, N.B. (2007) Social network sites: Definition, history and scholarship. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13(1), 210-230.
- Calvert, S., L. (2002). Identity construction on the Internet. In: S.L. Calvert, A.B. Jordan, & R.R. Cocking (Eds.), *Children in the Digital Age: Influences of Electronic Media on Development*, pp. 57-70. Westport, CT: Praeger
- Department of Education and Skills (2004). *Every child matters*. London: DES
- Hornik, R. (2003) Alcohol, tobacco and Marijuana use among youth. Same-time and lagged and simultaneous-change associations in a nationally representative sample of 9-18 year olds. In D. Romer (Ed.) *Reducing adolescent risk: Toward an integrated approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Huffaker, D., & Calvert, S.L. (2005) Gender, identity and language use in teenage blogs, *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 10(2). Retrieved July 1, 2009 from <http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol10/issue2/huffaker.html>
- No Child Left Behind Act 2001. Pub. L. No. 107-110.

**Reviewed by Frederic Fovet, College Northside.**

---

**Fox, Jennifer. (2008). *Your Child's Strengths: Discover Them, Develop Them, Use Them*. New York: Viking Penguin.**

**Pages: 334   Price: \$24.95   ISBN: 978-670-01876-5**

Our school of education is located in one small building and it includes the departments of special education, teacher education, counseling and nursing. A school psychologist, counselor, associate dean and I would meet twice a month in this building to gather and synthesize research on parental involvement in schools. While meeting, the chair of our department of special education handed the faculty Jennifer Fox's *Your Child's Strengths*. Once a few of us read the book, we hurried to meet and discuss its implications on education. As I read the book, I could hear the words of a song by Alicia Keys, *Unbreakable*, in the background.

Give back like Bill and Camille  
Be rich like Oprah and Steadman  
Or instead struggle like Flo and James Evans  
'Cause he ain't no different from you  
And she ain't no different from me  
So we got to live our dreams – *Unbreakable* (2005).

The song talks about being resilient, to stick with what you do best and what makes you happy. It is a great introduction to this book and the concepts in it. The inspiration that led to this book originated from Fox witnessing the birth of a friend's baby. The event reminded her that every child came into the world bearing strengths and gifts. She imagined ways in which she could keep all children strong, like this new born baby, despite life's ups and downs. She began to think of her own childhood and how she started optimistic and strong and yet events occurred that made her no longer interested in developing her strengths. She had seen the same things happen to so many bright children over the years in her roles as teacher and administrator. The book is the result.

The book is organized in three main parts. Part 1 addresses mental modes and practices that contribute to the weakening of children. Part 2 describes strengths and offers parents, teachers and schools rationales and strategies for helping children identify and develop them. Finally part 3 is a workbook for parents, children, teachers and schools. This part of the book contains a strengths inventory for adults and children, worksheets, recommended resources for schools, and information on a four-year high school program to create a strengths-based community. This book is intended for the use of parents,

teachers and preschool through high school educational leaders.

The main point, explored utilizing different examples, is that for children to have successful lives and America to be able to compete globally, the United States will need to abandon education as we know it. Fox asserts that the needs of the future will be collaborators, innovators, adaptable and activating people. One way to change this is to help children discover their strengths and avoid a life full of weakness. In chapters 1-3, the author identifies ideas and practices that weaken children: traditional classrooms/schools, hierarchy of valued learning styles, requiring students to learn outdated content they will never utilize, penalizing children for not being interested in certain subjects, placing the entire responsibility of learning on children, and standardization. Traditional classrooms/schools are identified as hierarchies, teacher lead and controlled discussions, questions and answers.

When teachers and parents teach only using their dominant styles, not all children are reached. If we use only one way to teach, children may never have an opportunity to learn their strengths. Parents and teachers make choices that make them comfortable, that accommodates their learning styles and places the success of the teacher and parent over the success of the child. If Thomas Edison were in class today, his teacher would describe him as needing to focus more, sit still and he would not have been a good test taker. Edison wrote that his teachers didn't sympathize with him, called him mentally challenged and his own father called him stupid. Edison, with the help of his mother found the things that would interest and energize him and his mother let him guide his own learning (p. 22).

The use of outdated content as a weakening agent used in schools is also discussed. A question is posed by the author, "Is what was relevant 10 years ago, still relevant today?" (pg. 11). Fox writes that many children are unmotivated to learn because the content is outdated and students do not see the importance of what they are learning. According to Fox, true learning takes place when what you learn is explicitly connected to how the information studied will improve one's life.

Standardization is another weakening agent identified in the book. Fox differentiates between children being well educated and good test takers. She suggests that assessments should explore what children know, how they can engage with the subject, explore the subject, create meaning and infuse their culture. According to Fox, most standardized tests rely on short term memory and do not give information about what the child knows and understands about the subject. Fox points out that what is tested is not always what is taught. The author makes the case for the weakening messages sent to children who do not outperform or perform as well as others.

If a child is not living up to their potential what do you do? First, figure out why this is so. Teachers and parents need to figure it out together, with the child. The child's strengths should be taken into consideration, along with information we know about parental and teacher preferences. Overemphasizing a child's personality as though it is a variable to be changed communicates to children that the only way they can be successful is to change the unchangeable (p. 24).

A discussion concerning learning can go in several directions. One can assume that when a child is not meeting the standards they have a deficit/disability or one can assume that there is a "teaching, parenting or school disability" (p.56). In Chapter 4, Fox presents a strong case against the current practices in education and the relationship with a 300% increase in children identified as learning disabled. The author points out that most learning disabilities are more a function of the environment rather than a brain abnormality. In many cases there is a mismatch between the teaching style and the child's learning style and it may manifest itself as a disability. The author states that when a child is in a setting where others are learning easier, and that child is having difficulties, the difference becomes a disability. Fox identifies, after school care, diet, antiquated school systems and increased pressure to perform academically as other contributing factors to learning problems. Fox presents a strong correlation between increased funding for disabilities and the increased identification of students with specific learning disabilities. Schools do not receive funding for children who learn differently only for children with disabilities. There is no agreed upon discrepancy, a method most often used to determine a disability, between states. Fox asserts that many children identified as learning disabled are excellent students outside the traditional classroom and school.

The label disability has as much to do with the setting and the requirements of the setting as the person. The setting most responsible for the proliferation of the term learning disability is the traditional school. If all schools work off the same model then a student will be disabled in every school that uses that model. Schools must be willing to depart from the traditional methods used to teach and assess performance. Schools that are willing to do depart from those methods will do a great service in addressing the issue of learning disabilities (pg. 57).

Fox presents steps to discover and develop strengths that build upon works by Marcus Buckingham and speaks to strengths. Fox identifies learning, activity and relationship strengths. The learning strengths are identified as Logical-Mathematical, Social-Interpersonal, Bodily-Kinesthetic, Auditory, Linguistic, and Spatial. You have to read the book because these strengths have a unique twist and are presented in a manner different than previous multiple intelligences and learning styles works. Adults need to help set the stage for children to learn their strengths.

Part 3 provides a path for any organization to create a program based on strengths. Fox encourages a specific person to be assigned to coordinate the strengths agenda and keep it moving forward. Teachers can work with leaders to identify and develop their own strengths. Projects and problem-based learning supports children to develop their strengths as they work in teams to explore and create. Awards for activities and relationship strengths is encouraged.

This summary does not give the breadth and depth of the book justice. Chapter 6 talks about the good, bad and ugly

contributions of educational theories on education. Chapter 9 identifies barriers and bridges to a life of strengths. Appendix B provides concrete examples of issues with traditional assessments. Appendix C is full of resources practitioners and parents can use today.

As an emerging scholar whose research is primarily in the area of educational practices and theories, I believe this book will challenge the thinking of educational practitioners, parents and policy makers. Too often students are limited in how they may access the curriculum. The Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) holds at the heart the intent for all students to be able to access the general curriculum in the most appropriate manner. By identifying the ideas and practices that weaken children and emphasizing learning, activity and relationship strengths, this book provides practical information on how parents, schools and teachers can ensure that no child is left behind.

## References

Keys, A. (2005). *Unbreakable*. Milwaukee, WI: EMI Music.

**Reviewed by Yvette Latunde, an Assistant professor of Special Education. Her research focuses on practical issues that arise in academic achievement for cultural and linguistically diverse learners, such as traditional school models, teacher and administration preparedness to work with diverse learners and families, alternate assessments and the impact of class and culture on instruction. She is currently investigating instructional equity for diverse learners and parental involvement.**

---

**Gorow, Teena R., & Muller, Susan, M. (2008). *The ABC's of Wellness for Teachers: An A-Z Guide to Improving Your Well-Being in the Classroom and Out*. Indianapolis, IN: Kappa Delta Pi.**

**Pages: 88    Price: \$14.95    ISBN: 978-0-912099-47-7**

Teaching is a demanding profession that takes a great deal of time and energy. It is essential for teachers to achieve a healthy balance between their personal and professional needs in order to sustain and renew their passion and enthusiasm in the classroom. The third book published by Kappa Delta Pi in the ABC's series on teaching, *The ABC's of Wellness for Teachers: An A-Z Guide to Improving Your Well-Being in the Classroom and Out*, offers practitioners expert advice on how to develop a healthy and balanced lifestyle amidst the daily responsibilities of teaching.

Wellness is an expanded idea of health that is determined by the decisions we make about how we live our lives. A state of well-being is acquired when there is a balance in the six aspects of life: social, intellectual, physical, emotional, occupational, and spiritual (National Wellness Institute, 2007). The authors focus on the interaction of these six mental wellness aspects and how they continually influence our daily lives throughout this concise, uplifting book.

Teachers at all stages of their careers will find this alphabetically arranged guide useful for its wide variety of self-improvement strategies, classroom ideas, and reflective practices as they strive for happiness, success, and a sense of purpose. Teena Ruark Gorow and Susan Marie Muller, both previous classroom teachers, provide quick tips for improving personal growth, time management, and stress avoidance among others. These practical suggestions are accompanied by humorous illustrations and teacher-friendly icons to draw the reader's attention to additional wellness pointers, professional advice, and words of wisdom.

The tone of the book is upbeat and the entries are short and understandable. A valuable self-scoring, wellness assessment tool and individual wellness planner is included at the end of the book. *The ABC's of Wellness for Teachers* is a timely and refreshing self-improvement book filled with helpful advice and new insights for everyday teaching situations. It would make a wonderful teacher appreciation gift!

## References

National Wellness Institute. (2007). *The six dimensional model of wellness*. Retrieved June 25, 2009, from <http://www.nationalwellness.org>

**Reviewed by Cheryl K. Snyder, a doctoral candidate and graduate teaching assistant in the Department of Special Education at the University of Kansas. Her areas of professional interest include emergent literacy development, inclusive strategies for young learners, and early childhood unified teacher education.**

---

**Gurian, Michael; Stevens, Kathy & Daniels, Peggy. (2009). *Successful Single-Sex Classrooms: A Practical Guide to Teaching Boys & Girls Separately*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.**

**Pages: 268    Price: \$29.95    ISBN: 978-0-7879-9732-8**

In August 1995, Shannon Faulkner became the first female student to enroll in the Citadel, an all-male military college after a two and a half year legal battle 2002 (Faludi 1995; Brown 2002). In 2008, there were 866 female students comprising 26.1 % of the total enrollment at the Citadel (Citadel Office of Institutional Research 2008). The increase in female enrollment at the Citadel over the past decade reflects the success of women in integrating one the most stringent, male dominated

educational settings. However, a new trend in education appears to be emerging which advocates a return to single-sex classrooms and schools. The book, *Successful Single-Sex Classrooms: A Practical Guide to Teaching Boys & Girls Separately* was written for teachers who work in single-sex schools and classrooms for grades K-12. Teachers who are looking for new techniques to engage their students may find the book useful as well.

The book is well organized containing diagrams and charts to illustrate its points. There are bulleted summaries included at the end of each chapter. There is substantial input included from practicing teachers, students, and parents. Several journals from teachers documenting their successes as well as their frustrations in implementing single-sex classrooms are included. The book covers topics such as why single-sex classrooms are needed, how to implement a single-sex program, and which methods are most useful in teaching male and female students.

The authors, Michael Gurian (a social philosopher, family therapist and corporate consultant), Kathy Stevens (a former music teacher and educational program administrator), and Peggy Daniels (a former classroom teacher and school administrator) are on staff at the Gurian Institute which conducts research and training on gender differences in learning and development. Although none of the authors' biographies indicate a background in medicine, neuroscience, or educational psychology, the primary intent of the book is to explain that there are differences in male and female brains and that gender based activities can be used by teachers to maximize the learning potential of students. Books written about the gender differences located in the brain are used to support arguments for differentiated education. Other evidence included testimonials from teachers detailing the practices that were used in their single-sex classrooms.

The research on brain differences between male and female students was based on brain imaging techniques used while the subjects were reading and listening. One of the cited studies had as few as 38 participants: 19 male and 19 female (p. 22). Using biological differences to advocate separate schooling based on gender is reminiscent of the Clarke's treatise, *Sex in Education, or a Fair Chance for Girls*, (1873), written to advocate biological, emotional, and intellectual reasons for educating women differently and separately from men. Clarke wrote, "...the discussion of the irrepressible woman-question, and many of the efforts for bettering her education and widening her sphere, seem to ignore any difference of the sexes; seem to treat her as if she were identical with man, and to be trained in precisely the same way; as if her organization, and consequently her function, were masculine, not feminine" (1873, p. 3).

Clarke was writing specifically against the co-education of girls. Gurian, Stevens, and Daniels expressed their concern that boys are at risk in co-ed classrooms because boys are reading less books, are receiving more discipline referrals and fewer college degrees than women (pp. 32-33). It is ironic that female students are now surpassing male students in a school system that was originally designed by males to teach males. The authors also make arguments for single-sex education for boys and girls based on their "learning strengths" which emphasize movement, space, and competition for boys and emotions and social interactions for girls (pp. 89-97, 103, 108-111, 121-123, 126-129).

Neither Clarke nor the book authors discuss increasing academic achievement in great length. However, the book includes testimonials from teachers which include strategies for teaching specific topics in ways that they thought would appeal to each gender. For example, a competitive card game called Kryto was recommended by one teacher to teach arithmetic operations to boys and a group-based, finger counting activity called Single Hands Math was suggested to teach girls multiplication (pp. 154-155, 194). The activities suggested by teachers were one of the strengths of the book. Other teachers may find the games and group work innovating enough to try them in their own classrooms whether they are single-sex or not. The different examples how to build relationships between students, schools, parents, and community may also be appealing to some educators (pp. 228-229, 231, 244-250).

The lack of hard evidence demonstrating that single-sex schools actually improve academic achievement is one of the weaknesses of the book especially in the age of accountability. Learning is based on more than biological and hormonal differences. The student and parent opinion surveys included for evaluating programs after implementation measure the comfort and confidence levels of students (pp. 75-81). The findings from over 50 years of research on single-sex schools in Britain indicated that there no difference in educational achievement for girls or boys educated separately (Asthana, 2006). Similar results are being found in the United States and there is a lack of test scores to support single-sex schooling (Friend 2007; Byrd 2008; Hahn 2009; Schultz 2009). In fact, research from Tel Aviv University (Anonymous, 2008) demonstrated that both boys and girls learn better when they are educated together. Although the testimonials from teachers will be helpful to other teachers looking for new ideas, school administrators in the face of tight budget cuts need concrete evidence of increased academic achievement before investing in single-sex classrooms and schools as described in the book.

Another weakness is that the book overlooks the centuries of successful male and female students in co-educational settings. A deficiency also shared by Clarke, who wrote, "The fact that women have often equalled and sometimes excelled men in physical labor, intellectual effort, and lofty heroism, is sufficient proof that women have muscle, mind, and soul, as well as men; but it is no proof that they have had, or should have, the same kind of training..." (1873, p. 5). In a similar fashion, the book stated, "The research now indicates that girls are closing the gap with boys in the areas of math and science, and also making strides in improving their technology skills" (p. 32). Girls are succeeding yet it is still recommended that they be taught differently and separately from boys.

According to the book, the alarm has been sounded only for the boys. The reasons listed by the book varied from the reading habits of boys as compared to girls to predictions of future drug and alcohol abuse (pp. 32-33). The authors did not establish that any of the listed reasons were the result of teaching male and female students together.

*Successful Single-Sex Classrooms: A Practical Guide to Teaching Boys & Girls Separately* did not convince me that this was a feasible solution to the problems of low academic achievement in American schools. Practicing teachers and pre-

service teachers will be interested in trying the sample lesson plans on math, science, and reading in their classes whether they are single-sex or co-educational settings. The suggestions for improving the classroom environment might also be fun to try. The book could be a great source for researchers interested in studying the history of education, the philosophy of education, single-sex classrooms, and educational methods. As far as arguments for teaching male and female students separately, we only have to look back to our recent history and remember the lessons of the Citadel.

## References

Anonymous. (2008, May 5). American Friends of Tel Aviv University; Keep boys and girls together, TAU research suggests. *News Rx Science*. 94. Retrieved May 29, 2009 from ProQuest database.

Asthana, A. (2006, June 25). Single-sex schools 'no benefit for girls'. *The Observer*. Retrieved on May 29, 2009 from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2006/jun/25/schools.gender>

Brown, L.M. (2002). Surviving the Citadel. *Black Issues in Higher Education*, 19(7), 12-13. Retrieved June 5, 2009 from Research Library database (Document ID: 122836231).

Byrd, R. (2008, February 8). Single-sex: Positive results found at Hook Junior High in Victorville Instructors, principal discover changes in behavior. *McClatchy-Tribune Business News*. Retrieved May 29, 2009 from ProQuest database.

Citadel Office of Institutional Research. (2008). *Profile for the Citadel Fall 2008 enrollment by gender*. Retrieved June 5, 2009 from [http://www.citadel.edu/instresearch/fall08/cit\\_gender.htm](http://www.citadel.edu/instresearch/fall08/cit_gender.htm).

Clarke, E. H. (1873). *Sex in Education, or a Fair Chance for Girls*. Retrieved June 5, 2009 from Project Gutenberg Online Books Catalog, [http://www.gutenberg.org/catalog/world/readfile?fk\\_files=236229&pageno=2](http://www.gutenberg.org/catalog/world/readfile?fk_files=236229&pageno=2) .

Faludi, S. (1995, August 23). For Shannon Faulkner, Strength in Numbers. *New York Times*. Retrieved June 5, 2009 from <http://www.nytimes.com>.

Friend, J. (2007). Single-Gender Public Education And Federal Policy: Implications of Gender-Based School Reforms in Philadelphia. *American Educational History Journal*, 34(1/2), 55. Retrieved May 29, 2009, from ProQuest database.

Hahn, V.S. (2009, February 20). Dividing boys, girls grow exponentially. *McClatchy-Tribune Business News*. Retrieved May 29, 2009 from ProQuest database.

Schulz, F. (2009, May 23). Single-gender classrooms go before board. *McClatchy-Tribune Business News*. Retrieved May 29, 2009 from ProQuest database.

**Reviewed by Stephanie Nicole Robinson, PhD, faculty, Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership, Walden University, Baltimore, Maryland.**

---

**Major, Marc R. (2008). *The Teacher's Survival Guide: Real Classroom Dilemmas and Practical Solutions*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Education.**

**Pages: 360   Price: \$36.95   ISBN: 1-57886-816-5**

The author introduces *The Teacher's Survival Guide* as a guidebook--quick to point out that, "a guidebook is not a rulebook ..." and as such, he "[does] not purport to present a perfect system that guarantees flawless teaching" (2008, p. ix). This statement establishes that the book will attempt to guide teachers, especially those new to the field, through common issues and oft-experienced dilemmas. What it also establishes is the author's casual, congenial, but always practical, tone and his humble attempt to cull large amounts of wisdom from teachers, research and first-hand experience to pass along to the reader.

Though the author's overall tone is conversational and the chapters generally read in a linear fashion, the book is unique in that it can be picked up, thumbed through, and used as a quick reference as well. This is due in large part to incredibly well-planned organization of the material and smart layout. From the broad organization of chapters to the details of the page design and its numerous bold titles and subtitles, the book strikes an amazing balance between quick guide and literary read.

Major maintains a knowledgeable tone throughout and quickly becomes the voice of a trusted mentor--one who will not only give advice, but who will sift through others' advice and experiences and recommend, light-heartedly, who to listen to and what to do. He remains in the reader's pocket by constantly backing up his guidance with explanations as to why his recommendation is logical, rational, and the path of least resistance and most return. From the outset, he stresses to new teachers the importance of finding a mentor in the school. The author perfectly fulfills this very role to the reader.

Undoubtedly useful to any educator, there is a definite bend toward secondary school issues. Though never stated as such, the book is geared toward teachers of adolescents, with their special needs, and classroom management is an overarching point of emphasis. The author's practical, trustworthy tone lends itself to advising on delicate disciplinary issues as well as issues with other adults, such as parents and administrators.

The chapters are structured in a very user-friendly way, each with a concise introduction that is followed by appropriate data and smart presentation of graphic analyses—lists, charts, tables and illustrations—that are plentiful but never so numerous as to seem tedious. As the chapter topic and data unfold, sidebars are sprinkled in and well-edited enough to be read simultaneously if needed. Then, the book’s most deliberate purpose is presented — the “Teaching Dilemmas.”

Each chapter presents numerous dilemmas in the following format:

[example]

TEACHING DILEMMA: STUDENTS SUFFER TEST ANXIETY

I have students who do well during most of my class, but when it comes time for a test, they bomb.

SUGGESTED SOLUTION

[Here, the author would present advice, including lists or other graphic elements to easily read and reference in the future.]

As with the book in its entirety, this component of the guide can be read initially and then easily referenced by specific dilemmas as they arise. Thus, the text can sit on a teacher’s bookshelf and the author’s friendly guidance is always handy.

While the organization of the book is its true strength, the chapter topics and their order are as smart and purposeful. The opening chapter, “Cultivating a Classroom Culture,” presents the reader with applicable overall guidance for creating the most positive classroom environment to achieve harmony, respect, motivation, and how to best promote engagement and learning. Almost philosophical in tone, there is much inspiration to be gleaned from these first pages.

The chapter “Who Are Your Students?” identifies ways to adapt teaching style and classroom environment to the particular student audience. Here the author maintains his knowledgeable voice while also establishing his credentials as being in touch with younger culture and attitudes. Building on the momentum created by these first two chapters is an extremely practical guide for “Preparing for the First Week of School.” Tips for every aspect of organization, from grade books to seating charts, is presented here.

Communication then becomes the focus for the rest of the text, beginning with the chapter “Communication Essentials,” and then introducing the book’s emphasis on classroom management with two chapters on this topic—“Classroom Management I: Prevention and Minor Trouble,” which strives to give advice for strategies to avoid real disciplinary trouble, and “Classroom Management II: Chronic and Severe Trouble,” which addresses measures for when the problems do arise and continue to do so. Wrapping it up is the chapter “Communicating with Parents, Administrators and Others,” which maintains the viewpoint of respect and rational but always flexible thought and actions.

All the chapters could merit much further mention of their specific contents, but the most note-worthy aspect of this book is in its overall presentation and tone. Both the practical and philosophical aspects of teaching are presented with intelligence, wit, and calm wisdom and are then expounded on in a useful manner. Anyone in education would find it simultaneously refreshing, familiar and applicable.

**Reviewed by Meredith Ostlund, a graduate student in Education (Art) at Jacksonville University.**

---

**The Marianne Frostig Center of Educational Therapy. (2009). *The 6 Success Factors for Children with Learning Disabilities: Ready-to-Use Activities to Help Kids with Learning Disabilities Succeed in School and in Life*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.**

**Pages: 203    Price: \$29.95    ISBN: 0470383771**

Have you ever been frustrated by the inability to help an exceptional education student to succeed in your classroom? If you have, then you ought to consider *The 6 Success Factors for Children with Learning Disabilities: Ready-to-Use Activities to Help Kids with Learning Disabilities Succeed in School and in Life*.

A group of teachers at the Frostig Center in Pasadena, California developed the activities presented in *The 6 Success Factors for Children with Learning Disabilities*. These teachers identified six primary areas needing improvement in students with learning disabilities: (a) self-awareness, (b) proactivity, (c) perseverance, (d) goal setting, (e) use of social support systems, and (f) emotional coping strategies. Following extensive introductory material, the main text is organized into six chapters, each covering one of the success factors. Each chapter begins with an introduction to the topic, followed by ten activities to support and to reinforce that area. The activities are designated as to their target grade range, include the majority of the information needed to integrate them into a lesson plan (including instructional notes), and are engaging and interesting. The two appendices include supplemental materials, such as reading suggestions and evaluation forms for individuals and for classes.

Many books promise “ready-to-use” activities. Often, these activities require the instructor to acquire myriad outside materials. While the activities in *The 6 Success Factors for Children with Learning Disabilities* utilize outside materials, most of the activities are worksheet-based. The book provides instructions and reproducible copies of these activities.



The text flows logically through the success factors and the activities, building upon previous skills and knowledge in a self-reinforcing progression. The reproducible pages are centrally aligned on the sheet, which makes them somewhat awkward to photocopy. However, this does not significantly reduce their usability or their effectiveness in the classroom.

*The 6 Success Factors for Children with Learning Disabilities* promises ready-to-use activities and, they deliver on that promise. The activities require little-to-no adaptation, having been developed in the classroom. The text and activities are organized such that it's quick and easy to locate an appropriate activity at a moment's notice. Overall, this book accomplishes its goal: to prepare teachers to enable students.

**Reviewed by Amy Blevins, a student of Education at Jacksonville University.**

---

**Mendenhall, Emily. (2009). *Global Health Narratives: A Reader for Youth*. Albuquerque, NM University of New Mexico Press.**

**Pages: 238    Price: \$21.95    ISBN: 978-0-8263-4605-6**

The book, *Review of Global Health Narratives: a Reader for Youth*, was written to be used as a tool for initiating discussions about global health, culture, disparities, and diseases. Rather than just write on each of these topics individually and reciting a litany of numbers and facts associated with each issue, the editor compiled an anthology of stories that places the issues of health, the environment, culture, and disease—and the relationships between them—in the context of daily living. Using this approach, the editor and contributing authors successfully achieve their goal of creating a text that will "...provide youth with a context for understanding the importance of healthy communities" (p. xv). In its totality, the text demonstrates succinctly the need for embracing the definition of health as put forth by the World Health Organization: "...a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (1946, para. 2).

The effects of structural violence are made quite clear in the introduction, when the author notes that "...disease may not result from the choices one makes; rather disease may result from physical and emotional distress caused by political-economic problems such as poverty and poor working conditions" (p. xvi). While it would be preferable for the governing political and social forces to create sweeping, positive changes, the reality is that most changes occur on a small, incremental basis. They result from individuals' determinations to improve their small corner of the world. The objective of the book is to demonstrate the interrelatedness of the many determinants of health but the overarching lesson that underlies each chapter is the realization that one person can make a difference. In a postscript to the reader, the editor says "...you have the power to improve the world by the choices you make" (p. 215).

The text is designed to include stories from all over the world. The table of contents is divided by world regions; for example, Part One includes stories from different areas of Asia, while Part 2 covers Oceania. Interestingly enough, the Middle East is not included. The chapters deal with a myriad of environmental, cultural, disease, and behavioral and mental health issues. Examples of topics include hazards of limited water availability, air pollution, the effects of globalization on dietary choices, obesity, the impact of marginalization on health care access, HIV/AIDS, TB, malaria, maternal health, depression, and disability. For youth in a developed or industrialized nation, disease is viewed as linear equation, wherein A causes B: if A is fixed, then B is resolved. Such an overview negates the fact that throughout the world, and even in developed countries, structural violence is present to a varying degree. In other words, the social structures of people's everyday lives are determined by forces well beyond their control. The net effect is that the resulting structure of society and its infrastructure (or lack thereof) may prevent people from meeting their basic needs. Fixing A may appear easily achievable but in reality it is not.

While many of the stories focus primarily on one issue, they are able to weave the collateral effects and effectors relating to this issue into the tale. For example, chapter 12 focuses on the difficulties of immigrating to a new country, culture, and way of life. At the same time, the issues of depression, discrimination, and, tacitly, intimate partner violence are also present.

In almost all of the stories, the mother, or grandmother, plays a central role. Interestingly enough, the role of fathers or grandfathers is limited or nonexistent in most of the stories. In two of the stories, the father had died; in one chapter the father is never referred to; in one the father left the family for the city and was never heard from again; and in a final story, an older brother leaves his family to go to the United States. With the exception of one story, none of others ever really address the incredible hardships (both financial and emotional) this often incurs on a family. For most of the chapters then, the relationships between men and women are either ignored, or referred to only thinly. Most of the chapters leave us with very little sense about the adult relationships being modeled for the protagonists of each chapter. The single exception to this is chapter 22, which deals directly with intimate partner violence. In chapter 12, this same issue is raised in one sentence but it is never touched upon again. In chapter 25, maternity care is the primary focus but it is clear in the story that the young midwife is fearful of angering her husband and can not depend on him for much help in sharing household or parenting tasks as she begins to develop her career. The empowerment of women and their attainment of equal rights and social status is critical if advances in global health are to be made. I think the book might have been more complete if it had included one or two more chapters that directly dealt with this.

It is not clear within the textbook what age group the book is designed for although on the back cover it says for ages 12 and up. I would broaden this age range to age 8 and up although from an educational perspective, I would simply suggest its use for grades 3-8. Some of the stories, however, may seem too rudimentary or overly simplistic for junior high students. There are several tales that would be appropriate for use in middle school or perhaps high school. The only reason that the

entire text may not be suitable for higher grades, and believability of the stories vary widely, reflecting the huge array of writing skills and talents that created the texts.

Because of the array of concepts and topics the textbook includes, it could be used as an interdisciplinary tool to bridge across classrooms and topics; for example, if chapter 31 is being covered in health class, it would be a great bridging topic to discuss the politics and history of the Bosnian-Serbian conflict in a history or geography class simultaneously. Overall, the text does a superb job of introducing the concept of health as a community attribute, value, and resource and the fact that each community member has a stake not just in their individual health, but their community's health as well.

## References

World Health Organization. (1946). *Constitution*. Retrieved July 13, 2009 from [http://www.who.int/governance/eb/who\\_constitution\\_en.pdf](http://www.who.int/governance/eb/who_constitution_en.pdf)

Reviewed by Michele Curtis, MD, MPH, University of Texas, Health Science Center Houston.

---

**Meyer, Margaret R. and Langrall, Cynthia W. (2008). *A Decade of Middle School Mathematics Curriculum Implementation: Lessons Learned From The Show-Me Project*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.**

**Pages: 298 Price: \$39.99 ISBN: 978-1-60752-012-2**

In a time when mathematics education is very important in order to keep America competitive, educators need to learn from past experiences and find ways to improve the knowledge and performance of American students. I believe *A Decade of Middle School Mathematics Curriculum Implementation Lessons Learned From The Show-Me Project* shares many lessons learned involving the adoption and implementation of new mathematics curricula over the past decade that will help students, teachers, administrators, and educators improve mathematics education.

Having been a middle school mathematics teacher for 23 years and adjunct professor teaching mathematics education courses for the past four years, I am extremely interested in mathematics curricula. Having been on several mathematics curricula adoption committees in the past, I wanted to find out how other districts completed this process, what challenges they met, how they overcame their challenges and how this process can be improved. Since our district adopted one of the four middle school mathematics programs discussed in this book, I am curious to find out how other teachers view the programs and what lessons they learned from using these programs. Many of my questions were answered in this book, yet I am left with the feeling that there is more to learn and think about concerning the standards-based mathematics curricula.

According to the authors, the National Science Foundation (NSF) approved a proposal involving the Show-Me Project: A National Center to Support Dissemination and Implementation of Standards-Based Middle Grades Mathematics Curricula from 1997 to 2007. Editors Meyer and Langrall, and associate editors Arbaugh, Webb and Hoover, document the work of the Show-Me Project and share lessons learned from the implementation of four distinct comprehensive middle-school curriculum programs: Connected Mathematics, Mathematics in Context, MathScape, and MathThematics. Their targeted audience includes state and district mathematics supervisors, middle grades mathematics teachers, administrators, and mathematics teacher educators involved in curriculum reform. Therefore, it makes sense that the people telling the story are those directly involved in adopting and implementing these curriculum materials--curriculum developers, teachers, school district administrators, project directors and researchers.

The book is organized into four parts. In the first part, an overview of the history and direction of the Show-Me Project is presented and sets the stage for the rest of the book. The beginning of the Show-Me Project was greatly influenced by the NCTM Standards suggesting a need for curricular reform in mathematics and the NSF's funding of standards-based curricula. The editors selected three authors, Robert Reys and Barbara Reys from the University of Missouri, and John S. (Spud) Bradley from the National Science Foundation, to give a clear, descriptive summary of the history of the Show-Me Project. It is easy for the reader to understand the importance of the Show-Me Project and how it provided a powerful means to influence mathematics curricula reform.

In the second part, four different curriculum adoptions of standards-based materials and implementation of these curricula are described. This part also provides recommendations on how to handle some of the difficult challenges districts face when implementing these standards-based materials. The editors present an equal balance of portraying lessons learned by curriculum developers, teachers, administrators, project directors and researchers. Also, the four mathematics curriculum programs are equally represented by including an adoption story, an implementation story, curriculum specific professional development considerations and a teacher change story for each program.

In the third part, teacher education and professional development concerning these four curricula are the main focus. The last two chapters in this section identify how the theory concerning the reform-based mathematics curricula being taught in the college method courses matches closely with the reformed curricula being taught in middle schools.

Part four summarizes the lessons learned from the Show-Me Project and looks at six curriculum challenges for the next ten years. These challenges include looking at the effects of the NSF-funded middle grades mathematics curricula on student achievement; reviewing state standards and matching them with the curricula; working with publishers to continue cooperation with the program developers of the reformed mathematics curricula; maintaining curriculum balance and

integrity; looking at teacher capacity for using the NSF-funded curriculum materials effectively; and finding younger people to continue the work of the past curriculum developers.

The authors in this book continually stress how important professional development is for teachers using the standards-based curricula because of how different it is from traditional curricula. The standard-based curriculum encourages teachers to become learners and facilitators in the classroom instead of informers of knowledge. The authors clearly identify the key issues related to professional development: focus on mathematics content and inquiry-based instruction; focus on assessing student learning; address specific teacher concerns; and support ongoing implementation (p. 150).

Having taught mathematics method courses at two different colleges, I found the chapters on preservice teacher education to be very accurate. Research shows that teachers will teach the way they have been taught. The authors emphasized that preservice teachers need to experience the reformed curricula as students in order to help them understand the standards-based mathematics curricula and be better prepared to teach the reformed curriculum.

Any school district that is considering an adoption of a new mathematics program will find this book to be a valuable resource. Middle schools districts who have already adopted one of these standard-based mathematics curricula will find a great deal of useful information to help them with professional development. Any mathematics educator, teacher, supervisor or administrator will find this book extremely informative about lessons learned about curriculum implementation over the last ten years and will be motivated to think about the future of standards-based curriculum reform.

**Reviewed by Dr. Carol A. Rodano, adjunct professor at Rowan University, Glassboro, NJ, and The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, Pomono, NJ; middle-school mathematics teacher at Bunker Hill Middle School, Sewell, N.J. Her interests include mathematics education and mathematics anxiety.**

---

**Wilten-Daugenti, Tracey. (2008). *.edu: Technology and Learning Environments in Higher Education*. New York: Peter Lang Publishers.**

**Pages: 214 Price: \$32.95 ISBN: 9781433103186**

*.edu: Technology and Learning Environments in Higher Education* is a concise review of extant and emerging technologies that either do or can affect development of effective learning environments. Much of the content consists of definitions and usage data, with heavy emphasis on traditional-aged student populations and lesser emphasis on faculty and administrators. It will be of substantial interest to those faculty and administrators who have limited understanding of the topic, less so to those whose knowledge base is more sophisticated.

The book consists of 14 chapters divided into four sections. "Introduction" and "Conclusions and Future Directions" are listed separately, not as chapters, along with a glossary, a notes section and an "About the Authors" section. There is no index. Although Wilten-Daugenti is identified as the sole author, four chapters and the glossary are authored by others.

The first section, "Technology Trends Impacting Higher Education Today", consists of four chapters on Web 2.0, videos, mobile devices and gaming. In the first three chapters, Wilten-Daugenti provides definitions of and factual information about usage of wikis, blogs, really simple syndication (RSS) and multiple derivations of these types of tools, in addition to brief introductions to mtvU, podcasting, podcasting tools and mobile learning (m-learning). "Gaming", the fourth chapter, is more substantive. Factual information and definitions are provided, but Wilten-Daugenti goes into more detail, perhaps because gaming is still deeply in the transition from entertainment to learning tool.

The second section, "Increased Use of Technology and Its Implications for Higher Education", includes five chapters, two of which are guest authored by Patricia D. Wilen. Her chapters, "Increase of Credible Content on the Web" and "Adaptive and Assistive Technology for Use in Higher Education", provide information that even this tech savvy reviewer found useful. The other three chapters follow the general model of the first section--definitions, usage data and forecasting of how education is about to change.

Wilten-Daugenti presents essentially the same information in the third section "Learning Environments": how colleges and universities can meet students' expectations for technology integration, along with additional usage data and definitions, as in the first two sections. The tenth chapter, "Learning Environments", presents a brief discussion of how Wilten-Daugenti developed a personal learning environment while researching a health issue for a family member and an example of the many resources that Allison, an imaginary freshman biochemistry student, finds and uses in order to develop a Wikipedia entry for her final project in a biology course.

The fourth section begins with "Forward through a Rearview Mirror", Joseph Cevetello's thoughtful consideration of technology throughout history, a comparison and contrast of today's environment with those of previous generations. Following is "Learning 2.0: Revisiting the 7 Principles", by Lev S. Gonick, which presents the concept of participatory learning as it can function with the tools presented, and provides a critical examination of the principles that educators rely on in developing learning experiences. This section is remarkably rich and thought provoking.

In Chapter 13, Cevetello maintains:

To begin, we must acknowledge that most technology trends begin as an attempt at radical reform of education practice. Invariably, a particular technology's pundits will claim that "X" technology must be adopted

to 'revolutionize' how we educate. This is essential, they claim, to either boost achievement, to create citizens who have the skills necessary to succeed, or just to keep up with other schools, countries, or peoples. Many proponents will claim all three and point to an impending crisis in education (p. 133).

Readers might wish that Wilen-Daugenti had read those sentences—indeed, read the entire chapter—before writing her ten chapters, which are unrelentingly, uncritically pro-technology. A glaring omission in these chapters is judicious examination of key issues: how and whether students without technology access can benefit, how 24/7 availability—a much-lauded concept—affects the reality of faculty and staff workload, and the extent to which student motivation is the actual driver. In .edu, students are uniformly innovative, faculty members are consistently resistant and technology is unequivocally beneficial.

**Reviewed by Jennifer K. Holtz, Ph.D., Assistant Professor at DePaul University, Chicago, IL. Dr. Holtz teaches almost exclusively online and has developed several online science courses. She coauthored, with Kevin F. Downing, Ph.D., *Online Science Learning, Best Practices and Technologies* (2008), IGI Global Publishing.**

---

**Williams, Rhian. (2009). *The Poetry Toolkit: The Essential Guide to Studying Poetry*. New York: Continuum.**

**Pages: 288 Price: \$29.95 ISBN: 1847060498**

*The Poetry Toolkit* is truly the essential guide to studying poetry. Rhian Williams encourages the reader to allow the words on the page come to life by understanding the intricacies of each poem. *The Poetry Toolkit* is packed with information that will teach the novice poetry reader the basic skills to enjoy and engage the poetry, but also contains thousands of references and further reading suggestions that will appeal to the expert. Specializing in nineteenth-century literature, Rhian Williams presents command knowledge and passion that aids readers in discovering a love for poetry.

The chapters are strategically organized to begin with the broadest topic of "Types and Traditions" and subsequently become more detailed with each chapter. By first explaining the various types of poetry, the beginner gets a sense of how the epic may differ from the ballad, or a light verse poem; and the experienced reader can categorize poems previously read and make connections to the given examples. Part II dives into the shape or configuration of a poem by examining sixteen different forms. Some general forms such as the ode, epigram, and epitaph are discussed as well as the strict rules for a haiku, limerick, or villanelle. The reader then turns to the sound of a poem by learning tools to stress the appropriate syllable, find the rhythmic pattern of various metres, and identify rhyme schemes. The reader is now ready to study the different types of stanzas, or the use of metre and rhyme to group together lines of poetry. Finally, familiar topics of wordplay are discussed, such as simile, metaphor, and personification; as well as word schemes such as anaphora, chiasmus, and anastrophe.

Special features throughout the book allow for easy reference and connection between topics. Definitions are easily identified with a large grey box, items that are fully discussed elsewhere in the book are bolded, and other terms of interest that are defined in passing are italicized. Each chapter ends with several "Read More" suggestions. These bulleted lists give the reader some extra examples of poets and poems that pertain to the given topic. The "Close Reading" section concludes the book by analyzing two poems and includes a sample essay on each. Four additional poems with study tips are also given for exercise.

Williams' does an excellent job of providing plenty of examples throughout the book for the reader to grasp each concept. Although the book flows nicely from beginning to end, each concept could be read and studied individually.

*The Poetry Toolkit* would be excellent for a college level literature class or possibly an advanced high school class. A glossary of terms along with the pronunciations would be a helpful addition.

The tools needed to read, study, and write poetry can be found in this inspiring book that demystifies complex ideas and vocabulary used in poetry.

**Reviewed by Patricia Richters, a graduate student at the School of Education at Jacksonville University.**

---

**Zhou, Yanyu. (2008). *Success for All: A comprehensive Educational Reform for Improving At-risk Students in an Urban School in China*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.**

**Pages: 300 Price: \$39.99 ISBN: 978-1-59311-939-3**

Children considered at-risk for school failure along with other adverse life outcomes have received increasing attention in multiple countries across the world. The research literature is replete with studies emphasizing specific detrimental factors that may make a child's life more difficult upon entering adulthood (Adelman & Taylor, 2002, 2000; Carr, Borkowski, & Maxwell, 1991; Clark, 1983). It is argued that school and community must be linked and that school systems must be altered because systems, not isolated factors, subvert academic achievement. *Success for All: A comprehensive Educational Reform for Improving At-risk Students in an Urban School in China* constitutes a useful and purposeful model and a refreshing addition to the existing literature. It allows the reader to experience a "living account" of an educational

reform in Shanghai, China for at-risk middle school adolescents at the Zhabei No. 8 Middle School. It further provides tangible evidence that will help to eradicate the fixation on the at risk paradigm.

This book contains 12 major chapters. Following the abstract, the introduction defines the problem, asks what is wrong with urban schools and discusses the Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) model for success. The research design and data collection focuses on a phenomenological approach, which employs ethnographic methods such as interviews, participant observations, and critical reviews of documents.

The first two chapters examine the meaning of school success, the definition of an at-risk student, a school with reference to a CSR, factors that lead to the difficulty these students have in school; and the strategies conducted by governments and schools. Research is reviewed in depth both in North America as well as in China.

In Chapters 3 and 4 the author provides the social and educational context for Success Education program adopted by the Zhabei No. 8 Middle School. At this point he discusses the underpinnings of the political, economical, and cultural changes in China prior to 1978. The author deals with pedagogical issues that contribute to the readers understanding of how critical knowledge, values and social practices need to be lined up in order to provide a basis for teachers, students, and parents to redefine their roles as engaged participants. Chapters 5 through 11 analyze in detail the process of the reform, strategies adopted by the Zhabei District, and the results of this reform.

Chapter 12 makes more specific recommendations for what strategies and innovations assist at-risk students and how China's experience illuminates answers to challenges faced by educators around the world. A 'holistic' or 'child centered' perspective is therefore adopted that expresses an operational framework toward: (a) establishing a caring environment; (b) designing a flexible curriculum; and (c) involving parents as partners as well as the community at large.

The main strength of this book is that it is grounded in an array of research on school reform efforts and elicits practical suggestions about what works and what does not. If families, schools, and communities are cognizant of and responsive to student needs, they have the potential to produce poor and minority youth who are more at promise for success than at risk for failure.

## References

Adelman, H.S., & Taylor, L. (2002). Building comprehensive, multifaceted, and integrated approaches to address barriers to student learning. *Childhood Education*, 78, 261-268.

Adelman, H.S., & Taylor, L. (2000). Looking at school health and school reform policy through the lens of addressing barriers to learning. *Children's Services: Social Policy, Research, and Practice*, 3, 117-132

Clark R. M. (1983). *Family life and school achievement: Why poor black children succeed or fail*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Carr M., Borkowski J. & Maxwell A. (1991). Motivational components of underachievement. *Developmental Psychology*, 27, 108-118.

**Iris S. Drower is a Fulbright Specialist candidate and reading specialist/teacher trainer/ instructor at Phoenix Union and Arizona State University. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Loughborough, UK and worked with Dr. Brian Stratford, an international authority in the area of Down syndrome. She has made over 100 presentations and published worldwide. Areas include; education in diverse/multicultural settings preschool-University level, inclusion special needs families, supervising, pre-servicing, developing partnerships, instructing, & designing and planning curriculum.**



~ ER home | *Resenas Educativas* | *Resenhas Educativas* ~  
~ overview | reviews | editors | submit | guidelines | announcements | search ~