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Brief Reviews for June 2010

Gestwicki, Carol. (2010, 2007). *Home, School, and Community Relations: A Guide to Working with Families* (7th Edition). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Pages: 654 ISBN-10: 1-4354-0108-5

In *Home, School & Community Relations: A Guide to Working with Families* (7th ed.), Carol Gestwicki addresses the importance of building strong home, school, and community relations, and of the crucial role that teachers of young children can play in creating a positive partnership with the families of their students. Importantly, in doing so, the author explicitly acknowledges the ever increasing tension between school and the family that results from the stressful impact of external social, cultural and economic factors, and recognizes that families and parents are adversely affected by circumstances of modern times. Noting the remarkable uniqueness of families with regard to structure and experience, Gestwicki urges teachers to consider the social and cultural contexts of the individual families of their students. Acknowledging that some family situations create real challenges that may frustrate teachers, she argues that "working with families will always be one of the more challenging tasks for educators" (p. xiii). The author encourages educators to develop a strong belief in the importance of partnership and family involvement and urges them to realize that "this is not a separate role, but one that is integrated into the concept of working with the whole child - and one for which they need to prepare fully."(p. xiii).

Throughout the book, the author strongly emphasizes the concept of diversity and the need for educators to develop understanding, empathy and appreciation of the many differences and similarities that exist among people and families with whom they work, as well as the importance of developing positive attitudes, philosophies, and practical techniques useful in building productive relationships with families. She maintains that genuine understanding of families and parenting is crucial to establishing positive home-school relationships and reminds educators that they have a professional role or obligation to understand and reach out for the families whose children they serve. In other words, educators should strive to develop attitudes of respect and empathy for parents and families, as well as the communication skills and techniques that will support real partnerships. In the book, the author explores various roles of parenting and teacher-family partnerships, describes methods for developing partnerships, provides ways of

making a partnership work, and inspires readers to reflect on their own attitudes and behaviors.

The book builds on its previous edition, but has been significantly updated to include expanded discussions on parent involvement, specific techniques teachers can use to develop an attitude of acceptance to every family, and additional aspects of various models of parent education. Chapter two has been updated to include the latest demographic data about modern families. Another update in this edition is the strong focus on local and national efforts and organizations which remind teachers of their responsibility towards families, as well as emphasis on No Child Left Behind and its significances and implications for families, teachers, and schools in terms of parent involvement. In addition to these updates, several new features have been incorporated into each chapter. In "Reflections for Journal Entries," the reader is encouraged to consider his/her personal attitudes and experiences and reflect on teaching practices. Case studies encourage the application of particular concepts to classroom practice and experience, whereas helpful websites, updated references**,** and suggestions for further reading**,** listed at the end of each chapter, will allow readers to further explore topics. In addition, some pedagogical features are added to this edition to facilitate student mastery of concepts. They include objectives which appear at the beginning of each chapter; key words and terms which are listed alphabetically and printed in bold type; real-life photographs of children with their parents and/or teachers at home or in school meant to authenticate and contextualize concepts and facilitate comprehension; and boxes that highlight important concepts. At the end of each chapter there are also student activities, review questions, and a summary. At the end of the book, there is an appendix which includes additional information, a comprehensive glossary, and of course an index. Ancillaries include a book companion web site for both the instructor and students, an instructor's manual, "Professional Enhancement Text" which contains additional resources, "Lecture" (digital library), and "Web Tutor Toolbox" (Blackboard). All of these features combine to reinforce ideas and concepts and facilitate comprehension.

Particularly noteworthy to this reviewer were the real-life photographs which are appropriately suited for each discussion, stories that capture attention and imagination, and case studies and reflection journals that provoke thoughtfulness. One suggestion for future edits would be a broader discussion on ELL parents and the particular challenges they face while becoming involved in the education of their children as well as the knowledge and skills needed by educators to cross such barriers. In addition, while the book has a reference section at the end of each chapter, for quick reference of cited authors and their work, it is also important to have an integrated one at the end of the book .

The book is appropriately organized into four sections, each consisting of several chapters. In the *preface* of the book, Gestwicki sets the stage for upcoming sections and introduces the book's goals and intended audience, its organization and content, and the new additions. Given that home-school partnerships are supported by research, mandated by governmental legislations like NCLB, recommended by professional organizations such as the National Association for Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and warranted by community concerns, she argues that creating them is no longer an option but an integral role and responsibility of the teacher. By acknowledging the fact that the task of forming relationship with children's parents is both legal

and moral obligation, the author exposes the dual nature of teachers' role: teaching children and forming productive partnership with their families which are inextricably linked and for which educators are expected to be accountable.

The book was written in response to the challenges faced by educators in attempting to form relationships with a wide spectrum of families, and the demand for adequate professional preparation to help educators of young children acquire better understanding and better skills to overcome obstacles while forming such relationships with families. The author describes her purpose of writing the textbook as to "continue to raise some of these larger issues, to sensitize teachers and prospective teachers to the complex nature of parenting in today's world, so that the teachers' basic stance will not be *us against them*, but *we're all in this together*"(p. x). She highlights the fact that creating partnership with families is not only practical but also philosophical**,** asserting that the philosophical underpinning of the book is the idea that creating productive home, school, and community relations is crucial to providing appropriate experiences for children.

Section one (chapters 1-3) constitutes the foundation and introduces readers to families and the experiences of parenting. In order to introduce the scope of diversity in our society and the spectrum of its colors, Gestwicki starts the section with the hypothetical lives of two fictitious families which she presents anecdotally to simulate the uniqueness of context for each family in terms of needs, experiences, and motivations. The author highlights the emotional implications of parenthood and urges educators to reflect on their views and to realize the importance of understanding diverse family situations not only in terms of race, language, and culture, etc., but also with respect to the striking differences that exist within families in regard to experience, values, and functioning. She vividly describes various types of diversity, characteristics of families, external factors that influence families, and the emotional responses, reminding teachers that they have an obligation to understand family life and how it impacts teaching. The author urges them to go beyond the stereotypical assumptions of a "typical" family or "perfect" parents, and asserts that "rather than judging families against same artificial standard, or perhaps the way we never were, it is vital that teachers be able to recognize the forces that influence the thinking of us all. Empathy and the compassion needed to work with people very different from ourselves are the result of seeing contemporary families against the backdrop of the real world in which we now live." (p.60). She examines the various roles and responses of parents, models and motivation for parent involvement, and the implications they have for teachers.

In section two (chapters 4-7), teacher-family partnerships in early education are explored. Gestwicki examines perspectives on family-involvement, benefits, and potential barriers to teacher-family relationship. Citing relevant literature and studies including Epstein's six types of involvement, the author discusses a brief history of family involvement, and then makes the case for three powerful motives behind family involvement: mandates from government and professional associations, research on family involvement, and community concerns for family support. She provides a new perspective on family involvement, redefining it from the traditional triangle model to a new child-centric framework in which the child becomes the center of gravity of the whole relationship. In addition, Gestwicki discusses tangible benefits of creating

relationships for the child, parent, and the family, arguing that the key to removing many barriers to many parent-teacher relationships is to change teacher's mindset. She further examines the attitudes and actions that create the foundations for successful partnerships.

Section three (chapters 8-14) is about the methods of developing partnership. Gestwicki starts the section with a discussion about the steps helpful in establishing a relationship on the first day and the strategies and benefits associated with them. She describes the separation experiences for young children and their parents at the beginning of the school year and the role teachers can play to help ease the transition. The author then moves to discuss in detail informal techniques of communicating with families including daily conversations, telephone calls, personal notes, electronic communication and use of technology, bulletin boards, daily news flashes, newsletters, traveling suites, libraries and other circulating materials, classroom displays, and parent suggestion boxes and other evaluation methods, which help keep families informed about events that are part of their children's daily lives and as a result strengthen parent-teacher partnership. She also discusses many formal ways of effective parent-teacher interactions such as techniques of forming successful parent-teacher conferences, home visits with parents and children, involving families in the classroom, parent education, and ways community agencies and actions affect families and schools as well as how teachers and parents can work within their communities to support their best interests. According to the author, these are all important facets for educators to explore and study as they develop their skills of communicating with families.

In section four (chapters 15-17), the essence of what makes a partnership work is discussed. Considering the enormity of variations among families and the fact that each family situation is unique, the author moves the discussion from generalities to specifics. She describes individualized communication strategies and styles that teachers can use to deal with different circumstances and cultural orientations, and examines various ways of working with families from diverse background and with families in particular circumstances such as those experiencing separation and divorce, families with children who have special needs, families with infants, families who have experienced abuse and neglect, and adoptive families. The author identifies reasons for hostile reactions, indifference, and overinvolvement, discusses frequent causes of parent-teacher tension and considers ways to resolve conflicts, urging teachers to be observant, reflective and problem-solvers.

Home, School, & *Community Relations: A Guide to Working with Families* is an excellent guide for home-school-community collaboration. It is an invaluable textbook for pre-service, and practicing new and experienced teachers, as well as a wide range of professionals who work with children and their families in various public and private programs. They will find the information in this book useful and practical as it will definitely enhance their understanding of the structural and experiential diversity that exist in contemporary families and as a result help them develop empathy and respect for diversity. It will also provide them with the tools and the skills necessary to tackle the emotional obstacles and other challenges they will encounter while forming relationships with the families and communities of their students. In addition, professors who teach at teacher education programs and school administrators as well as staff development professionals will find the book informative and resourceful.

Gestwicki's clear writing style, her experience in teaching, and her profound knowledge about diversity result in a textbook that is highly readable. While the book is primarily written for educators of young children (early childhood to elementary), the ideas presented in it are nonetheless applicable and useful to those who work with higher grades. The book is well researched because, throughout, the author properly cites relevant literature and attempts to connect her arguments and discussions firmly to research. Without a doubt, in this book, Gestwicki brings the issue of home, school, and community relations much closer and makes a compelling case for diversity, while providing educators the necessary tools to embrace and effectively work with it. Her notion that educators should be advocates for children and families and find ways to form productive partnerships, and her message that the family, school, and community need to be connected with each other in order to provide the support needed to educate and raise children, are not only intuitively sensible but also ethically necessary. They touch the heart of what education is all about. The book is adequately updated with lots of new important features added and with plenty of examples, making it comprehensive and resourceful. I used it in one of my graduate courses and found it inspirational and insightful. Without reservation, I recommend *Home, School, & Community Relations: A Guide to Working with Families* to anyone one who is interested to understand diversity and overcome the challenges involved in creating a positive sustainable partnership with the families and communities of their students.

Finally, this book can be of particular value to school and district leaders who constantly wrestle with the daunting task of school improvement and need to build strong ties with the families and communities of a diverse student populations. Not only will it provide them with greater insights about diversity and its implications as well as legal and ethical requirements of family involvement, but will also prepare them for the broad subject of home, school, and community relationship. Since knowledge and understanding are needed to change attitudes and dispositions and to materialize action, school and district leaders need to take the lead in educating themselves and their staff about the whole subject. They should go beyond mere communication with families and equip themselves with the real tools necessary to tear down walls and build bridges between school, home, and the community. This updated edition of Gestwicki's book certainly offers such indispensible knowledge in a rather accessible manner.

Reviewed by Abdillahi Abokor, a doctoral student in educational administration at Ohio University in Athens, Ohio. He teaches ESL science at Mifflin High school in Columbus, Ohio.

Gilbert, Glen G., Sawyer, Robin G., & McNeill, Elisa B. (2009). *Health Education: Creating Strategies for School and Community Health,* 3rd ed. Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett Publishing.

Pages: 456 ISBN: 978-0-7637-5929-2

The purpose of *Health Education* is to provide sound methods of teaching for the health educator or anyone wanting to conduct health education in the community, in schools or in the workplace. According to authors Gilbert, Sawyer and McNeill, the methods and interventions would be the same in all environments.

The premise of the book is that effective health education is the process. In other words, "it important to know how well and effectively we perform the function for educating and motivating people to make good decisions about their health" (p. 3). When planning for health education programs, the authors suggest using the basic steps that do not include solving program planning issues. They include: assessing the needs, diagnosing the problems, developing appropriate goals and objectives, selecting methods for an interaction, implementing the intervention, and evaluating the outcomes.

In Chapters 4 - 7, Gilbert, et al, describes various methods that can be used as a framework for carrying out health education initiatives. Elements discussed include the method description, when to use the method, how to use, the advantages and disadvantages, implementation and examples. The chapter includes over 30 categories of methods that the health educator can use.

In Chapter 8, the authors have included a section on minority health and raise the question as to whether minority health should be studied. "The authors of the text believe that health issues as they relate to minority populations should indeed be discussed, with the condition that such topics be viewed not through the narrow lens of race alone, but rather within a fuller context that more accurately reflects the complexity involved" (p. 292). Gilbert, et al discuss six health conditions and provide discrepancies by ethnicity for each condition. Each discussion includes the near-term goal and the goal progress. Other health issues pertaining to children and sexuality education are included in the text.

Glen Gilbert has been a health educator for over 30 years. His experience includes teaching university level courses for 15 years, serving as the Director of the School Health Initiative at the US Department of Health and Human Services. In addition, he has provided consulting and health education services and has worked with most state and federal agencies. He has authored over 70 professional publications.

Robin Sawyer has many contributions in community and public health. He has received 13 national and international film awards for developing sexuality-related media and received numerous university teaching awards. He has published extensively and is a nationally known speaker gaining national attention in the *Washington Post* and appearing on the *Today Show* and *Tyra Banks* show as a consultant for MTV.

Elisa McNeill serves as the coordinator of the Health Education Teacher Certification Program. She is known for her innovative teaching and has presented at numerous state, regional and national conferences. McNeill has 20 years of teaching in public schools and is in the final phase of completing her doctoral degree at Texas A& M.

Overall, the authors have designed the text to guide the health educator in a variety of settings, including school health education, community health education, worksite health education, and patient health education. As they have stated, the basics are the same when educating in any type of setting. The text will assist the health educator with the skills while facilitating health education in all settings.

Reviewed by Sherry Grover, PhD, Texas Woman's University, Denton/Houston, TX.

Hagood, Margaret C., Alvermann, Donna E., and Heron-Hruby, Alison. (2010). *Bring It to Class: Unpacking Pop Culture in Literacy Learning*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Pages: 94 ISBN: 978-0-8077-5061-2

The role of texts from popular culture in contemporary classrooms is a polarizing topic among many K-12 educators. *Bring It to Class: Unpacking Pop Culture in Literacy Learning* is a concise and practical book authored by three distinguished teacher educators that carefully explores this issue from multiple angles. Written for classroom teachers, coaches, administrators, librarians, and media specialists, the book shines a light on a range of issues that include connecting popular culture texts to curricular content, challenges to texts from popular culture in the classroom, and constructing identity through popular culture.

The practical nature of *Bring It to Class* makes it a valuable addition to any educator's library. While drawing heavily upon classroom research involving texts from popular culture, the authors present theoretical perspectives in a clear and efficient manner. Moreover, the practicality of the text is supported by accounts from various stakeholders who have witnessed the potential of popular culture in the classroom firsthand, including teachers, media specialists, principals, and students. For example, the Hagood, Alvermann and Heron-Hruby use teacher descriptions to help readers discover the ways texts from popular culture are being used to teach high school students to critically analyze sources. Additionally, readers looking for ideas to immediately implement in the classroom are sure to appreciate the lesson plans and exercises the authors provide.

The authors' thoughtful approach to questions about the role of popular culture in the classroom

is on display from beginning to end. Given the prominence of standardized testing in schools across the United States, however, the book's second chapter—"How Does Pop Culture Connect to Standards?"—is especially apt. To address this issue, the authors illustrate how four instructional models for implementing popular culture texts may play out. Hagood, et al provide a peek into the classroom of an 8th-grade reading teacher using movies, graphic novels, and online tools to address standards related to vocabulary and visualization through a detailed vignette and a student work sample. With this approach, readers get a clear sense of how texts from popular culture may be used in the classroom without sacrificing the relevance and rigor that state-mandated curricular standards require.

The value of *Bring It to Class* is further enhanced by the inclusion of reflection activities in each chapter. Through such activities, readers are prompted to consider how a chapter's content applies to their respective educational contexts. For example, after reading about three different views of popular culture—mass culture, folk culture, and everyday culture—readers are prompted to reflect on their own views of popular culture, consider how their views reflect their values and beliefs, and think about how their views influence their work with students. The reflection activities interspersed throughout promote greater engagement with the important issues and concepts raised in the book.

In today's increasingly connected world, *Bring It to Class* is a valuable resource for educators who are interested in thinking further about the ways they connect with students, and, by striking a balance between theory and practice, the authors provide ammunition for practitioners who seek to unpack popular culture in the twenty-first century classroom.

Reviewed by Luke Rodesiler, University of Florida

Jacobson, Jennifer. (2010). *No More "I'm Done!" Fostering Independent Writers in the Primary Grades*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers.

Pages: 166 ISBN: 978157110784 8

Whether you are a new teacher heading to your first primary grade classroom in September, or an experienced teacher heading back to meet your next class of young students, you will want to add *No More "I'm Done"* to the 'absolutely must read' section of your summer reading list. You might even want to highlight the title and use an asterisk or two or three to remind yourself that this book is one you will want to read very soon so that you have time to integrate as many of Jacobson's tips-born-of-experience into your instructional planning and your new or revised classroom design. Jacobson's focus on the teaching of writing to young learners includes dozens of practical recommendations for functional classroom arrangements, carefully planned daily routines, and effective teaching strategies that you will want to add to all the other ideas that are

taking shape in your head as you imagine working with your new students.

Jacobson's book will be of particular interest to those teachers who are keen to discover how to help young students to develop their ability to make progress with their writing without constant one-on-one teacher assistance. If you are looking for ways to successfully implement a daily writer's workshop in your classroom, you will find that Jacobson's years of experience as a writing teacher and her admirable willingness to share the details of her accumulated learning about best classroom practices have combined to make this a book that is nothing short of an intense professional development package. Readers will find that Jacobson's friendly and articulate voice conveys just enough confidence to convince you that the suggested instructional strategies and pedagogical decisions will lead to success over time, but not so much authority as to make you feel overwhelmed by the need to follow every suggestion she offers. There is something very personal about Jacobson's writing style that makes her text compelling to read. She works hard to make you, her reader, feel that you are taking part in a conversation with her, by cleverly anticipating your objections to her pedagogical decisions, and by taking care to counter your expected hesitancy to accept some of her ideas. Jacobson's attention to her reader's potential questions is evident, for example, in her clear explanation of why she does not advise devoting time to writing conventions early in the school year with emergent writers even though this is a commonly accepted practice. "You may wonder," she writes, "why I'm not focusing more on conventions in the first few weeks" (p. 54). For the reader who may have been wondering exactly that question--and for those who hadn't thought to question this challenge to the usual topic schedule--Jacobson proceeds to provide a persuasive argument as to why she intentionally made this decision. So by taking the time to carefully and meticulously describe the behavior, the language, and even the interior thinking of an expert teacher, Jacobson achieves her goal of explaining "how [we] can help primary students become independent writers" (p. 2). It's as if you are having conversation with a trusted and highly valued colleague, and the result is a book that is engaging and inspiring to read.

As is the case with so many books published by Stenhouse Publishers, the organization and visual appeal of the text go a long way to making the text a pleasure to read. A comprehensive name, title, and subject index, a concise table of contents, and clearly segmented chapter sections make specific topics easily accessible. A list of the many children's books referred to in the text is handily provided in a bibliography that is separate from the briefer list of professional book references. The six chapters are arranged in such a way that the reader of the entire text moves from learning why Jacobson is convinced that using a daily writer's workshop for teaching writing in the primary grades is a sound pedagogical approach to chapters that focus on the teacher's role in establishing a successful writer's workshop classroom, to a concluding chapter that is modeled on the "frequently asked questions" troubleshooting model. In this final chapter the author once again converses with the reader by imagining the most common problems that will arise when teachers try out the recommended teaching strategies.

Other elements of this book that will bring it alive for teachers and that make it stand out from other discussions on the teaching of writing include the many examples of children's writings and drawings, the pictures of classroom spaces, the charts and graphical organizers referred to in the

text, and the sidebar notes that provide short lists of children's or professional books that relate to the topic under discussion. The core chapters of the book move logically from a guided tour through a classroom that is set up to support independent writing, to a detailed discussion of daily routines that support student independence, to mini-lessons that focus on the development of student strategies that foster independence. In this last chapter the author presents the daily mini-lessons that she would do during the first month of school--including details such as recommended picture books and references to other mini-lessons that are expanded on elsewhere in the text. She uses the 6 traits of writing as the organizing structure for her mini-lessons, rather than what she refers to as the "buffet method" (p. 54) that ends up introducing students to too many writing skills in too short of a time period. The concrete lists and plans for establishing both a space and student practices that promote independent work offer teachers many ideas to add to their repertoire of classroom management skills for writer's workshop.

The real core of this book, though, arrives in Chapter 5--by far the longest chapter in the book (63 pages)--when the author presents you with "a year of mini-lessons for growing writers" (pp. 71-134). This section carries the reader month-by-month through the school year by providing nine or so lessons per month. These lessons are beautifully presented, with each including an "On Hand" section that lists the materials you will need to teach the lesson, the actual "Mini-Lesson", and an "Extension" section that offers ideas for moving beyond the core lesson. These creative and carefully sequenced mini-lessons move from a focus on organization, to voice, to word choice, to fluency, to quality details, to a second look at narrative organization, to poetry, and effective word choice. For a new teacher this chapter will be viewed as a gift from an expert writing teacher mentor, and for experienced teachers these lesson ideas will provide new material and much to think about and to try out.

No More "I'm Done!" is an exciting teacher resource that will inspire primary grade teachers. If you teach writing to young children you will find valuable ideas here, and if you are a librarian working with teachers you will want to be sure that every picture book mentioned in this text is in your school or library. Teacher education colleges will not only want to purchase this book but will want to display and promote it widely. Highly recommended.

Brenda Reed is the Learning & Research Services Librarian at the Education Library, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada

Laminack, Lester L. (2009). *Unwrapping the Read Aloud: Making Every Read Aloud Intentional and Instructional.* New York: Scholastic.

Pages: 96 ISBN-13: 978-)-545-08744-5

An important but sometimes overlooked part of a balanced approach to literacy is the daily teacher read aloud. In our efforts to get books into students' hands, we may forget the importance of fluent and prosodic modeling of reading by the teacher. In *Unwrapping the Read Aloud*, Laminack eloquently and passionately reminds his audience (teachers, media specialists, literacy coaches, staff developers, and administrators) that books read aloud to students can be used, not only to instruct, but to inspire. Laminack credits his own success as a well-known children's author to his third grade teacher who read with the intention of having her students fall in love with books and reading.

In this age of testing and covering curriculum to meet standards, some teachers may question the time spent reading aloud to students. The question may not be: Can we afford to spend time reading aloud to students? Rather the question may be: Can we afford not to? As noted by the oft quoted Commission on Reading in *Becoming a Nation of Readers* and cited by Laminack, "The single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success is reading aloud to children" (1985, p. 23). Laminack suggests that, among other things, reading aloud supports content area knowledge, develops listening comprehension, demonstrates thinking, expands vocabulary, creates a literate classroom community, and exposes students to the craft of exceptional writers.

In *Unwrapping the Read Aloud*, Laminack explains how to choose the perfect read aloud and, more importantly, having chosen the book, how to read it so that students are captivated by the tone, mood, intensity, and pacing. Reading aloud well is an art and Laminack masterfully takes us through the process with five of his personal favorites. The book is accompanied by a CD and may be used for staff development. While a lone teacher who wants to improve her reading aloud skills may want to read the book and watch the CD, she should know that, even though the book is short, a substantial amount of time is needed to read the book, watch the CD, and absorb and practice the information.

As I think back to the reading classes I have taken or taught, I can recall little mention of how to read a book in order to caption a reader's interest and attention. Laminack reinforces the need for daily read alouds and guides us through the art of reading aloud well. This book is a must read for any adult who hopes to inspire a love of books and reading in children.

References:

Anderson, R. C., Hiebert, E. H., Scott, J. A., and Wilkinson, I. A. G. *Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report of the Commission on Reading.* National Academy of Education.

Reviewed by Janet Lewis, an elementary school literacy coach in Gwinnett County (Georgia) Public Schools and an adjunct professor at Brenau University,

Gainesville, Georgia, and a part-time instructor at Georgia State University, Atlanta. Dr. Lewis earned her Ph.D in Language Education from the University of Georgia.

Lengel, T. & Kuczala, M. (2010). *The Kinesthetic Classroom: Teaching and Learning Through Movement.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Sage.

156 pages ISBN 978-1-4129-7954-2

Recent research shows that regular physical activity helps children perform better in school. This book moves beyond recess and gym class to show how teachers can integrate movement into daily classroom instruction. The authors immediately establish the relevancy and urgency for this topic. They explain that not only does movement provide novelty and change for students but it also gives them the opportunity to grow cognitively, emotionally, and socially, not to mention physically. The authors also connect their ideas to experts in the field, providing pertinent research to support the text.

Within the first couple chapters the authors convince you of the importance of movement in learning. Readers will wonder, "Why haven't we been doing this all along?" Lengel and Kuczala describe how regular physical movement improves attention span and helps the brain master new information. Readers will learn how to use activity breaks to refocus students and build a sense of classroom community through small and large group activities. A framework is presented detailing six ways that movement can be used to support teaching and learning.

The Movement with a Purpose framework is presented and includes:

- Preparing the brain
- Providing the brain with breaks
- Supporting exercise and fitness
- Developing class cohesion
- Reviewing content
- Teaching content material

Each of these components is described in depth within subsequent chapters. Chapters begin with a series of questions, setting the stage for the reader. Activities are described in a simple, easy to understand way. An example of a typical format would be the chapter on "brain breaks" where ten movements for visual tracking and 18 for spatial awareness are presented. Example lesson plans might have been a helpful addition as it would be beneficial for classroom teachers to see the activities embedded within the instructional plan. Readers will need to use their imagination and determine their own comfort level as to how and where these can be integrated into daily lessons.

The chapter on supporting exercise and fitness does seem more appropriate to physical education class. General classroom teachers will question if this is an appropriate use of time. Information is presented in a format that can be done in a short amount of time and with little or no preparation. Busy teachers will appreciate this! Team building and getting to know you activities are also presented in a section on class cohesion. These activities build unity and would engage students in cooperative tasks.

Twenty partner or small group activities that can be used for reviewing academic content are also presented. While these may not fit into every teacher's repertoire of teaching strategies, they would be a great way to infuse physical activity and something different into the day. All of the activities are linked to working memory and the importance of rehearsal in retaining the content. The movement concepts are also presented within content material in math, science, and social studies.

This text provides examples of success stories at both the elementary and secondary levels as well as into higher education. This continues throughout the text sharing scenarios and sharing problems specific to each level. Diagrams, flow charts and other graphics enhance the content and provide a connection to the text.

When movement can be easily integrated into what teachers are already doing, they will be much more likely to try it. The authors recognize this and attempt to dispel concerns while emphasizing the importance of this initiative.

Lengel and Kuczala convince the reader that anchoring academic content with movement will bring many benefits including increased test scores. They tie this topic into other relevant educational topics including; differentiated instruction, alignment to standards, data-driven instruction and special education. With an emphasis on teaching the whole child, this guide shows how movement can improve students' mental and physical well-being and contribute to their joy in learning.

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.

Shinagel, Michael (2009). *The Gates Unbarred: A History of University Extension at Harvard, 1910-2009.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Pages: 247 ISBN: 978–0–674–03616–1

Author Michael Shinagel is the incumbent Dean of Continuing Education and University Extension at Harvard University, so it is not surprising that he writes optimistically about the past, present, and future of Harvard's University Extension program. His book is a detailed history of that program from its beginnings in the early twentieth century to the present day, chronicling the growth of the program, its service to Boston and the worldwide community, and its prospects for the future.

However, the chronology doesn't begin just with the founding of the university extension program in 1910. It starts, rather, more than a century earlier with John Lowell, Jr., who was born in 1799 to a well known Boston family, and who began studying at Harvard in his mid-teens. In ill health, he dropped out of Harvard after two years (at age 16) to travel around the world on the ocean; he later made a fortune in textile and cotton cloth.

John Jr. wrote in his will shortly before his early death in 1836 that a trust fund should be established for "the maintenance and support of Public Lectures to be delivered in said Boston upon philosophy, natural history, and the arts and sciences…for the promotion of the moral and intellectual and physical instruction of the said city of Boston" (p. 4). This fund created what came to be known as the Lowell Institute, which has been administered since its founding by Lowell's relatives, first by his cousin John Amory Lowell from 1836 to 1881, and later by John Amory Lowell's son and grandson.

The grandson was Abbott Lawrence Lowell, who not only served as Trustee of the Lowell Institute from 1900 to 1943, but also as President of Harvard University from 1909 to 1933. It was in his capacity as Harvard University President that many of the goals of the Lowell Institute were transmuted into the Harvard University Extension Program.

The Lowell Institute had begun serving the Boston public in 1840 with three enormously popular lecture series on geology, religion, and botany. By the end of the nineteenth century it had offered "more than 430 lecture series or 4,400 free lectures on science, religion, literature, and art by the leading authorities in these fields" (p. 10).

When A. Lawrence Lowell became President of Harvard University, he brought the same zeal for "popular education" that had driven him as Trustee of the Lowell Institute. He championed the establishment of the Harvard extension program and the appointment of an academic dean, Professor James Hardy Ropes, who led the program for 12 years. By the time Dean Ropes passed the mantle to Arthur F. Whittem, who served as Dean for the next 24 years, the university extension program had awarded 36 Associate in Arts degrees. This was a four year degree that pre-dated the use of the term Associate's Degree to refer to a two-year program.

The program that had begun modestly in 1910, with an enrollment of 606 students and eleven courses for them had grown to more than 140 courses and approximately seven thousand students and even included an undersea education partnership with the Navy by the time Shinagel became Dean in 1975. Under Shinagel's leadership, by 2008 the program had grown to nearly 14,000 students (more than 2,500 of whom were international students) with 481 graduates. Shinagel's tenure also saw the graduation of an 89 year old and an 18 year old student, the introduction of distance education, and growing partnerships with other schools and organizations. The author pulls no punches in chronicling one of the major failures during his tenure--a partnership with the Indian Computer Academy in Bangalore that began with great fanfare in 1992, but which dissolved a mere two years later due to financial mismanagement on the part of the Indian partners.

As a chronology of the program, the book is successful. However, the book falls short in some ways. Because Harvard is regarded as the pioneer and leader in American higher education in so many ways, the reader expects to see the book providing strategic direction for the adult and continuing extension education movement in the U.S. But the book fails to take on the task of critically examining the larger implications of extension education as a component of American higher education. It also fails to examine satisfactorily how an institution like Harvard can maintain its quality of higher education through an extension program, since the demographics and prior academic preparation of extension students can sometimes be radically different from that of the full-time students. Combining full-time work and school is a fast-growing phenomenon, as the recent emergence and growth of various for-profit institutions attests. The failure to examine this phenomenon and the role of institutions such as Harvard as part of that mix is a glaring oversight.

The book also fails to estimate the added value to students and to society in general by this changing culture. Since many higher education professionals look to Harvard for leadership in higher education, the lack of leadership on this question is striking. Dr. Shinagel, in his capacity as Harvard Professor and Dean of University Extension, is uniquely positioned to provide this leadership, but his book only scratches the surface of the deeper questions about the significance of lifelong learning; how to balance life, family, work, and school; and how to ensure higher education quality amidst a growing constituency of non-traditional students.

Reviewed by Clark Capshaw, PhD, a 2007 graduate of the Higher Education Leadership and Policy program at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. Currently, Dr. Capshaw works as an evaluator of aerial intelligence systems for the U.S. Army Test and Evaluation Command in Alexandria, VA, and as an online instructor for the University of Phoenix.

Shores, Cara. (2009). *A Comprehensive RTI Model: Integrating Behavioral and Academic Interventions.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Pages: 174 ISBN: 1412962951

In *A Comprehensive RTI Model: Integrating Behavioral and Academic Interventions*, Cara Shores describes how Response to Intervention (RTI) can be used to promote academic achievement and behavioral success for all students. Shores demystifies RTI and explains how it is a framework designed to promote learning for all students.

The book is divided into five chapters. The first two provide an explanation of and rationale for RTI, and chapters 3-5 provide in-depth descriptions of the three levels of support that make up the RTI framework. Three resources with tools for planning implementation of RTI at the district or building level and resources for Tier 1, 2, and 3 are appended at the end of the book.

In chapter 1, titled "A Comprehensive Model for Response to Intervention," Shores provides a detailed overview of RTI. There are more than thirty years of research supporting RTI's efficacy as a "framework of increasingly intensive assessment and interventions designed to address a continuum of academic and behavioral problems" (p. 2). It is meant to promote success for all students, although RTI has also been "promoted as an effective tool for the identification of students with learning disabilities" (p. 1). Shores explains how the RTI process can be used to prevent students from being needlessly identified for special education services. Shores concludes the chapter with a realistic discussion of the barriers to implementing RTI, thus making the challenges transparent.

In the second chapter, "Establishing the Structure for RTI Implementation," Shores explains how RTI is a school-wide approach that cannot be implemented in one or two isolated classrooms. Successful realization of RTI's goals requires collaboration among district and school administrators and teachers. Shores underscores the importance of recognizing that RTI is not a quick fix that can be put into practice overnight; she recommends a 3-5 year implementation plan. Chapter 2 provides information that school administrators will find particularly useful.

Chapter 3, "Building a Strong Foundation Through Tier 1 Universal Supports," describes the two basic building blocks for successful RTI implementation: providing students with quality curriculum and effective instruction, and using school-wide behavior expectations for all students. In the RTI framework, Tier 1 is the support all students receive, and this level of intervention should meet the needs of 80-90% of students. Through universal screening and data-based decision making, students who need additional support to succeed are identified for Tier 2 support. Chapter 3 concludes with an example of how RTI was implemented at a middle school in Georgia, including impressive data about the decline of office referrals for behavior problems.

In the fourth chapter, "Providing Targeted Supports Through Tier 2," Shores describes the process of providing early interventions for students with learning or behavior deficits that

persist despite universal support. Tier 2 support is needed for 10-20% of students and begins with the formation of student assistance team. The team works to "analyze existing information about the student and collect additional information and data necessary to develop an appropriate intervention plan" (p. 85). Once the specific interventions are identified, student progress--or response to the intervention – is closely monitored. The plan can be modified if the student does not make progress, and students who do not respond to Tier 2 support are identified for more intensive interventions at Tier 3. Chapter 4 concludes with a case study of a student's Tier 2 intervention plan.

In Chapter 5, "Delivering Intensive Individual Supports Through Tier 3," Shores described the process of supporting the 1-5% of students who do not respond to targeted support. Shores explains that although the percentage of students who need Tier 3 support is small, "their supports and instruction require a large percentage of the school's resources" (p. 109). She cites research indicating that this population is responsible for 40-50% of all behavior problems in some schools. Given the clear importance of effectively intervening to support this population, Chapter 5 is detailed and comprehensive. Shores clarifies that Tier 3 support is not synonymous with special education. She specifies that "the bottom line is the student needs intensive instruction and support" (p. 111) and that support should be provided through general education if the student is not eligible for special education services.

The resources appended at the end of the book consist of RTI process development tools and resources for Tiers 1, 2, and 3. Specifically, the process development tools include a comprehensive RTI needs assessment, a gap analysis form, a district implementation checklist, and sample multiyear plans for district implementation. These resources should be helpful for administrators and teacher leaders seeking to implement RTI in their schools. The tools for Tier 1 support include (a) a quality of Tier 1 instruction rubric, (b) a behavior matrix describing appropriate student behaviors in a variety of school settings, (c) a rewards menu of activities for students, (d) a description of inappropriate behavior levels and potential teacher responses, (e) a sample discipline referral form, (f) a simple data collection form, and (g) a sample demerit plan. The Tier 1 tools are specific to middle school, so teachers and administrators may need to consult other resources for ideas about how to develop tools and processes appropriate for elementary and high schools. The Tiers 2 and 3 tools consist of a brief functional behavior assessment survey/checklist and a list of questions to facilitate the analysis of data. Both tools are reproducible for the school that purchased the book and appear easy to use.

There were two shortcomings of the book: overly-wordy explanations and problematic citations of research. While these shortcomings inhibit the flow of the book, they are not severe enough to prevent Shores from her goal of providing a thorough explanation of RTI. Overall, the book is a helpful and comprehensive resource.

Reviewed by Sara Fry, Assistant Professor of Education, Boise State University, Idaho.

Shumow, Lee (Ed). (2009). *Promising Practices for Family and Community Involvement during High School*. Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Pages: 137 ISBN 978-1-60752-124-2

Principals and other school leaders will find this monograph a helpful addition to their professional library. As part of a series entitled *Family, School and Community Partnership Issues*, this volume focuses exclusively on the challenges of parental involvement at the high school level. While much attention is given to how principals can foster and sustain relationships and involvement levels with children during elementary school, less attention has been afforded the myriad of issues involving secondary students, parents and staff.

Researchers have found that parents and community members have a very significant impact on student achievement and attendance, as well as post secondary aspirations, despite a considerable decline in parental involvement by the time a child reaches high school. Both school leaders and classroom teachers are aware that family and community factors are important for student success in high school even though connecting parents and teenagers to the secondary school curriculum is difficult. This volume in the series reflects contributions from a diverse spectrum, including chapters written by research scholars, field practitioners and policy analysts.

Divided into two parts, Section One of the book is dedicated to perspectives from theory and research. This section covers adolescent development, family involvement, the role of family and community in extracurricular activities and the evolution of trust relationships. These chapters read much like a current literature review, with extensive documentation and provide the lay reader, as well as graduate students and researchers, a thorough examination of the challenges associated with developing successful partnership programs in today's high school. For example in Chapter 2, Kreider and Suizzo ask the question that many readers may be thinking: Why consider and even encourage family involvement in the lives of adolescents, when adolescents themselves may want nothing more than to be left alone or in the company of their friends? (p. 9) The authors argue that indeed adolescents *do* want to maintain connections with parents and other adults, albeit in different ways than younger children do. They examine the developmental tasks of adolescence and consider outcomes associated with sustained levels of family involvement (academic achievement, healthier peer relationships, etc.)

Section Two outlines perspectives from policy and practice and includes chapters dedicated to transitioning to high school, Firefox (a programmatic approach to student and community partnerships), fostering career education partnerships with businesses and community organizations, as well as emerging state policies which support the notion of parental involvement at the secondary level. This section is more appropriate for field practitioners.

Building principals and other school leaders seeking specific ideas on how to generate or create parental involvement programs may find themselves reading selected chapters specific to their school needs, while graduate students and other researchers will appreciate the breadth in which

the topic of high school involvement is covered. As an example, school leaders may benefit from the useful and detailed information shared by Lampert in Chapter 5 which outlines a freshman advisory program at a Midwestern suburban high school intended to address transition issues of eighth and ninth graders. Lampert guides the reader through the needs analysis, curriculum development and evaluation process of the freshman advisory program used as a model. Although she calls the program "a work in progress" which is admittedly challenged by human components (p. 84)—every year they have a new set of freshman and often new staff members to train, school leaders will appreciate the practical advice and experience offered in this chapter if they aspire to begin or revamp a program in their respective schools.

In the final chapter, Zinth challenges school personnel to review how they involve parents in the postsecondary planning process. Data suggests a strong disparity between stated postsecondary goals and actual postsecondary attainment (p. 124). While the vast majority of high school students state the belief that they will go to college, research suggests that fewer than half of the high school graduates will enter college within a year of leaving high school (p. 124-125). Zinth does an exemplary job of highlighting the state approaches that have been enacted to ensure that students and their parents have access to the information needed to make decisions regarding the college planning process, matriculation, costs and financial aid, etc. and provides some specific state examples such as Texas "Go Centers" and the Indiana e-Transcript (p. 130-131). Both high school principals and guidance counselors will find this chapter especially helpful as they formulate ways to increase involvement levels of secondary parents.

The challenges associated with implementing effective parent involvement programs at the secondary level may be significant; however, this monograph offers both a theoretical foundation and practical ideas for working to increase the commitment to parental partnerships at the high school level. Such dedication by secondary level stakeholders ensures high school students are afforded critical opportunities for success, both academically and developmentally. Researchers as well as school and community leaders interested in forging and sustaining such partnerships will find this small volume especially beneficial.

Reviewed by Laura Lloyd-Smith, Ed.D, a graduate of the University of South Dakota and adjunct instructor of education. Dr. Lloyd-Smith is a former school counselor whose doctoral research focused on assessing secondary level principal attitudes toward parental involvement.

Skrla, Linda; McKenzie, Kathryn Bell; & Scheurich, James Joseph. (2009). *Using Equity Audits to Create Equitable and Excellent Schools*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

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The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) identified the United States (US) as the only country where the proportions of highest performing students was similar to the percentage of the lowest achieving students (OECD, 2007). Results on the PISA also indicated gaps on the performance of US students on standardized measures of school achievement on multiple subjects (NCES, 2007). The Bush administration attempted to address these gaps through policy changes, such as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2002). However, the goals of NCLB to improve student achievement have been hindered by a lack of clear methods for schools and districts to achieve increases in academic performance. This mismatch between policy and practice has left school administrators and educators with few concrete ways to meet policy expectations.

Skrla, Mckenzie, and Scheurich have responded to the call by school administrators for concrete guidelines to help close achievement gaps of students in their schools and districts with *Using Equity Audits to Create Equitable and Excellent Schools*. Writing in response to the NCLB requests for accountability, the authors recommend that policies and educational practices work together to help reduce and eventually eliminate these gaps all across the country. Indeed, Skrla et al. suggest that equity audits are "a systemic way for school leaders… to assess the degree of equity or inequity present in three key areas of their schools or districts: programs, teacher quality, and achievement" (p. 3). Equity audits, accompanied by practical methods for how to address areas that require improvement, may prove beneficial to school administrators and teachers.

This book is organized into three parts. Part One offers a general overview of the book. It includes a definition of systemic equity, its purpose, and the authors' experiences, first as practitioners and now as researchers, helping schools and districts close achievement gaps. It also provides historical examples of equity audits conducted in the US and other countries, and a seven-step method for conducting equity audits in a school or district.

Part Two, the core of the book, details the equity audit process for schools and districts around teacher, programmatic, and achievement quality equity. First, keeping data about teacher distribution across grade levels and student groups, based on teacher education, experience, mobility, and certification, provides leaders with a sense of which courses are taught to which students by which teachers. Second, the selection and inclusion of students in special education, gifted and talented programs, bilingual education, and discipline programs, should reflect the overall representation of diversity in the school population. Third, a recommendation for schools and districts is to keep systematic annual records of results on state achievement tests, dropout rates, high school graduation tracks, and SAT/ACT/AP/IB results so that equity can be examined historically. Last, for a better analysis of systematic differences or similarities across campuses within one school district, the book presents a successful example of the process of equity audits and the resulting implementation of changes.

Part Three identifies actions and strategies for responding to equity audits at an individual level. First, the book explores the characteristics of an equity-oriented change agent (EOCA), and highlights the ideal beliefs, attitudes, and actions of an equity leader—a school principal, an administrator, or a classroom teacher—responsible for promoting equity and conducting equity

audits on campus. Then, the authors emphasize the importance of reflection and interpersonal relationships, and provide seven leadership strategies to develop equity consciousness. Next, the book describes nine high-quality teaching skills, and suggests classroom evidence to assess each of them, as well as a strategy to observe and develop high-quality teaching skills for all teachers. Finally, the last chapter foregrounds equity traps –such as having a deficit view, erasing students' cultural backgrounds, or maintaining negative practices—that might become obstacles to move toward equity at the individual and/or collective level, and offers both a skill and a strategy to overcome them successfully.

The authors have written a concise, accessible, and practical guide to methods and applications of equity audits. Each chapter includes preliminary summaries, recaps of previous chapters, boxes with step-by-step instructions and relevant information, discussion activities and reflection questions, and chapter conclusions. School administrators and teachers will find this book easy to read, and its step-by-step guidelines, easy to apply.

Given the policy context created by NCLB, and in response to a need for accountability, the authors established their concern for equity issues early in the book. They identified teaching as one aspect of schooling that could be improved given the support of school administrators. Utilizing adult-learning theory, they suggested guidelines for school administrators to help teachers develop higher levels of equity consciousness and teaching skills. These guidelines will contribute to more equitable practices in schools that may also reduce achievement gaps. However, the authors refrained from an analysis of teachers' work, including the conditions within which they work, and also excluded a discussion of the impact of the social contexts of students' lives that may influence their academic achievement.

Ultimately, bound by the constraints of NCLB policy, the authors were limited in their conceptions of how to assess equity gaps, as well as how to address these issues. Though the authors recognized the complexity of the issues associated with achievement given socioeconomic status and race, they maintained responsibility for student performance with teachers. Some of their suggestions for improving teaching did not appear to consider the time constraints on teachers, many of whom face large numbers of students. While routinely conducting quick checks to ensure all students are acquiring the skills they need is conceivable in the early grades, it may be much less possible in high schools given the sheer number of course preps and students across courses.

In the future, changes to educational policy in the US may provide more options for assessing student learning that are not limited to ranked performance on standardized tests of achievement. While policy and practice do need to work together, policy changes need to take into account the complexity of learning. Changes in schooling should aim for learning goals that extend beyond what achievement tests measure. Once this occurs, those committed to educational equity may be more likely to make recommendations that include curricular and structural changes to schooling that impact the classroom, such as allowing teachers to balance their time between planning pedagogy, conducting equity checks, and developing relationships with students. Given the narrow policy context, the authors were not able to address necessary

changes in social issues like racism, sexism, and poverty that also contribute to gaps in achievement. As a final point, we would like to invite school administrators to reflect on their own levels of equity consciousness prior to assessing it for their teachers. While we all know the power of a single school leader committed to equitable school reform, in our experience that school leader has just as often been a teacher as an administrator.

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