



**Daniels, Harvey. (2001). *Looking into Literature Circles*.
Portsmouth, ME: Stenhouse.**

This 15 minute video supplements Daniels's 1994 book *Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in the Student-Centered Classroom*, by attempting to communicate more fully the essence of the literature circle experience for circle participants. It accomplishes this by focusing on literature circle participants engaged in discussion: the three longest scenes show third graders, high schoolers and a parent group talking about what they have read and attempting to integrate it with their previous knowledge and experience.

This is not "Candid Camera" but viewers do get a sense that this is a real, not a staged discussion. The filmmakers do not edit around areas that some might consider problematic behaviors. For example, in the high school group two of three male members are clearly leading the discussion, yet they routinely call upon the two female members of the group to state their opinions first. The males' contributions are largely in reaction to the statements made by the women. This brief film does not go into detail about preparing a literature circle environment for the classroom or dealing with the problems that might arise, it hopes to show the "productive social interaction" that literature circles generate.

The film would be most appropriate in introducing literature circles to preservice teachers or parent groups. The review copy had sound problems that obscured the voice of the narrator and some of the circle participants significantly. Purchasers should be sure to check their copy for sound quality before accepting. (5/8/01 - Stenhouse acknowledges some faulty copies and is "making good on it to anyone who bought between 4/12 and 5/3.")

Pages: na Price: \$30.00 ISBN: 1-57110-336-8

Reviewed by Kate Corby, Michigan State University

Freeman, Evelyn & Lehman, Barbara (2001) *Global Perspectives in Children's Literature*. Needham Heights, MA : Allyn and Bacon.

Bringing the world's diversity to the classroom can be a challenge. Freeman and Lehman make it a bit easier for readers in the U.S. market with this excellent offering. They discuss books from abroad and also books published in the U.S. about foreign places. *Global Perspectives*

begins with a look at how the world has come to American classrooms in the past and how this tradition is growing and changing today. Many educators seek out materials about other cultures, not merely to show their students difference, but to help them understand the common bonds between people.

References to specific materials are woven into the text as Freeman and Lehman discuss quality assessment, translation, cultural taboos and accuracy issues. They look at various genres including picture books, poetry, and biography; various themes -- personal struggles, war, everyday life. There is also a section on the folklore of various regions. A variety of appendices and indexes make retrieving information easy.

Pages: **136** Price: **\$22.33** ISBN: **0-205-30862-7**

Reviewed by Kate Corby, Michigan State University

Paechter, Carrie. (2001). *Changing School Subjects: Power, Gender and Curriculum*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Paechter has been a frequent author on issues of gender and schooling in the U.K. Here she takes an in-depth look at the gendering of school subjects. The book is not easy reading but it is accessible. Some readers might be irritated by the frequent, often acronymic, references to specific British initiatives. It would be difficult to divorce the subject from politics, but it is quite possible to understand the points being made without knowing the details of every program mentioned.

Two of the chapters struck me as particularly strong, especially for American readers. Chapter six discusses Physical Education (PE). Paechter does a good job of analyzing how we got to our current situation, with some sports "male" and some "female." Her analysis points out the historic differences between the American viewpoint and the British, making it easier for an American reader to see that these designations truly are cultural. In Britain, PE has focused more centrally on keeping fit and maintaining a healthy body rather than on learning winning strategies or competitive spirit, though these values are immigrating from the U.S. PE for females has traditionally been more individualized, such as dance or gymnastics, while the men's activities have involved more team effort. Unfortunately Paechter does not offer a particularly strong recommendation for "an androgynous and truly empowering PE."

Chapter eight is another I would recommend to American readers. Paechter does an excellent job of pointing out how the centralized curriculum and standard tests that assess it's mastery have changed both curriculum and students. As she points out, it becomes increasingly necessary to test more and more aspects of a subject, because anything

that is not on the test is devalued and discarded by the students. At the same time, even knowledge that has been constructed by the students cannot really be theirs, it belongs to the school because it must be transformed to fit within the demands of the portfolio/examination.

Pages: **184** Price: **\$26** ISBN: 0-335-20119-9

Reviewed by Kate Corby, Michigan State University

Ramirez, Lettie & Gallardo, Olivia M. (2000). *Portraits of Teachers in Multicultural Settings: A Critical Literacy Approach*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Although an edited volume, this work holds together as a unit better than most. It is not a series of biographical sketches as the title might suggest. The first chapters define critical literacy and discuss its implications for the classroom. The section on selecting literature for classroom use, which appears in chapter two, will be a highlight for many, while those who are struggling to reach African American students will appreciate Oladele's insights as she describes bringing elements of African culture into the classroom to provide an affirming environment for her students. Later chapters move on to more specific implementations, focusing on art, drama and technology. These chapters are closer to the almost biographical storytelling that the title suggests. The final chapters speak about reaching students by involving parents and creating trust through transforming classroom culture. The teacher as learner is a theme throughout, but especially in these latter chapters.

This might not be a good choice as an introductory text, but will offer some new ideas and thoughtful comments for teachers who are thinking about critical literacy and want additional viewpoints.

Pages: **220** Price: **\$30.67** ISBN: **0-205-30575-x**

Reviewed by Kate Corby, Michigan State University



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