

**Bidabe, Linda (2001) *No Ordinary Move: A Memoir*.
Farmington, PA: Plough Publishing.**

No Ordinary Move is a very gratifying memoir of Linda Bidabe and her courageous struggle to implement a special education curriculum for children with severe disabilities. She had me hooked at page one. Born on a Kansas farm in 1945, she vividly recalls her childhood and invites the reader along for the journey. Linda was born a leader. She is a very determined individual and demonstrates this throughout her memoir. She encounters many obstacles during her life, obstacles in which she has the strength to overcome. She later narrates her entrance into adulthood, where she experiences life as a teacher, wife and mother.

An educator at heart, Ms. Bidabe's goal in life is to help children with severe disabilities fulfill their dreams. These are children who are limited in both fine and gross motor skills. She is successful because she sees the importance of individualizing goals for her students and she gives the reader many examples of this in her memoir. She is a true leader because she stands as the voice for 'her children' and their families. Linda also realizes the importance of involving parents in their child's development. She views 'her children' (as she refers to her students) as individual human beings with a goal in life. She believes in their dreams enough to make them reality. Just when the world is ready to give up on most of these children, Linda Bidabe motivates them to sit, stand, walk and some to even run. However, she does not fail to mention that she is not successful with every student that enters her classroom. She accepts others and has empathy for them. This is a very inspirational woman; for every door closed on her, she finds ten that are open.

After years of hard work, Linda Bidabe founded the MOVE (Mobility Opportunities Via Education) Program and Curriculum, a curriculum that has been published in ten different languages. She has lead educators from all around the globe to help children in their communities with severe disabilities. While reading this book, I developed a high level of respect and admiration for this woman. Linda Bidabe finds great joy in helping others reach their goals, a virtue that deserves applauding. She shows the reader the importance of establishing goals and working toward those goals in positive ways. I not only recommend this book to teachers, but to anyone looking for a well written, inspiring autobiography.

Pages: **336** Price: **\$24.00** ISBN: **0-87486-915-3**

Reviewed by Amy Henderson, Chapman University—San Diego Campus

Fullan, Michael (2001) *Leading in a Culture of Change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

We are experiencing times of sweeping change, with tighter fiscal constraints, demands placed on educational leaders by the "No Child Left Behind" act, and controversy over high stakes testing, vouchers, and accountability. Fullan's book, *Leading in a Culture of Change*, offers both insight and direction for the current educational leader whether at the central office or campus level.

Michael Fullan is the dean of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. He is also recognized as an international authority on educational reform. He is involved in training, consulting and evaluation of change projects around the world such as his efforts with the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy in Great Britain.

Leading in a Culture of Change centers around leaders focusing on key changes that will allow them to lead effectively. Discussing the change process, the author refers to our culture as one that "seems to specialize in pell-mell innovation" (p. ix). Fullan opens by quoting Robert Steinberg: "The essence of intelligence would seem to be in knowing when to think and act quickly, and knowing when to think and act slowly"(p. x). Fullan is concerned with not only the decision, but the timing involved in making the correct decision. His sometimes-lighthearted approach to the issues surrounding the change process should not be misconstrued as a signal that understanding the process is unimportant.

Fullan's writing style is more familiar than authoritative with liberal amounts of case histories from both the business world and the world of education. His mantra in this book is that all of us can improve our leadership abilities simply by focusing on a small number of key dimensions. Fullan ties each chapter to the previous one re-emphasizing the previous chapter through reinforcement in the current one. This method allows the reader to apply the methods in a building block manner. I found the book an easy read and quite enlightening, reinforcing some of my personal beliefs concerning successful leadership styles.

The first chapter, "A Remarkable Convergence," is devoted to the discussion of effective leadership, stating within the first page "this is not a book about superleaders. Charismatic leaders inadvertently often do more harm than good because, at best, they provide episodic improvement followed by frustrated or despondent dependency. Superhuman leaders also do us another disservice: they are role models

who can never be emulated by large numbers" (p. 1) The author weaves the business world and the educational world together as learning organizations, stating that if they fail to evolve together they will fail to survive. He espouses five themes for successful leadership: moral purpose, understanding change, developing relationships, knowledge building and coherence making.

Starting his journey with chapter 2, "Moral Purpose," Fullan weaves his way through all five points in building block fashion, each inextricably connected to the preceding point. Moral purpose is seen as both an end and a means. In education, every "leader", whether an administrator or teacher, must see as an important end, making a difference in the lives of students. He continues by stating, "if you don't treat others fairly, you will be a leader without followers" (p. 13). Fullan describes two excellent examples of moral purpose. The Monsanto company's remarkable transformation, under its new CEO, Robert Shapiro, started with a series of "town hall meetings" discussing the unsustainable problems of hunger facing humanity. That discussion led to ten thousand of Monsanto's employees becoming involved feeding the world. The second example is the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy, the nationwide initiative to improve both the literacy and numeracy of Great Britain's twenty thousand schools in which Fullan has been an active participant. The author clearly makes his point, social consciousness and the concept of being a good citizen apply internally as well as externally whether in the business or educational setting..

In chapter three, "Understanding Change," Fullan briefly describes Kotter's eight steps in *Leading Change* (1996, p. 21), Beer, Eisenstat, and Spectors six observations (1990) about bottom-up strategies and Hamel's advice (2000) to "lead the revolution" in eight easy steps. Do following any or all of these recipes for success guarantee success? Would a leader know what is right in all circumstances? The answer seems to be, probably not. I believe Fullan means change is more than the outward mechanics of the process. To truly understand the change process one must take into account the system and all stakeholders. Without considering those involved, lasting change will be impossible.

The title of chapter four, "Relationships, Relationships, Relationships," speaks for itself. Success of any venture depends upon the people involved in the change process. Again, Fullan uses an excellent example to emphasize his point: District 2, one of thirty-two community school districts, in New York City. District 2 experienced an amazing system wide improvement based on building relationships, instilling a moral purpose, and understanding the change process. The philosophy surrounding building relationships for results espoused by Anthony Alvarado, the District 2 Superintendent during the time of change is a particularly strong section. Fullan makes an excellent point concerning change while discussing high stakes testing. We must resist the urge to focus on short-term results, by placing our emphasis on long-term results and the systemic improvements that will generate the

lasting change we are seeking.

Chapter five, "Knowledge Building," discusses the important differences between knowledge and information. Many in-service training sessions are guilty of only supplying information rather than developing a knowledge base that will support and enhance lasting change. Focusing on gathering information rather than developing knowledge to use the information does not work. I see this as one reason why it is so important to create environments that are conducive to knowledge sharing and network building among all stakeholders.

In chapter six, "Coherence Building," the author takes the reader on a journey of guiding people through their differences and enabling those differences to surface. He builds on the hypotheses that creative ideas and novel solutions are often generated when the status quo is disrupted. He discusses the frustration felt by many when a school district has a large number of "improvement programs" operating at the same time.

Fullan wraps the book up with the fable of the Hare and the Tortoise. Lasting change is not accomplished with lightening speed techniques but rather with a more tortoise like approach, tinkering with the status quo to bring successful change. Positive change in any organization is possible, but it must start with leaders willing to invest time and effort and involve all stakeholders in the change process.

I found this book both enjoyable and enlightening. Each page offered positive insights into leading the change process. I would recommend this book to all administrators, whether at the central office level or on the campus. It would be an excellent centerpiece for staff development revolving around the change process. Fullan does not lead the reader to believe that by following simple steps all will work out fine. Instead he offers a path to change with many positive examples of company's and educational systems growing, developing, and maturing toward a common goal.

References

- Beer, M., Eisenstat, R., & Spector, B. (1990). *The critical path to corporate renewal*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
- Hamel, G. (2000). *Leading the Revolution*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Kotter, J. (1996). *Leading Change*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Pages: **162** Price: **\$25.00** ISBN: **0-7879-5395-4**

About the reviewer:

John T. Roskosky is an assistant principal at Irvin High School in El Paso Texas and a student in the Educational Leadership and Administration doctoral program at the University of Texas at El Paso.

Harwayne, Shelley (2001) *Writing Through Childhood: Rethinking Process and Product*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Writing Through Childhood: Rethinking Process and Product is a resource for language arts teachers interested in advancing students' written communication and literacy skills. This discourse is based on a five-year qualitative empirical study of K-6 students, their writing, and teaching methods for aiding their composition abilities. Harwayne presents an honest, passionate, yet objective view of elements affecting students' written products.

The first part of the text articulates the importance of eliciting students' interest in writing. This discourse provides teachers with practical approaches for engaging students in authentic tasks early in their composition careers and highlights the significance of allowing students to write about their concerns. Harwayne provides descriptions of elementary age students that can only be viewed as insightful. She effectively magnifies these targeted sketches assisting readers with the conceptualization of her philosophy. The first segment of the book expands upon the idea of meeting students at their own academic and chronological levels quite effectively, outlining innovative ideas for contacting students at lifecycle junctures. Students' writing samples throughout the book support Harwayne's instructional and adolescent intelligence claims and provide educators with examples of classroom applications.

Harwayne catalogs six major instructional strategies for helping young authors develop a stable, unified literacy foundation and a love of writing. These strategies construct a resource which profiles the importance of journaling, work shopping, audience analysis, shared celebrations and publications, invitations, and collaborations. As an active participant in the writing process penning communications with students, the author easily depicts, from an involved perspective, how these elements may be met in the writing workshop.

Harwayne dynamically presents a weighty reading-writing connection. As an element of "needs-based mini-lessons", she advocates teacher compiled trade book libraries for use as modeling devices (p. 116). These supportive novels demonstrate writing techniques and promote critical analysis. Harwayne's list of titles and suggested purposes is a valuable tool for educators, shaving time off of their already busy schedules.

A significant section of this text explores the importance of student-teacher conferencing. Harwayne submits thoughtful, convincing passages supporting conferencing, listing these meetings as essential and non-negotiable components of any literacy workshop. In a well developed section that she calls "The Basics", Harwayne (pp. 84- 86) charts elements that enable teachers to effectively plan time for

individual conferencing in the classroom setting. In this segment she examines the classroom culture, highlighting elements that facilitate effective student/teacher conferencing and promote continued class performance and productivity during individual discussion periods. Teachers will value her discourse and tone viewing it as the voice of reflective, successful experience.

A major strength of this book is Harwayne's underlying philosophical conceptualization of the learning process. Understanding that we retain information best through connected and authentic approaches, Harwayne effectively integrates the five language strands of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing. Interwoven classroom applications are sprinkled throughout the text providing the reader with an opportunity for deep reflective understanding of language's many connections.

Writing Through Childhood: Rethinking the Process and Product is a highly readable text. Writing from a synthesized perspective of teacher, staff developer, co-director, consultant, author, principal, and superintendent, Shelley Harwayne provides practical arguments and guidelines for her positions. Years of research lend credibility to her reflections and interpretations of the writing process. Readers will appreciate a rich repertoire of appendices complete with inspiring texts (listed by section), charts, checklists and students' work. Educators will value the genuine understanding of the "human" element within each of us, and the concrete classroom applications presented. For those interested in advancing written communications and literacy, this discourse is not to be missed.

Pages: 407 Price: 25.00 ISBN: 0-325-00290-8

Reviewed by Kim A. Harris, University of Oklahoma

Sampson, William A. (2002) *Black Student Achievement: How Much do Family and School Really Matter?* Lanham, Maryland and London: Scarecrow Press.

William A. Sampson examines several questions in his book, *Black Student Achievement: How Much do Family and School Really Matter?* He looks at problems that have engaged researchers of urban minority students for decades: what factors create a successful student, what are the factors that most influence learners to succeed, what reforms are needed to assure student success? Sampson's hypothesis is that "differences in family dynamics and /or home environment account for the differences in school performance." (p. vii)

This book presents a small case study (a sample of twelve families) that was selected to examine what qualities help students to succeed. To focus primarily on student success and the effect of the family,

Sampson choose a sample of students of the same race (African-American), same socio-economic status (lower income), same age cohort (ten-fourteen), and the same community (West Side of Evanston Illinois). He observed and interviewed the three males and nine females over an eight-to ten week period. Sampson admits that he is not the first researcher to study minority student success. (p.4-6) He points out that in his casual interviews with successful black people who like himself came from poor backgrounds, "family" is the factor always mentioned as crucial to their success. (p.6) He also touches on the topics of family socio-economic status, parental marital status, teen motherhood, single-parent households and negative peer pressure on successful students etc. in probing the effect of the dynamics of each family toward student success.

In the Preface and first two chapters, the author reviews previous research and the varieties of methodological approaches to minority student success. Sampson describes his choice of the methodology of prolonged observation. He tells how he chose his sample, approaching the families through trusted community workers in an agency in the neighborhood. The author goes on to describe his classification of students as high, average and low achievers in school based on grades and teacher's comments on official grade reports. Sampson presents the case studies in the following chapters (3-5) that are arranged in the classifications of high, average and low achievers. Each case study contains a general introduction to the student and family from the interview and questionnaire, and a section on the observations.

The strength of the book, in this reviewer's opinion, is in the case study chapters. The behaviors, problems and observations of the students and families discussed are those with which many urban teachers are familiar in their daily classroom lives. It is interesting that the participants in the study are not described in stark clinical terms, but with dignity. There is an appreciation for the difficulties, stresses and successes in their lives. Sampson even comments on the personal observations of one of the study participants with support material from research studies. (p.99) Sampson also interjects personal reminiscences from his own experience (p.6, 186) showing that he is truly a reflective urban education researcher and practitioner!

The last portion of the book (Chapters 6-7) contains Sampson's recommendations for further study, a criticism of school-based reform and suggestions for the pursuit of family-based reform of education. This evolves from his belief that the school-system is based on middle-class values and those poor, minority families who negotiate it best may have low incomes but share middle class values. (p.57)

The book is written in approachable style accessible to every reader: layperson, educator, and researcher. It contains an appendix with the questionnaires used in the study, a bibliography (containing materials with imprints from the 1990's and 1980's, with the exception of classic texts and studies), and an index. I would recommend it for pre- and in-

service teachers, urban practitioners and policy researchers. It would be a worthy addition to libraries that serve those readers. It might also prompt university and student teacher-researchers to embark on similar research. *Black Student Achievement: How Much do Family and School Really Matter?* is a worthwhile addition to the literature on urban education and minority student success.

Pages: **233** Price: **\$25.95** ISBN: **0-8108-4295-5**

Reviewed by Sheila Kirven, New Jersey City University



[home](#) | [reviews](#) | [editors](#) | [contribute](#) | [subscribe](#) | [publishers](#)