education review

Dickinson, David K., & Tabors, Patton O. (2001) *Beginning Literacy with Language: Young Children Learning at Home and School.* Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing.

It has long been noted that children learn in a variety of settings. Home, school, and play experiences all play a significant role in the learning process for young children. *Beginning Literacy With Language* addresses the importance of language development in the school and home settings. Language development is crucial to literacy achievement and this book attempts to provide ideas, experiences, research, and thought provoking stimulus for educators and parents alike.

Beginning Literacy with Language is divided into sections, with each section offering articles by contributing authors and private consultants in the fields of early childhood education and psychology. The sections contain literature reviews, research, and classroom interaction on such topics as supporting literacy and language development through reading, playing at home, preschool experiences, language opportunities during mealtimes, and parent involvement. Actual home and school observations and experiences of over 70 young children are documented in the book, in which parent-child and teacher-child interactions are recorded. The children, parents, and teachers are from diverse backgrounds, which add to the overall utility of the book for the classroom teacher, graduate student, parent, or counselor.

The connections between language and literacy are important, and it is vital parents and educators understand and work toward this connection when working with young children. Parents who are interested in day-to-day interaction opportunities will find the "suggestions for parents" sections helpful, as they provide ideas without a lot of technical jargon and research methodologies. Educators will applaud this book for the in-depth research, references, statistics, charts, and actual classroom observations and transcripts. Professors in an academic Education Department may also wish to review a copy *Beginning Literacy with Language* for use in an early childhood education curriculum.

Pages: **432**   Price: **$29.95**   ISBN: **1-55766-479-X**

Reviewed by Ru Story-Huffman, Cumberland College

Dorn, Linda J. & Soffos, Carla (2001) *Scaffolding Young Writers: A Writer's Workshop Approach.* Portland, Maine:

Stenhouse Publishers.

Scaffolding Young Writers is a concise, practical book, designed to assist teachers in the primary grades in effectively providing a learning environment in which children can develop the skills necessary to write successfully. Creating a supportive environment for children's writing using the writer's workshop approach is the authors' primary focus. They identify three aspects of socio-cognitive learning theory as the foundation for their work—that the act of writing is a cognitive process, that writing instruction must be based on what students already know and that teachers must provide students with a variety of opportunities to learn writing. The writer's workshop approach lends itself to the "scaffolding" technique by structuring the support that teachers can provide to ensure student success while the student is learning the increasingly complex set of skills necessary for good writing.

The book is divided into five chapters, each clearly laid out with numerous examples and illustrations.

- Chapter 1, The Development of Young Writers, sets the stage for the remainder of the book with clear explanations of the writing process and the importance of understanding the balance between a child's ability to compose and the ability to effectively handle mechanical aspects of writing. Stages of writing are briefly described with a useful chart detailing behaviors exhibited by young writers at each of four stages.
- Chapter 2, Assessing Writing Development, focuses on formal and informal strategies for continuous assessment of writing in the primary grades. Modes of writing are clearly defined. Examples of children's writing are presented both in the text and as illustrations in the child's own handwriting to assist the reader in understanding the two aspects of writing integral to the primary grades-composing and transcribing. .
- In Chapter 3, the details of setting up a writer's workshop environment in the primary classroom are laid out in well-articulated steps. Illustrations of portions of a writing portfolio accompany descriptions of the forms and checklists that allow the child, with the teacher's assistance, to manage the writing environment and develop appropriate writing skills. .
- Chapter 4 lays out a variety of mini-lessons that the authors define as "explicit and focused lessons that the teacher creates to demonstrate a particular skill or strategy." These mini-lessons are the mainstay of the scaffolding technique that the authors find most useful in the teaching of writing. Mini-lessons on routines to organize the writing environment, on specific writing strategies, such as editing or revising, and on particular writing skills are described and illustrated. Accompanying the text are useful sidebars that clearly outline the steps to follow in using a mini-lesson. .

- The final chapter is devoted to the writing conferences that form a major portion of the writers' workshop environment. Types of writing conferences are described, along with lists of questions a teacher might use to elicit information from children about their writing.

An extensive appendix provides many useful forms and checklists that can be readily adopted by the classroom teacher. A helpful index and list of references are also included.

The authors have certainly achieved their goal of writing a practical book to help teachers teach writing in the primary grades. As mentioned above, examples from students in writing workshop classes are included throughout the book. The authors' own teaching, as well as their work with primary grade teachers using the Arkansas Literacy Coaching Model, make the examples immediate and relevant. The focus on real-life examples, coupled with clearly outlined steps to take in incorporating the writer's workshop model into the primary classroom, makes this book ideal for practicing teachers wishing to find a useful and interesting approach to the difficult task of encouraging and developing good writing in the early grades. Beginning and student teachers would also benefit from the practical focus of this book. Dorn and Soffos lay out such a clear model and display such a commitment to the importance of the writing process for young children that new <u>and</u> experienced teachers may well be inspired to adopt this writer's workshop approach in their classrooms.

Pages: **99** Price: **$15.00** ISBN: **1-57110-342-2**

Reviewed by Carla A. Hendrix, Plattsburgh State University of New York

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Guskey, Thomas R. (2002) *How's My Kid Doing?: A Parent's Guide to Grades, Marks, and Report Cards.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Starting with the premise that "parents want clear and useful information on how their child is doing in school. [and] Teachers want to inform parents about students' academic performance", (p. xiii) Thomas Guskey explores the processes that attempt to meet both of those objectives. Efforts to reform or "improve" a school's grading/reporting methods often only confuses parents even more. Having been a teacher and an administrator and now a parent, Guskey wrote this book hoping to clear some of the confusion so parents and teachers can communicate more effectively and ultimately cooperate to help their mutual students learn.

He admits right away that neither grades nor the reporting of grades is necessary for students to learn or for teachers to teach! Their purpose is

simply a means to meet the original objective—reporting a student's progress. Since teachers also use this report of a student's progress as evaluation or diagnosis, it can additionally be a means of determining the paths a student will take, especially in the short term, but eventually in his entire academic career. Therefore, it is vitally important that parents understand this 'modus operandi' of their child's report card.

Guskey notes, however, that this is increasingly hard to do because of inconsistencies in grading policies, even within a district, and other changes taking place in the grading processes around the country, especially when educators don't agree on the purposes of the grading system itself. Therefore, he feels parents should be very involved in the evolution of any reporting system and he offers examples of how parents' interpretations of report card terminology can differ from the schools'. He points out that parents often see no connection between the report card and what they could be doing at home to help their child succeed in school.

Guskey discusses other issues as well. Topics such as grade inflation, grading on the curve, and even the practice of selecting a school valedictorian are evaluated and analyzed. One surprise, he does not cover the subject of authentic assessment which is the buzzword of the moment, and gives short shrift towards explaining the use of portfolios as a valid means of documenting a child's academic development. Communication modes between parent and teacher are highlighted, along with computerized grading systems, although he admits that the use of technology will not eliminate the complexity surrounding grading and reporting of grades.

Very little of this discussion, however, appears to be targeted directly to parents. The book has several strengths; it is very well researched and has an extensive reference list. It delineates both the advantages and the shortcomings of different grading systems along with recommendations for their use. It is informative and excellently written, but it is difficult to distinguish whether the book has been written for parents or for educators. It reads more like a report on grading systems to be used, perhaps, in a teacher education program or a principals' training rather than as an aid for parents. For example, Guskey writes: "Researchers suggest that an appropriate approach to setting cut-offs must combine teachers' judgments of the importance of concepts addressed and consideration of the cognitive processing skills required by the questions or tasks. ... Using this type of grade assignment procedure shifts teachers' thinking so that grades on classroom assignments and other demonstrations of learning reflect the quality of student thinking instead of simply the number of points students attain." (p.80) This passage follows an explanation of how the Graduate Record Examination is evaluated, with implications for how teachers can apply this knowledge when grading their students.

Only the seventh (and last) chapter speaks directly to parents. It gives suggestions for communicating with their children about their grades

and with school administrators and teachers as well. However, the too brief conclusion at the end of this chapter abruptly switches from this angle and apparently returns to addressing educators. The book uses such a scholarly voice that it is hard to imagine the average parent reading it through to that last chapter. The language and structure is such that a parent might need to be college educated themselves in order to consider perusing the book and college educated parents are probably less likely to need to read it in the first place. Chances are a large number of teachers or principals are not going to be able to offer this book for assistance if a parent comes to them asking for help in understanding his child's report card.

Pages: **176**   Price: **$24.95**   ISBN: **0-787-96073-X**

Reviewed by Jacqueline Crandall, Detroit Public Schools.

Jacqueline Crandall is a teacher in the Detroit Public Schools and the parent of two college students and a high school junior. She has collectively dealt with 52 years worth of report cards on both sides of the parent/teacher fence.

Jobe, Ron & Dayton-Sakari, Mary (2002) *Info-Kids: How to Use Nonfiction to Turn Reluctant Readers into Enthusiastic Learners.* Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

While much that is written about literacy focuses on fiction, nonfiction or content- area literacy is receiving increasing attention. This book is intended for teachers of students whose learning styles or intelligences are not served by an exclusively fiction- based literacy curriculum, whom the authors call info-kids. These are children more interested in real life, who prefer "true books" to stories. But this approach recommends itself to anyone addressing content-area literacy skills.

This concise, well-organized volume distills the observations, resources, and strategies of the authors and dozens of classroom teachers into a framework for appreciating and connecting with these frequently reluctant readers. Much like the books recommended for info-kids, this book gets right to the point, giving teachers basic information and tools they can use immediately. It is designed for maximum utility and appeal, effectively using wide margins, headings, boxed text, quotations, "info-teasers", and brief book lists. The authors emphasize that this is a starting point, meant to outline successful approaches, not an exhaustive study of the issue.

Five chapters make up Part A. These describe

- characteristics of info-kids and potential obstacles to their learning

- ways to "mine" the information interests that are essential to connecting with and motivating info-kids
- how to identify appropriate information books
- a proposal that teachers create a "parallel curriculum" (focusing on process skills over content coverage) for these students.

Although three information book awards are suggested as sources for identifying more titles, including other annual lists and compilations would be a service to teachers.

Part B's eight chapters each describe one type of info-kid and present aptly chosen books and active learning tasks related to developing interests, strategies, reading-thinking skills, and research-project skills. Each chapter concludes with a paragraph on teacher realities - challenges typically faced when working with info-kids - and how to address them. Chapters on evaluation (which includes several observation checklists) and how to support and model information-based literacy comprise Part C.

A two-page professional resource bibliography is followed by a 14-page compilation of the selected, recent juvenile titles from Part B.

A convincing and encouraging guide that advocates for a point of view about info-kids and nonfiction as much as it describes an approach, this book is recommended for libraries serving pre- and in-service K-8 educators in all fields.

Pages: **128**   Price: **$17.50**   ISBN: **1-55138-143-5**

Reviewed by Ann Glannon, Wheelock College Library

Niles, S. G. & Harris-Bowlsbey, J (2002) *Career Development Interventions in the 21st Century.* Columbus, OH: Merrill Prentice Hall.

Niles and Harris-Bowlsby performed an excellent job composing *Career Development Interventions in the 21st Century*. I found this textbook to be practical, resourceful, and surprisingly enjoyable. The authors used a broad, yet user-friendly approach to discuss various career development issues, transitions, implications, and interventions. Emphasized in the text is a smorgasbord of approaches that can be used when applying methods and interventions in various counseling settings.

The book consists of 15 chapters. Within each chapter, the reader will find vignettes containing a pseudo-client who has a problem, which the chapter highlights. Also included in each chapter are websites that can be used to obtain further information or serve as reference points for the reader. The first three chapters provide the reader with foundational

career development theories, contributors in the field, interventions, and trends and transitions within career development. Chapter 4 examines four identity development models: racial identity, gender identity, gay/lesbian identity, and persons with disabilities. These models are designed to give the counselor a framework for addressing the needs of clients from diverse groups. Similarly, Chapter 5 gives the reader a blueprint of the phases that are involved when conducting career counseling for individuals and groups. In addition to techniques and strategies, the authors illustrate useful information on career assessment and planning in Chapte 6.

In the next chapters, Niles and Harris-Bowlsby highlight various kinds of print and electronic resources available in the career planning process. They describe client and counselor roles, list potential barriers, and offer suggestions that may be helpful when assisting clients. This section includes methods to integrate technology, and the challenges associated with them. In Chapter 9 the reader gets a step-by-step guide to designing a career development program including sample programs for middle and high school, university level, corporate settings, and community agencies.

Chapters 10-12, in my opinion, are the highlight of the textbook. In these three chapters, the authors provide a wealth of information about career development interventions at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, in addition to interventions in higher education. Each section provides goals, guidelines, and interventions followed by a number of sample career development activities. This section takes a look at modern day approaches to career development by exploring the various influences that the environment, genetics, and other factors play in how individuals choose careers. It also provides print and electronic material resources to assist the counselor and client in making informed decisions. The remaining chapters look at the career counselor in various community settings, coupled with potential ethical considerations, and evaluation of services.

Overall, this textbook offers a new and exciting look into career development today. It is a model of how contributors in the field can begin to conceptualize the career development movement from the old to the new.

Pages: **480**   Price: **$64.00**   ISBN: **0-13-927146-5**

Reviewed by Karesha Williams, University of South Carolina

Pipkin, Gloria, & Lent, ReLeah C. (2002) *At the Schoolhouse Gate: Lessons in Intellectual Freedom.* **Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann.**

As the preface notes, this book "issues a call for the students' right to

read what they want and to write what they want." The title is from a Supreme Court decision that says students don't leave their rights "at the schoolhouse gates." Two veteran high school teachers of English language arts in Florida describe their evolving beliefs and experiences in giving students control over their own learning plus responsibility for deciding what to say and read and write.

In Part One, Gloria Pipkin details her problems in middle-school in the 1980s with increasingly restrictive local as well as state-wide regulations. Her strong advocacy of classroom libraries, her encouraging students to choose their own books, and her classroom use of novels realistically portraying contemporary teens' problems all encountered opposition from school administrators. The conflict over first amendment rights and school censorship resulted in Pipkin filing a federal lawsuit that dragged on for four years with mixed results. The struggle did, however, draw a great deal of media attention and she received a national Courage Award (in company with C. Everett Koop, Paul Volcker, and Rudolph Guiliani) in 1989.

Part Two, focuses on Pipkin's one-time colleague, ReLeah Lent who describes her censorship battles in the 1990s as the adviser to an award-winning high school newspaper where she encouraged student decision-making at all levels. She too got involved in a lawsuit, losing her adviser position but winning a large settlement and a PEN Newman's Own First Amendment Award.

The two authors combine in Part Three to examine the larger context of censorship, proposing an Intellectual Freedom Manifesto, a very brief model policy for book selection in schools, and a simple model review policy. Both are strong advocates of classroom libraries and whole-class reading. They include a list of resources, organizations, and even their own email addresses. Both remain active in intellectual freedom issues, but Pipkin has left teaching for consulting and advising those in censorship battles.

Although they are strong opponents of bureaucratic, political, and religious restrictions on teachers' and students' rights to choose what they read and teach, their very personal accounts do try to portray the opposition to their views with care. They also show how some administrators, parents, and even fellow teachers seem to fear anything that would encourage students to question or challenge authority, particularly if there are sexual or religious elements involved.

A major value of this book is the realistic picture it develops of what difficulties, frustrations, and personal costs await any teacher who tries to go beyond the boundaries set by administrators and politicians. In its almost diary-like accounts, it is far more effective than any mere polemic against censorship.

Pages: **235**   Price: **$21.00**   ISBN: **0-325-00395-5 (paper)**

Reviewed by Roland C. Person, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale

Strickland, Dorothy S. , Ganske, Kathy & Monroe, Joanne K. (2002) *Supporting Struggling Readers and Writers: Strategies for Classroom Intervention 3- 6.* **Portland, Me:** Stenhouse Publishers **and Newark, De:** International Reading Association.

Strickland and Ganske, university teacher educators and researchers, and Monroe a teacher educator and curriculum director have created a very user-friendly handbook of research-based practices and strategies for pre-service and in-service teachers and their administrators. The authors state that the aim of the book is "to offer the best research based practice on the literacy learning and teaching of low achieving students." (Foreword, p. ix) This book aims to address the over reliance on early intervention which assumes "all [middle grade] children are ready for content-based work" and "remedial programs which are used as a replacement rather than a supplement to classroom instruction." (Foreword, p. ix) The authors feel that there should be "differentiated and tailored instruction [for struggling students which will eventually result in] better instruction for all children." (Foreword, p. x.)

The authors' foreword instructs users to look at Part Two of the book, "The Strategy Bank", which contains a very helpful collection of "cheat sheets" arranged according to function for instruction, assessment, test taking, home/school collections and professional development. Each sheet has three main sections. These include "What It Does", a description/definition of the strategy or activity; "How to Do it, step by step instructions; "What To Look For", student behaviors, responses; and "For More Information", articles, books, or reproducible forms. Some of the topics covered in the Strategy Bank include interest surveys, anecdotal records, rubrics, reading buddies, peer coaching and study groups. The organization of the Strategy Bank aptly demonstrates the backgrounds of the authors as classroom teachers: practical information efficiently organized.

Part One of the book contains information in chapters which give historical overviews and recent research since 1996 on topics such as: motivating reluctant readers, the needs of English language learners, small group instruction , reading fluency, improving reading comprehension and writing. It also gives helpful lists of practical hints and shortcuts for instructors. The text contains tables, bulleted lists and samples of student work. These chapters are written in a firm, authoritative but supportive voice.

The "Resources" section has a list of print materials and resources to use with students. These include hi-lo books, fractured fairy tales,

predictable books, and materials suitable for choral reading and readers
theater. A few Internet websites are mentioned in the References
section. Most of the references are to materials with imprints from
1990 onwards, the majority of these have 1994-2000 imprints.

The organization and layout of the book is a model of accessible
information supported by a compilation of recent research and
resources for busy classroom teachers and education students.

Pages: **250**   Price: **$22.50**   ISBN: **1-57110-055-5**

Reviewed by Sheila Kirven, New Jersey City University

Walsh, W. Bruce, Bingham, Rosie P., Brown, Michael T., & Ward, Connie M., editors. (2001) *Career Counseling for African Americans.* Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Counseling theories and techniques taught to masters-level counseling
students may leave students convinced that communication patterns of
clients are indistinguishable among various cultures. However, there
are multiple themes relevant to the African American community that
can negatively contribute to the plethora of stressors that continue to
plague this population, especially with regard to career counseling.
Career Counseling for African Americans stresses the importance of
career counselors becoming adept with the history, socio-political,
cultural, and racial factors of African American clients.

The primary purpose of this edited book is to present career counselors
with relevant information and cultural competencies to enhance
delivery of career information. Attention is drawn to the lack of
systematic research on issues that are often considered speculative but
relevant to African Americans in career counseling. For example,
several contributors note that the research on this topic is often limited
to college students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds and does
not apply to students of lower socioeconomic status. Career counselors
are encouraged to examine their own cultural attitudes and biases, as
well as encouraged to better understand how negating the effects of
slavery, racial and structural discrimination, and sexism can affect
career choices and the upward mobility of African Americans.

The authors discourage the counseling notion that "One Size Fits All."
This counseling notion often prevails in practices (e.g., assessments)
that are not as relevant to African Americans. To prevent or reduce
such practices, the book suggests that career counselors get familiar
with the literature on multicultural issues. Multicultural Career
Counseling Checklist for Counselors (MCCCC) and the Culturally
Appropriate Career Counseling Model (CACCM) are two assessments

identified as a gateway into better understanding how to best provide relevant career counseling.

Authors throughout the book warn counselors not to classify African Americans as monolithic. Counselors are urged to understand subsystems within the African American culture. For instance, if a counselor is unfamiliar with "light skinned/dark skinned" color discrimination, they can experience difficulty understanding why lighter- skinned women are being paid substantially more than darker-skinned women.

The main premise of this book is career counselors' understanding of possible poor choice-making by some African Americans based on poor education and training, and systematic orientation to low paying, low prestige jobs. They are urged to encourage clients to consider high paying/high prestige non-traditional careers (e.g., fields of science, math, engineering technological fields).

Career Counseling for African Americans also discusses African American, families and the plight of women, who in many instances perceive themselves as having a "double-discrimination" factor disadvantaged by both race and gender. African American families are more focused on group survival and extended family while white families tend to be more nuclear. Generally speaking, if one member of an African American family "makes it", he/she is expected to give back to the community and/or to family members that did not have the education and/or financial resources to do more. When discussing dual-career couples one contributor notes that historically African American women have always worked, unlike their white female counterparts. Therefore, dual-couples in the African American community do not have the same challenges as in the white community.

In the book, issues centered around gender imply that African American females are more likely to disclose personal concerns and issues dear to their hearts. On the contrary African American males are less likely to seek out counseling. As a way to increase African American males participation in counseling one author suggests that career counselors begin by using group-oriented approaches (e.g. athletic teams, fraternities, etc.), that can provide opportunities to talk one-to-one later. For both genders, African Americans tend to prefer friendship-oriented counseling sessions. Counselors are advised to establish rapport in "informal" ways.

Career Counseling for African Americans is a thorough examination of the concerns career counselors should be aware of for this client. The book recommends that historical aspects of racism, discrimination and sexism for this population need to be better understood by counselors in order to develop adequate and effective delivery of services. This book is a must read. I believe that career counselors can benefit from this timely piece. I am confident that those career counselors who read this book will be inspired to learn more about African American culture

to better serve their career needs.

Pages: **216**   Price: **$45.00 (cloth); $19.95 (paper)**   ISBN: **0-8058-2715-3 (cloth); 0-8058-2716-1 (paper)**

Reviewed by Sheila Witherspoon, University of South Carolina

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