



Kuharets, Olga R., editor (2001) *Venture Into Cultures: A Resource Book of Multicultural Materials and Programs.* Chicago: American Library Association.

A resource book for educators and librarians, *Venture into Cultures* covers background information, materials, activities and websites relevant to different cultural and ethnic groups. Each chapter focuses on a particular group or geographical area: Africa, the Caribbean, India, Jewish 96American culture, Korea, Latino Culture, the Middle East, Native American Culture and Russia. Background information on the region or culture, a list of recommended materials, and program ideas are outlined which could form the basis of community programs, classroom activities or lessons. Suggested materials including both print and non-print resources, are annotated with a description and suggested grade level. Chapters also include a list of websites and other resources. Despite the volatility of the Internet, most of the websites were still current when tested by the reviewer.

Although the depth of background information varies widely among the individually authored chapters, the book is extremely useful. Contributors to this volume include librarians and educators many of whom have a connection with the culture about which they are writing. These cultural connections give the materials cited a greater relevancy and authenticity. This is exactly what professionals working with diverse populations need.

This is the second edition of this book. The first edition, edited by Carla Hayden, contained an Index by Culture that effectively gave a quick booklist of available materials. This would have been a helpful addition to the general index in the second edition . The primary aim of both editions was to give librarians and educators materials and activities to introduce diverse cultures to children. Both editions of the book fulfilled that primary purpose.

The editor is successful in providing a useful resource for Social Studies and Geography classes and library programming. On a broader scale, *Venture Into Cultures* also provides education students, in-service teachers, and librarians with resources and ideas for use with multicultural and Limited English Proficient populations. A worthwhile purchase.

Pages: **125** Price: **\$47.50** ISBN: **0-8389-3513-3**

Reviewed by Sheila Kirven, New Jersey City University

Parsons, Les (2001) *Response Journals Revisited: Maximizing Learning Through Reading, Writing, Viewing, Discussing, and Thinking*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

When it comes to response journals Les Parsons wrote the book. His 1990 book on the topic began the move toward using these journals to help students organize their thoughts about reading. In the past decade Parsons has written one other book on the subject and several others have joined the movement by writing books or dissertations on using response journals with literature studies. Now Parsons says, the journals have become so much a part of the curriculum that we have moved from substance to form, losing the reason for using journals without ceasing the practice.

In this latest book Parsons takes the questions about response journals that he hears repeatedly and answers them. Along the way he offers forms and guidelines that teachers can use to make sure their practice captures the spirit as well as the form of the tool. The chapter titles give a clue to the areas of concern, getting started, using journals with literature, with live and mass media, developing discussion skills, and evaluation. The chapters on live and mass media, and evaluation are the two most heavy with checklists and guidelines to help the novice.

Clearly, on one level, Parsons feels that his baby is being misunderstood. But he also conveys a clear understanding of the day-to-day challenges that can keep a teacher from reaching optimum implementation with any new teaching tool. Teachers who are questioning their own response journal use and those who are considering implementing journals will find this book a helpful tool.

Pages: 119 Price: \$17.50 ISBN: 1-57110-345-7

Reviewed by Kate Corby, Michigan State University

Sarason, Seymour B. (2002) *Questions You Should Ask about Charter Schools and Vouchers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

In this brief text, Seymour B. Sarason re-visits the premise of his earlier work, *Charter Schools: Another Flawed Educational Reform?* In both titles, the dominant theme is that the charter school movement, like other educational reform efforts, will fall short of its goal. In this book, he discusses two major education reforms: charter schools and vouchers, with the first topic receiving more attention than the second. In chapter one, he clearly states the book's purpose: it is intended for those who have not considered the major issues surrounding charter

schools and vouchers. Sarason contends that most people oversimplify these issues.

Sarason effectively illustrates the complexities inherent in these movements and notes that, in principle, he is a proponent of both efforts. He believes, however, that the evidence to judge their effectiveness is lacking; the data upon which evaluative judgments should be made is not gathered. Sarason makes a convincing case for the need for more than anecdotal evidence in order to judge reform efforts. He further contends that reformers fail to examine past reform movements in order to avoid making similar mistakes.

Although very short, this title encourages the reader to think about educational reform in a new light. Its importance is diminished by the similarity to his earlier contributions. It will be useful to the reader interested in considering the complexities of educational reform but of limited use to the serious researcher. Of the 19 references, 10 are to the author's earlier works.

Pages: **123** Price: **\$15.00** ISBN: **0-325-00405-6**

**Reviewed by Barbara Wales, Central Missouri State University,
Warrensburg, Missouri**

Shiveley, James M. & VanFossen, Phillip J. (2001) *Using Internet Primary Sources to Teach Critical Thinking Skills in Government, Economics, and Contemporary World Issues*. Westport, CN: Greenwood Press.

This book is part of the Greenwood Professional Guides in School Librarianship Series. Other titles in the series discuss using primary sources to teach critical thinking skills in history, geography, the sciences, world languages, and mathematics.

The book is arranged into three parts. Part I presents an overview of critical thinking and discusses how critical thinking pertains to the social sciences. Part II defines primary sources and provides instructional strategies for using primary source documents in the classroom. Part III identifies 118 web sites containing primary source documents. Each site description contains an abstract of the site, a set of questions and activities designed to promote critical thinking skills, and a list of other related sites.

Since teaching with technology, incorporating active learning techniques, and developing students' critical thinking skills are goals for many teachers today, a book providing practical suggestions for accomplishing these ambitious goals could prove extremely valuable. The first two sections provide a thoughtful framework and fairly lengthy bibliographies, and the third section provides specific

suggestions for what sites to use. Overall, the book includes a nice balance of the theoretical and the practical. The authors are realistic about possible pitfalls involved in using Internet resources, and they discourage having students engage in activities requiring extensive surfing. Instead, they suggest directing students to primary sources that the teacher, with the help of this book, has identified.

The first two broad categories in Part III, Political Science and Economics, deal primarily, although not exclusively, with historical subjects. Topics include Bacon's Rebellion, Stamp Act, Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death, The Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798, Jim Crow Laws, and the Scopes Monkey Trial. The third category is Contemporary World Issues. Given the pace of change in our world, this section already seems somewhat dated. For example, although the links in the unit on Terrorism are still active, the suggested sites do not take into account the events of September 11 and the aftermath.

Given how rapidly Web sites come and go, the accuracy of the URL's is always a concern, but most of the sites featured here seem to be stable, and a few that could not be located using the given URL could be found using a Web search engine. Many of the URL's are extremely long and complicated, which teachers would need to take into account when preparing their lessons.

Libraries serving teacher education programs will find this, as well as other titles in the series, useful additions to their collections. One suggestion to the publisher would be to consider paperback editions. It seems that updated editions would be useful, and more schools would be able to afford them at paperback prices.

Pages: **244** Price: **\$39.95** ISBN: **0-313-31283-4**

Reviewed by Sharon Naylor, Illinois State University

Yero, Judith Lloyd (2002) *Teaching in Mind: How Teacher Thinking Shapes Education*. Hamilton, MT: MindFlight Publishing.

Judith Lloyd Yero takes a different approach to improving teaching and learning in *Teaching in Mind*. While many books on education proscribe a specific philosophy or practice, Yero delves deeper into the teaching experience by analyzing the "unconscious underpinnings" and subjective realities that each teacher brings to the classroom. Focusing on that perspective, Yero attempts to convince readers that knowing what beliefs lie beneath each instructor's teaching practices will lead to more effective teaching and, thus, more effective learning on the part of students.

Throughout thirteen chapters, Yero provides the structure to help

teachers reflect and analyze their beliefs and behaviors. In Chapters 3 to 5, she explores "the metaphors teachers use to describe their work" and explains why the ones used are significant. Subsequent chapters investigate how commonly held beliefs influence teachers' decision making and actions. Yero also examines the "conventional wisdom" of education. The last chapter is a call for action, in which Yero implores teachers to make conscious decisions to change their realities and behaviors in order to become better educators. The book concludes with a Self-Inventory and substantial bibliography, which includes websites.

Using both research and anecdotal evidence, Yero carefully builds the case for her call to action, encouraging teachers to become more self-aware and self-reflective and to develop the vision and courage to change their moribund teaching methods. She offers some insightful observations and provides the structure for teachers to explore - and change -- their own assumptions. Though not an especially complex assessment of the state of teaching, educators interested in investigating new approaches to education will find this very readable book illuminating and helpful.

Pages: **274** Price: **\$18.95** ISBN: **1-09711983-3-0**

Reviewed by Shellie Jeffries, Aquinas College



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