education review

Block, Cathy Collins, Gambrell, Linda B. & Pressley,Michael, editors (2002). *Improving Comprehension Instruction: Rethinking Research, Theory, and Classroom Practice.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

This book brings together the leaders in the field of reading comprehension instruction in a series of essays that discuss current research findings and their application to the classroom. It wasn't too long ago when the focus of reading instruction was limited to the ability to read only. Getting Johnny to read the words on the page was view as enough. While comprehension was valued and acknowledged as important, it was not a core component of reading instruction. Educators simply were not aware that comprehension-the ability to understand what is being read-could be taught.

Several factors converged to make reading comprehension a target of research and study. Beginning in the 1960's, researchers in education began to recognize the complexity of reading instruction as studies indicated the need for strategies to specifically address the instruction of comprehension in reading programs. New understandings of brain function in learning also influenced educators' understanding of how students actually comprehend information. Growth in the use of standardized testing impacted this trend as well with students increasingly being tested on their comprehension ability. As deficiencies became apparent, educators across the nation began to seriously investigate how students could be taught comprehension.

Today educators have access to an abundance of studies confirming the need for reading comprehension instruction and providing guidance on accomplishing the task. As readers of this text will quickly discern, the research is clear: comprehension can be taught. The challenge, as always when moving from the theoretical to the practical, is translating research findings into classroom practice. Editors Cathy Collins Block, Education Professor at Texas Christian University, Linda B. Gambrell, Director, Division of Education at Clemson University, and Michael Pressley, Professor of Psychology at Michigan State University, have selected an impressive cadre of authors for inclusion in this volume to help educators discover the tools and techniques for this task.

Divided into four sections, *Improving Comprehension Instruction* begins by presenting five essays that discuss the new developments in comprehension instruction. After re-examining the meaning of comprehension and helping readers understand exactly what is meant by the phrase reading comprehension, the authors share specific comprehension teaching techniques, including the thinking process

approach and the guided reading approach. Each essay includes practical information along with supporting research.

Section two's five essays look at comprehension across the curriculum. It includes such information as the link between writing and comprehension, the PQR (parsing, questioning, and rephrasing) method of comprehension, and other methods of improving comprehension through content studies.

In section three, four essays explore the relationship between technology and comprehension instruction. Here the authors examine how technology can be used in the classroom to enhance literacy instruction. The final part of the text examines the needs of struggling readers related to reading comprehension. These essays tackle the challenges associated with helping poor readers learn to comprehend. Specific instructional strategies are presented for working with those students who find understanding text difficult. Graphs, charts and other visuals enhance the text along with the extensive bibliographies provided at the end of each essay.

This highly recommended volume gives classroom teachers, reading specialists and others involved in the day-to-day practice of teaching reading at all levels, knowledge to understand the need for reading comprehension and strategies to implement this knowledge into their daily classroom activities. Written by the best in the field, *Improving Comprehension Instruction* offers readers' information they'll refer to regularly as they strive to make the process of understanding what is being read just as important as the ability to read the text. As stated in the preface, written by Gerald D. Duffy, Professor Emeritus, Michigan State University, "In sum, this book is a comprehensive, coherent source of knowledge about teaching comprehension. Scholars, teacher educators, and classroom teachers alike will find it to be a fundamental reference" (p. xiv).

Pages: **423**   Price: **$29.95**   ISBN: **0-7879-6309-7**

Reviewed by Stephanie D. Davis, Spring Arbor University

Cooper, Pamela & Morreale, Sherwyn (2003) *Creating Competent Communicators: Activities for Teaching Speaking, Listening, and Media Literacy in Grades 7 - 12.* **Scottsdale, AZ: Holcomb Hathaway Publishers.**

Creating Competent Communicators introduces the K-12 teacher to communications studies in general and to teaching each of four components of the National Communication Association's (NCA) standards in particular: (1) fundamentals of communication, (2) speaking, (3) listening, and (4) media literacy. The authors provide

background information on each component as well as teaching activities for grades 7 to 12 that cross curricular boundaries. The book addresses two practical problems that teachers face in attempting to teach communication and media literacy across the curriculum: one, a paucity of useful teaching resources related to the NCA standards, and two, a lack of specific training in communication education.

The authors pose and answer the question, Why teach communication? A rationale for communication education is based on the value of speaking, listening and media literacy skills for personal and academic success in life. An argument is made for the relevance of oral communication competence for students' social adjustment and participation in satisfying interpersonal relationships. The authors draw upon psychological and educational research to demonstrate the relationship between communication competence and self-actualization, professional success and successful living in today's media saturated world. Operational definitions of speaking, listening and media literacy help the reader to move beyond a conventional understanding of communication and literacy as merely reading and writing. A new understanding of oral communication frames an approach to instruction that emphasizes communication standards and competencies which cut across oral activities and communication contexts.

After the introduction section, the book is structured in four main units that lead the teacher through background information and activities on each of the four components of the National Communication Association's (NCA) standards. Each section is structured by the specific communication standards and teaching activities that reinforce specific concepts and provide illustrative examples of each communication standard. At least two teaching activities are provided for each of the twenty NCA standards for speaking, listening and media literacy in K-12 education. The standards themselves are detailed in the introductory chapter, and an itemized list of teaching activities with corresponding grade levels are mapped to each standard.

Teaching activities include a reference to the specific communication standard, a description of the activity and grade level, the specific learning objective, materials needed, the classroom procedure, and methods for debriefing. Activities for teaching the fundamentals of effective communication (unit 1) include name that analogy, poetry in motion, talking to parents and the other moral of the story is…. Teaching activities for speaking (unit 2) include pointers for polished public speaking, using the Internet as information resource, and using group speaking to overcome anxiety. Many of the speaking activities can easily be adapted for improving written communication (for example, Transitional Stories, p. 50 and Word Power, p. 52). Activities for teaching listening (unit 3) include invisible speeches, to tell the truth, and may I quote you? The introduction to the unit on listening provides an excellent overview of the listening process, effective listening skills and barriers to listening (p. 62 - 63). Teaching activities

for media literacy (unit 4) include defining media channels, millions of magazines, a peak behind the scenes, advertising's appeal, and the medium and the message. An approach to assessment is provided at the end of each teaching activity that guides the teacher towards evaluating meaningful outcomes. Photocopy ready assessment forms and checklists are provided with many of the activities.

The final section of the book is a compilation of teacher resources entitled "Tools, Tips, and Great Ideas". Print and non-print resources for each of the four components of the National Communication Association's (NCA) standards are provided that range from books, articles, videotapes and audiocassettes to web sites and professional organizations. Teachers might find most valuable the photocopy ready forms and assessment tools that are provided in the teacher resources section. Approaches to assessment are articulated in peer assessment forms, self-evaluation forms, and storytelling evaluation forms. Evaluation tools to assess persuasive and demonstrative speech are provided that identify key competencies and expectations for performance. A communication apprehension survey and self-assessments for managing anxiety, use of language and speaking, and listening skills can be used by individual students or by groups to reflect upon communication competencies.

New and experienced classroom teachers, student teachers and faculty in teacher preparation programs will find *Creating Competent Communicators* to be very useful for understanding communication education and for instructional planning, implementation and evaluation. Most of the teaching activities can be adapted and incorporated into classes and courses across subject areas and for children to adult learners. Some of the teaching activities are classics, such as Look Who's Listening (p. 38), Public Speaking (p. 59) and Using the Internet as an Information Resource (p. 48, includes checklists). The authors also present some new and innovative teaching activities, such as Becoming a Family (p. 22), Choral Oral Literacy (p. 56) and A Peek Behind the Scenes (p. 90). The well-developed teaching activities offered in this book will help teachers to apply the communication principles presented in each unit to their own classroom environments.

Creating Competent Communicators provides both background information and practical activities to guide teachers' efforts to implement communication instruction across the curriculum in junior and senior high school. Many of the teaching activities can also be adapted for elementary school and adult learners. In my opinion, the authors make a credible claim that the teaching activities will appeal to students of all ability levels, provide for student interaction and involvement, and require students to send and receive messages in a variety of contexts for a variety of purposes.

Pages: **112**   Price: **$19.50**   ISBN: **1-890871-39-7**

Reviewed by Dr. Michele Jacobsen, University of Calgary

Darling-Hammond, Linda, French, Jennifer & García-Lopez, Silvia Paloma, eds. (2002) *Learning to Teach for Social Justice.* New York: Teachers College Press.

As our society is becoming more and more diverse, increasingly teachers will have students from diverse backgrounds in their classrooms. However, preparing teachers to work with diverse students has not been given appropriate attention.

Learning to Teach for Social Justice is a collection of essays that illustrate the experience and struggle of prospective teachers who teach student populations diverse in terms of language, culture, race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation and gender. Authors are Stanford Teacher Education Program (STEP) students from mainstream and from non-mainstream cultures. Readers hear the authors' perspectives through their own voices as they struggle to learn to be teachers of students from diverse backgrounds and to be agents of social change.

The volume has four parts: Part I: What is Diversity; Part II: Does Who We Are Influence How We Teach?; Part III: Who Are Our Students and What Do They Need?; and Part IV: What Is the Problem and What Can We Do About It? Each prospective teacher's story is a chapter. Each part begins with an overview by the editors containing suggested questions that readers can use for their own reflection or discussion. The first and the last chapters are contributions from Darling-Hammond, the authors' professor and a prominent scholar dedicated to preparing excellent teachers for all students.

In Part I, the authors look at the concept of diversity, the importance of inclusion of others' perspectives, the danger of labeling individuals as part of a group and the value of incorporating the history of marginalized groups into the core of the school curriculum. In Part II, one of the chapters is written by a white female STEP student who deals with the question: "Can White teachers support learning by students who are from backgrounds other than their own?" Another chapter addresses the issue of multiple identities that can be caused by the dividedness of home and school cultural contexts. Because the school culture in the United States is primarily that of the mainstream, students from non-mainstream cultures may experience culture clash. The author of this chapter, who is from a non-mainstream background, relates her experiences dealing with such cultural bifurcation as a U.S. public school student. Other issues addressed in Part II include being inclusive of gay people, institutional discrimination that students from non- mainstream cultures may experience in school, and oppressive language in the classroom. One author offers a strong section on turning an occasion of oppressive language into a learning moment for students.

Chapters in Part III are excerpted from two kinds of case studies that the authors had done for their STEP courses. Authors illustrate what they learned, in adolescent and curriculum case studies, about who their students are, what they need, and how to meet their needs. Part IV is devoted to the issue of tracking, which often results in dividing students into privileged and underprivileged groups in terms of access to learning opportunities, funding, qualified and experienced teachers, quality teaching resources, quality curriculum, and thereby opportunity for success. It also presents reform proposals for teaching English language learners. The section suggests ways to create a well-functioning learning community with support for the individual student, and ways a teacher can promote all students' learning by allowing them to take ownership of their own learning and be active participants.

Many of us have an unforgettable teacher who had a significant influence, good or bad, in our life. As Darling-Hammond writes, "[p]erhaps the most important differences in what happens to children at school depend on who their teachers are: what they understand about children and about learning, what they are able to do to respond to the very different approaches and experiences children bring with them to the learning setting, what they care about and are committed to as teachers" (p.150). She contends that becoming a teacher who contributes to social change involves personal transformation. The prospective teachers in this book go through such transformation by critically reflecting on their own and their students' experiences and perspectives. It is through this journey that they gain an understanding of self, others, school and society, which makes a vital difference to become a quality teachers of all students.

Even though most of the writers are fairly new to teaching, their stories eloquently illustrate what it takes to become a multicultural teacher. Practicing and pre-service teachers can find value in this book as they struggle to find better ways to teach students from diverse backgrounds.

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Reviewed by Yumiko Otsuki, Portland State University

Decker, Larry E. & Decker, Virginia (2002) *Home, School, and Community Partnerships.* Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.

Larry and Virginia Decker set out to explore a theme voiced in the very first sentence, asking how to narrow the "growing gulf between the American public and its public schools." (p. v) Their book accomplishes two vital tasks in an informative and easily understood

fashion. First, it brings together most of the arguments and justifications for greater community involvement into one volume. Second, and perhaps of greater significance, it notes and cites the vast community education literature, organizing it topically.

Partnerships with family and community members/agencies require that school administrators and teachers rethink their traditional roles, roles that have effectively excluded parents and the community as key partners in creating and sustaining educational excellence. This book outlines seven strategies crucial to the "creation of a responsive support system for collaborative action to address educational concerns, quality of life issues…, and specialized needs" (p. 4). These strategies are supported by the statistical information provided in chapter two which builds a strong case and leads readers to an understanding of the general dissolution of the family unit and community cohesiveness. The social contract has broken down. Clearly, "educational problems reflect community and family problems in all their complexity, diversity and intractability" (p. 9).

The Deckers reference a 1996 Kettering Foundation report finding that schools and the public are moving apart. (p. 28) Despite efforts to bring the community into the schools, community members are often not involved in "the planning and implementation of academic improvement efforts" (p. 27). Community education offers principles (lifelong learning, self-determination, institutional responsiveness) which, over time, can integrate communities and their schools. The authors contend that there must be a change in the traditional mindset of educators to recognize and act on the belief that schools belong to the greater community, not to the bureaucrats.

There has been much rhetoric, but little happens in practice with a plan in which community involvement is a "major component" of efforts to restructure schools. I do think the Deckers are right, and that colleges of education should do more to teach prospective teachers how to work with their community in its broadest sense. Pre-service does very little to acknowledge the community and less to teach teachers how to work with anyone other than themselves. The on-going premise has been that the teacher is isolated in the classroom. This reviewer wonders, based on the Deckers' thesis, if everyone knows the value of parental involvement, if teachers continue to wish for more regular contact with their students'parents, and if study after study support the value, then why isn't it more of a priority? Why don't schools of education teach prospective teachers how to work with their community, including parents?

The book discusses home and school as partners. The Deckers discuss four models, initially proposed by S. M. Swap, on a scale of increasing involvement: protective, school-to-home transmission, curriculum enrichment, and partnership. A "partnership" develops along a continuum from cooperation through coordination into collaboration according to chapter six. Those who cooperate are simply working

together; coordination implies sharing resources along with joint planning, development and implementation of programs. Collaboration brings a higher degree of sharing, a more concerted partnership and joint allocation of resources, monitoring and evaluation. But, there are many barriers related to this final level: communication, individuals, resources, and policies. The authors describe a number of types of educational partnerships including volunteer programs, advisory committees, service learning, and 21st Century Community Learning Centers. Good planning and cooperation are essential. Partnerships work when planners realize "that collaboration takes place among people, not institutions" (p. 140). It has been my experience, however, that cooperation is usually a one-way street with schools asking for volunteers, but making no offers. The Deckers have more than adequately covered the traditional aspects of volunteer activity in the schools. I would have liked some reflection on what school people can contribute to the sense of community. It is my opinion that school systems would have more respect if we offered some of our time.

Having a good plan for community involvement and executing such a plan is more effective when the community knows what is going on. I remember an incident from twenty-five years ago when I was directing a program of adult evening classes. A student stopped me in the hall one night. "You know," he said. "I've been coming by here for years. Now I know what's going on, and I feel good about it." He was a satisfied consumer who would spread the word, and vote. That's the theme of chapter six, "School Public Relations: Bridging the Gap." Image does matter. Sharing information is an on- going process which does not end. Examine your personal level of involvement on various committees. If the Deckers are right, we are more active in those organizations in which we have an opportunity to make decisions, where we are wanted, and where we know what is going on. In such instances, familiarity does not breed contempt. Consistent, honest sharing of information breeds an even higher level of trust.

The chapter on "Dealing with Political Realities" reinforces our recognition that education is political at the local, state, and national levels. Education involves all the crucial essences of politics: power, money, values, and conflict. Obviously, the community's largest investment is its schools, both in dollars and in the entrusting of their children to the process of schooling. Recognition of the "political process" in its broadest sense is of paramount importance.

The Deckers argue that while most schools are safe, the news media lead us to believe that violence is pandemic. Consequently, educators and their communities can no longer be complacent about safety issues; rather, they must be proactive in predicting and preventing untoward actions. For example, as a high school administrator, I always wanted to watch the local news and read the paper to help discover what happened the previous night, activity that might affect school today. According to *Home, School, and Community Partnerships* the US Departments of Education and Justice reported in 1998 that 43% of

schools reported no crime, while 90% reported no incidents of serious violent crime. (p. 209) Proactive discipline, planning for safety, promotion of tolerance and peer mediation are just some of the elements which can prevent or reduce the potential for school-based violence. Schools with the strongest community support tend to have fewer issues with safety and violence.

The means for planning and evaluating successful partnerships between schools and communities are outlined in chapter nine. It looks in some detail at Wegner and Jarvi, for example, who advocate four types of planning for every organization: strategic, comprehensive, community, and internal systems. The Deckers review the basic steps of planning and provide appropriate references for additional study.

The final chapter is based on a quote attributed to Lyndon B. Johnson, "The best time to make friends is before you need them." (p. 251) As schools and the communities they serve have changed it has become imperative that school policy makers and administrators adapt to the changes. Resolving an issue or full-blown problem is much easier when a certain level of trust has been established and nurtured prior to the event. All too often this becomes painfully obvious to beleaguered leaders who, at best, can do little more than respond to the problems assailing them. Leaders too often say they "should have" reached out to families and community members before it was too late.

Larry and Virginia Decker have clearly shown us how to close the "growing gulf between the American public and its public schools." (p. v) This book has a broad and practical appeal to a variety of audiences. Administrators wishing to start a new program or improve an existing one will find valuable guidelines. Classroom teachers will better understand why and how greater community involvement and interaction can make their jobs easier. School board members will find extensive justification of the intrinsic value of such programs as will school-level or community-based leaders. Researchers will find the extensive bibliographical citations a treasure trove.

Pages: **284**   Price: **$36.50**   ISBN: **0-8108-4522-9**

Reviewed by John M. Formy-Duval, a retired public school administrator and now a content specialist at Measurement, Inc. in Durham, North Carolina

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Garan, Elaine M. (2002) *Resisting Reading Mandates: How to Triumph With the Truth.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Speaking directly to a teacher audience without any hint of condescension, Dr. Elaine M. Garan calls teachers to respond to reading mandates and other "research- driven" controls. Resisting

reading mandates offers teachers and administrators a guide to the *Report of the National Reading Panel* (2000) and the published distortions of this report. A reading specialist for twelve years, Garan provides a practical, concise reference for teachers, while alerting them to the federal government's new "attack" on educators.

Referring to the federal government mandates as the recommended "new quick fix," Garan bluntly tells teachers that they will eventually feel the influence of the National Reading Panel's "science" (p.2). While Garan does not provide much detail about the Bush Administration's No Child Left Behind Act, she does explain how No Child Left Behind is informed by the NRP (National Reading Panel) report's scientific research. While the NRP did not advocate any specific teaching method for reading, Garan reiterates previous educators' criticisms of the NRP, such as their exclusion of all non-experimental research along with the panel's definition of reading comprehension as a set of isolated skills.

In the introduction entitled "How to Use This Book," Garan lays out the book's question-and-answer format, explaining clearly how teachers can use the answers to defend their literacy teaching choices to fight against mandates. First, Garan describes the various editions of the NRP publications, including the Summary booklet, which contains a condensed version of the report of the subgroups from the NRP. Further, Garan points out that the Summary booklet, published after the NRPreport, "misreports the true findings of the panel" (p.8). These discrepancies can assist teachers and administrators when they choose to refute any isolated skill-and-drill mandates that claim scientific support from the Summary booklet. Further, direct quotes with pages from each document are included with responses to the questions, serving as a quick reference for teachers who may be called upon to explain their teaching strategies.

The next set of questions and answers covers the results of the National Reading Panel's synthesis of phonics research. Garan describes the panel's definition of reading comprehension as a set of discrete subskills, rendering the NRP's analyses problematic. Further, and most important for our defense against teaching phonics in isolation, Garan emphasizes that the NRP <u>does not</u> advocate teaching any particular method of reading comprehension or phonics instruction even though other reports have implied that the NRP <u>does</u> advocate phonics instruction. Garan persuasively summarizes these findings: "The NRP leaves decisions about when, how, and even if phonics should be taught to the professional discretion of the teacher" (p.12). The direct quotes included from the NRP support Garan's assertions, and are useful for any educator who wants to cite the NRP report directly.

The section of this book that I found most useful begins on page 71 where Garan clearly delineates the contradictions between The "Summary Booklet" and the NRP report. The most glaring contradictions occurred in phonics instruction where The "Summary

Booklet" stated that systematic phonics instruction is beneficial for children with reading problems. On the other hand, as Garan points out, the NRP report stated that there were "insufficient data" about the effectiveness of phonics instruction (p. 71). The author analyzes other contradictions related to phonics instruction throughout this section.

Resisting Reading Mandates contains excellent information about the "medical model" research methods of the NRP and phonics instruction. However, I would have been interested in reading more insights on the comprehension section of the NRP report. While the author does remind us of the NRP's incoherent definition of reading comprehension, perhaps Dr. Garan will consider writing a second book that focuses entirely on the NRP's meta-analysis of reading comprehension.

Finally, for those who are quietly waiting for the current political climate to dissipate, Dr. Garan reminds us at the end of the book that all educators must speak up about what they believe are effective teaching strategies and fair testing practices. Garan concludes her book with a poetic letter written by a kindergarten teacher; this letter represents frustrations that many educators seem to feel about standardized tests and other political intrusions. This book is an excellent reference for teachers, teacher educators or administrators who just want information about the NRP or who want to speak out against government mandates on reading instruction.

References

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. (2000). Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read: An Evidence-Based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and Its Implications for Reading Instruction. (NIH Publication No. 00-4769). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. The Reports and the Summary Booklet (which is just the item entitled *Report of the National Reading Panel: Teaching Children to Read* and is not explicitly labeled "Summary Booklet") are available online at http://www.nichd.nih. gov/publications/nrp/smallbook.htm See *Report of the National Reading Panel: Reports of the Subgroups* at http://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/nrp/report.htm for the full text of all reports.

Pages: **304**   Price: **$21.15**   ISBN: **0-325-00513-3**

Reviewed by Ann Marie Smith, University of Maryland, College Park

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Gebbie, Kristine, Rosenstock, Linda, & Hernandez, Lyla M. eds. (2003) *Who will keep the public healthy?: Educating public health professionals for the 21st century.* Washington D.C.: National Academies Press.

This book is a comprehensive report by the Committee on Educating

Public Health Professionals for the 21st Century of the Institute of Medicine of their new recommendations on the future of public health education. The committee has representation from various fields of academia, research, medicine, nursing and law. This provided a broad perspective on the many issues surrounding public health and the challenges it is facing, such as globalization, bioterrorism and issues related to ethics and the law to name a few.

The book is divided into six chapters. The introduction takes a look at the issues and objectives that will be addressed such as the profound effects of globalization and advances in science and technology including the ethical and legal issues that can arise from these advances. Also, since there are a variety of professions within the context of public health, establishing a definition of who are the public health professionals was an important distinction for the purpose of this study. The committee also proposes an ecological model as the framework for action on determinants to health. This is a good model as it emphasizes the linkages and relationships among multiple factors that are affecting health.

The second chapter gives a good overview of the past and present status of public health education and a review of the 1988 Institute of Medicine report, The future of public health, which "described the field of public health in disarray" (p.51). Although some changes have been addressed in the past five years, this report highlights the need for further actions and changes that need to take place in institutions and agencies responsible for educating public health professionals.

The third chapter takes a vivid look at the future of public health education and the eight content areas that the committee recommends be included in the graduate-level curriculum such as informatics, cultural competence and communication. An in-depth look at issues related to communication was included, particularly "risk communication." Even though the cases of anthrax in 2001 happened while this report was in progress, they are not mentioned in the book. I believe the anthrax cases highlight the importance of public health officials being able to communicate to the public and why it should be included in the training or education of every public health professional.

The next two chapters give recommendations for schools of public health, and other programs (i.e. medicine, nursing, law). The report provides institutions with specific frameworks and recommendations on how to strengthen programs, including gaps that need to be addressed. It goes further to recommend "all doctors should receive a basic public health training" (p. 135). The report also suggests incorporating training in public health in other professions, mentioning lawyers who can have influence over policies that have "profound effect upon the public health" (p. 143) and "the value of instructing future business leaders about the health consequences of their decisions." (p. 143).

The last chapter focuses on the roles of public health agencies in training and education not only of the current public health employees but the future public health workers. This report gives specific useful strategies such as collaboration with schools of public health, and emphasis on access to life long learning to assure that public health workers are up to date with current information and trends in public health. Additional recommendations include a call for increased funding from federal agencies for curricula development, fellowship programs, and education and training activities. The committee also recommends that public health officials in leadership and management positions should possess Master's in Public Health (M.P.H.). The master's level of education can help prepare our leaders gain better understanding of the whole public health system and equipped them with the current and most effective approaches in public health.

There are also appendices which include an in depth look at the public health education in the 20th century, input from organizations such as CDC, and an updated collection of competency sets for the different disciplines in public health.

The report is surprisingly easy-to-read and the format is easy to follow. This text highlights the importance of having adequately trained and competent public health professionals for the future protection of our nation's public health. I highly suggest reading this text to anyone who has an interest in public health. The full report is available online at http://books.nap.edu/b ooks/030908542X/html/index.html

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Pages: **304**   Price: **$42.95**   ISBN: **030908542X**

Reviewed by Victoria Buholtz, Point Loma Nazarene University

Gold, Mimi (2003) *Help for the Struggling Student: Ready-to-Use Strategies and Lessons to Build Attention, Memory, and Organizational Skills.* **San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.**

In Help for the Struggling Student, Mimi Gold presents a well-developed and organized format for strategy instruction to address attention, memory and organizational skills. The format is such that the strategies can be used to build on students' strengths as well as to address students' deficits. This book is for practical, everyday use; it is not a research book. Professionals interested in research supporting strategy instruction will not find this book useful. In lieu of research,

the author draws upon her many years of experience working with struggling students, particularly students with learning disabilities.

The book is organized into four sections. The initial section provides the foundational basis for using strategy instruction. The section apportioned to attention is ordered by complexity of skills presented. The section on memory is structured by categories according to learning modalities and the attention section is divided by skill areas. The last three sections each open with both a description of one of the processes of attention, organization or memory and a discussion of how the section is organized. Each of the strategy lessons included within the sections begins with an opening vignette. Using a vignette, a teacher should be able to quickly assess the strategy that will match her student's individual needs.

Interspersed at various points within the sections are suggested dialogued scripts that can be followed when working with a student. This should be an asset to a teacher new to strategy instruction. The author provides "recipes" with step-by-step instructions and samples to assist the teacher in presenting the lessons.

Strategy instruction can appear overwhelming for teachers using the methods for the first time because observations need to be made regarding learning styles and strengths and needs must be assessed before instruction can begin. The information included is thorough enough to allow confidence building for a first time user, and flexible enough to allow for individual adaptations with a more experienced teacher. Also, parents using the book will also likely opine that the scripts are beneficial.

A definite plus for the book is the inclusion of full-page reproducible visual aids and strategy sheets that correspond to the skills being discussed. Approximately one third of the 300 pages contain visual aids or pictographs that can be used to reinforce the lessons' objectives without a reliance on verbal explanations. In keeping with accepted practice, the pages for photocopying do not contain page numbers.

Although not explicitly stated, the book seems most appropriate for the elementary school level. Due to the detailed instructions included in the book, it seems that teachers of remedial reading and teachers of special education would be able to maximally utilize the book's contents. Some of the introductory attention lessons could be adapted for use with larger class sizes, but the amount of time and intervention needed for the majority of the lessons would seem to negate its usefulness for large group instruction. The author adds in her introduction that parents could find the book's suggestions useful for addressing areas of concern in their children. The book does appear to be suited for use by parents or by teachers for individual or small group instruction.

The contents of *Help for the Struggling Student* mirror the title. Teachers and parents should find this book gives them ample material

to successfully implement strategy instruction with their students.

Pages: **320**   Price: **$29.95**   ISBN: **0-7879-6588-X**

Reviewed by Karen Fontana, Mohawk Valley Community College and Elmira College

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Gurian, Michael & Ballew, Arlette C. (2003) *The Boys and Girls Learn Differently Action Guide for Teachers.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Over the years an incredible amount of column space has been devoted to the study of gender and schooling worldwide, with theories and argument abounding as to the reasons for the apparent difference between boy's and girl's academic and behavioural performance at school. While Gurian and Ballew add to the mountain of information with physiological evidence as to the source of gender difference, they also offer up a variety of interesting pedagogical strategies that teachers from preschool to high school can use in their classrooms.

Chapter 1 deals with the brain and its structural, chemical and functional differences between boys and girls, as well as how these differences affect learning. The authors go on to discuss brain based gender research in areas like academic performance, classroom behaviour, test scores and educational aspirations, offering suggestions as to how this research can be applied to the classroom. Chapter 2 looks at "Bonding and Attachment," with strategies for fostering feelings of belonging in students right through the various stages of schooling. Chapter 3 addresses "Discipline and Related Issues," in particular dealing with aggressive behaviour from boys. Once again strategies for students from preschool to high school are offered. Interestingly, this chapter almost exclusively deals with male students and strategies in dealing with their behaviour. I was puzzled at the lack of coverage of perceived discipline problems which may exist for teachers of female students and wondered if it was merely an oversight.

The next group of chapters deal with specific subject areas. Chapter 4 provides ideas for "Math, Science and Spatial Learning," while Chapter 5 looks at "Language, Reading, Writing and Social Science" techniques. Chapter 6 deals with an area of special significance for me as a Physical Educator, namely "Physical Learning and Nutrition." An important observation made by many researchers and revisited here is that boys value movement as a part of their learning experiences. The authors also discuss the value or otherwise of single sex classes, especially where tactile contact is involved. They maintain that single sex institutions are a preferable educational delivery structure, so that with the distractions of the opposite sex eliminated learning outcomes for both genders are enhanced. Call me old fashioned but I still see a great deal of value in "tactile contact" between boys and girls in

activities where the social, cultural and emotional benefits far outweigh the initial distraction or feelings of awkwardness felt by the class. In fact students who have previously shown less competence in physical activity have been known to shine in situations where they express their abilities in movement away from competitive sport, most notably during a mixed gender dance class. In this situation the motivation and attitude of the teaching staff is crucial to the success of the learning experience. This chapter also deals with the nutritional requirements of students and the modern phenomenon of childhood obesity.

Chapter 7 deals with "Special Education," the use of medication and special techniques to encourage learning with this unique group of students. Chapters 8 is the "nuts and bolts" section of the guide in that it gives the classroom teacher a host of suggestions as to how to plan and implement experiential learning strategies. Chapter 9 specifically deals with structural and systemic innovations to promote an environment that helps address gender issues in schools. This includes considerations like class sizes (a hot topic in Australia at the moment), uniforms and dress code, as well as pedagogical issues in the form of teaching and learning strategies. An appendix provides a guide to enlisting parent support, and a comprehensive list of resources and references is also included.

Setting aside the U.S. origins and references, the ideas, suggestions and strategies that the authors present in this action guide could be utilised by any educator in almost any setting. The message seems to be that while we can take into account the physiological differences and draw conclusions from that, perhaps the more compelling case in addressing gender differences is in the need for a modification of pedagogy when working with students of both sexes at all stages of schooling.

Pages: **240**   Price: **$19.95**   ISBN: **0-7879-6485-9**

Reviewed by Brendan Jones, Head Teacher (Personal Development, Health and Physical Education) Erina High School, NSW, Australia.

Kajder, Sarah B. (2003) *The Tech-Savvy English Classroom.* Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

The Tech-Savvy English Classroom by Sarah B. Kajder is both a well-balanced discussion of technology's implications in the English classroom and a collection of constructive ideas for teachers interested in applying technology to student learning. Practical applications and implementation techniques, many fine-tuned in Kajder's own classroom, are described throughout the book. Each chapter concludes with a list of related readings and online resources, while useful rubrics and worksheets are included in the appendix section. In addition, Kajder maintains a companion Web site to extend and update the

material discussed in her book.

Kajder draws on her experiences as an English teacher to address both the potential and the challenge of technology in the English classroom. As presented by Kajder, technology is any tool English teachers can manipulate to enhance student learning: hardware, software, Internet, PowerPoint. While Kajder's enthusiasm for using these tools is apparent, she is not blind to the difficulties arising from technology implementation.

Kajder opens *The Tech-Savvy English Classroom* by discussing her personal experiences with technology as an English teacher. Her description of growth as a technology user segues into Chapter 2, where Kajder discusses the different technological skill levels teachers possess. Each level is identified with a specific icon (such as a light bulb for technology innovation), which is then referenced throughout the book to identify activities and abilities relevant to that skill level. Chapter 3 addresses the skill levels of the students. Kajder describes activities used to assess her English students' understanding of and comfort with technology, then provides practical tips for student computer lab use and online communication.

In the remaining chapters, Kajder highlights specific technologies in the English classroom, incorporating clear-cut explanations, personal experiences and practical tips. In Chapter 4, Kajder addresses the advantages of utilizing hypertext with student reading and writing. Several activities are described that integrate this ability to link documents with English curricular skills and standards. Chapter 6 discusses the ability of technology to enhance the writing process. Kajder provides numerous useful examples and strategies for prewriting, revising and editing, and publishing, all aligned with a specific tool. In Chapter 8, Kajder presents the varied educational applications of telecommunication and teleinformation tools: communication, information and exploration, collaboration and community building.

Kajder introduces the Internet as an educational tool in Chapter 5, providing realistic suggestions on how to deal with search engines, searching strategies, information evaluation and student plagiarism. She expands on the Internet' applicability to the English classroom in Chapter 9 with her discussion of personal Web sites. Kajder's experience in building a class Web site provides constructive tips and helpful resources to any teacher desiring to do the same. Chapter 7 examines the Internet's applicability in one specific context: the WebQuest. Developed by Bernie Dodge of San Diego State University, a WebQuest is an Internet-based research tool and active learning activity. Kajder discusses the advantages of this instructional model, details the steps of creating a WebQuest for student use and provides hints on evaluating existing WebQuests.

Accessible and entertaining, *The Tech-Savvy English Classroom*

provides both practical approaches for incorporating technology into the English classroom and balanced discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of technology use. English teachers will find Kajder's book a valuable resource in their efforts to move their classrooms into the technological age.

Pages: **150**   Price: **$17.50**   ISBN: **1-57110-361-9**

Reviewed by Melanie Shoffner, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill

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Kelley, W. Michael (2003) *Rookie Teaching for Dummies.* New York: John Wiley and Sons.

For readers who are familiar with other titles in the "For Dummies" book series this book displays the same easily identifiable cover and follows the same characteristic format. They will recognize the characteristic "plain English - get in, get out" layout that is highly popular and definitely has a place in our time sensitive world where we search for straight-forward directions and answers. However, from a personal perspective, I found the topic and the book series a difficult combination to address. After polling colleagues, classroom teachers and pre-service teachers I found I was not alone in my negative reaction to the title. This response appears to be aimed at the catchy title that obviously markets well, but at the same time it apparently unintentionally offends practitioners. This turned out to be my main negative comment on the book.

Once past the title any reader who has taught school will find a delightfully written book filled with humor and extremely realistic ideas dealing with the everyday classroom. The author, W. Michael Kelley, is a veteran math teacher and founder of Calculus-Help.com. His dedication to students and teaching becomes apparent in the number of innovative ideas he shares with his reader. Everything from ideas for teaching in multicultural settings to using TV programs such as "The Survivors" (complete with background music from the Survivors CD) for review and practice in math. His sense of humor is woven throughout discussions covering topics such as classroom management, planning instruction, implicit and expected duties, as well as understanding the role of the teacher with respect to administrators and parents. It is very much a compilation of topics that most student teachers cover when working with a sponsor teacher during their practicum experience. Through research with colleagues and others, Kelley anticipates the kinds of questions a student teacher doesn't even know should be asked. I don't always agree with his comments but overall they are extremely practical and definitely worthwhile.

The book is organized around a format that covers the entire "For Dummies" series. The 23 chapters are divided into 6 major parts

ranging from "What They Didn't Teach You in College" to "Managing Your Classroom". The book can be read in any order since each section stands on its own. Icons are used to identify pertinent segments and highlight important parts of the text (specifically: Tips, Warnings, Remember, It's Elementary and Secondary Studies). The final section of the book consists of "The Part of Tens". This is a feature of the series where lists of items to remember are itemized into lists of ten. For this book it consists of two chapters, "Ten Things That Always Happen to Rookie Teachers" and "The Ten Biggest Rookie Blunders", which give a practical summary for any new teacher such as handling medical emergencies and cautions about harmless comments being misunderstood. These are followed by two fabulous chapters for great ideas and help, "Ten Ways to Use Technology in Your Classroom" and Ten Great World Wide Web Resources for Rookie Teachers".

The strength of this book lies in its plain language advice. Kelley doesn't shy away from topics that may be skirted in other places, such as his advice about keeping a pair of latex gloves in the desk for your own protection. The medical section is informative and covers a wide range of possible problems and issues. In each instance the focus is on care of the student while maintaining safety for yourself and the other students.

Overall this is a worthwhile book, filled with humor, practical advice and plenty of classroom ideas. For an experienced teacher it may bog down in places where it explains things we found out the hard way. But for a novice teacher it holds some great suggestions and sage advice.

Pages: **352**   Price: **$19.99 US; $29.99 CN**   ISBN: **0-7645-2479-8**

Reviewed by Elizabeth Jordan, Department of Educational and Counseling Psychology and Special Education at the University of British Columbia

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Luongo-Orlando, Katherine (2003) *Authentic Assessment: Designing Performance-Based Tasks.* **Markham, Ontario: Pembroke Publishers, distributed by Stenhouse.**

If you can envision a classroom of elementary students deeply engaged in a variety of creative and stimulating learning activities, Katherine Luongo-Orlando's guide, *Authentic assessment: Designing performance-based tasks*, will help get you there. The materials the author created for her authentic assessment workshops have evolved into this compact, practical guide to designing and implementing performance- based assessment tasks in the elementary classroom. The examples and sample assessment tools form a guide for pre-service and beginning teachers as well as those seasoned teachers who long to make their classroom places where students actively engage in the experience of learning.

Terms associated with assessment are defined at the outset to ensure a common understanding. A number of assessment formats and rubrics are laid out as models or for duplication. Classroom examples include introductions to and activities for three units The performance-based assessment tasks are laid out in a way that can be easily replicated by classroom teachers. The sample units are Making Literature Connections, Exploring Community and Understanding the Influence of Advertising. Each unit, pitched at the middle elementary level, is carefully explained in sufficient detail. Learning objectives and activities in one chapter are followed by assessment tasks and rubrics in the next. A number of informative criteria for developing rubrics are clearly described. Included also are worksheets that students can use to monitor and assess their progress as well as templates and tracking sheets for teacher use. All are in a form that can be readily duplicated for use by teachers.

The book concludes with a brief discussion of ways to translate assessment results into the grades demanded on school report cards. Although the author attempts to show the path from assessments to grades; the complexity and difficulty of accomplishing this task eventually defeat her. Her recommendations for using the results of assessment to communicate with both parents and students are more successful. Neither of these topics is commonly found in writings on the topic of assessment. *Authentic assessment: Designing performance-based tasks* can be a valuable tool for teachers wanting a practical guide to getting started or refining their skills as evaluators of their teaching.

Pages: **128**   Price: **$18.00**   ISBN: **1-55138-152-4**

Reviewed by Sandra R. Glass, Arizona State University

Pirie, Bruce (2002) *Teenage Boys and High School English.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

When I began my teaching career forty years ago I taught in an all male situation. Not knowing any better, I just assumed motivating teenagers to do their reading and get essays in on time was a problem that went with the territory of teaching high school English. Five years later when I switched to a co-ed school, I realized this wasn't necessarily the "reality".

Unfortunately, it doesn't take long for most of us to discover that not only are teenage boys not as successful in English as girls but they are also less likely to enjoy reading and they tend to struggle more with their written expression. Thank God there are certainly exceptions, but even the males who do well in the subject often do not see themselves as committed English students.

Puzzling over this situation, Bruce Pirie looked at the research explaining why boys aren't as successful as girls in English and assessed the findings against his own experiences in the classroom. From this investigation Pirie mapped the hurdles that seem to stand in the way of boys' achievement.

As he discusses the kind of thinking and feeling valued in the English classroom and how that relates to males, Pirie suggests some changes that will allow young men to grow beyond the present limiting stereotypes. While looking at the qualities boys can bring to the classroom setting and how to engage them at a higher level, the author also emphasizes that girls will benefit from some of the strategies he proposes.

Perhaps Pirie spends a bit too long explaining the problems or the hurdles that boys must overcome. He is writing for an audience that probably doesn't really need much convincing. The outlining of various teaching strategies to remedy the problem are what most teachers will really be interested in. Fortunately, there are plenty of concrete suggestions here on how to make subtle changes in approaching the subject matter that could help engage more males.

A case in point would be a few good ideas on handling peer editing. Since boys often do not handle public criticism well and may consider another male student telling them they made a mistake a put down. Pirie suggests the following: Form mixed-sex editing partners or groups. Boys may feel less competitively threatened by a female partner, plus boys' and girls' writing styles, although different, may well complement one another.

Another good idea is having the instructor model the review process. Hand out a piece you wrote and elicit hard, constructive criticism from the class. Explain how you are reacting to the comments from the students so they see how to deal with criticism. This will also set the parameters of the class peer-editing task.

Finally, it might be a good idea to explain that collaborative criticism is part of the "real work world". Whether a recording artist, filmmaker, professional writer or auto mechanic, you will probably be working with someone making suggestions on how to improve the "product" or a person you can consult if you need a second opinion.

Certainly this book is not a "cure-all" nor does it profess to be. Pirie does offer enough useable ideas, though. Those teachers who wish to "tweak" their classroom environment should find some solid help here.

Pages: **152**   Price: **$19.50**   ISBN: **0-86709-536-9**

Reviewed by Robert F. Walch, Retired educator, Monterey, California

Schlechty, Phillip C. (2002) *Working on the Work: An Action Plan for Teachers, Principals, and Superintendents.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

As Schlechty, founder and CEO of the Center for Leadership in School Reform, states in the introduction, the purpose of this book is to promote "the uses of the WOW framework as a tool to improve student performance in school" (p. xiv). WOW (Working on the Work) is a concept introduced in some of his previous books, notably, *Schools for the Twenty-First Century: Leadership Imperatives for Educational Reform* (1990) and *Shaking up the Schoolhouse: How to Support and Sustain Educational Innovation* (2001). Schlechty asserts that the three main ways to view school reform is to work on the students, the teachers, or the work. The first two reforms that involve changing the students or teachers did not produce the desired results, so schools must now make sure that the student's work is authentically engaging. He claims that he promoted his ideas in his earlier work, particularly *Shaking up the Schoolhouse,* therefore this book is to help those who are already persuaded by his ideas to put them into practice and improve student performance.

Schlechty sees five types of responses from students. They may be authentically engaged, ritually engaged (working for the grade alone, for example), passively compliant (solely avoiding negative consequences), actively retreating (not engaged, but not disruptive), or openly rebellious (refusing to do tasks and disruptive to others). Similarly, he sets twelve standards for what the school and classroom should manifest. These standards include patterns of engagement which are high, all parties are satisfied with student performance, tasks are geared towards a product focus, teachers and administrators are clear about student expectations, teachers are organized, the schools are safe, the communities are playing a part in the students' performance, students are working with their peers, there are a wide range of product types, students are given choices within their products, and the products are meaningful to the students. The slim book reads like a checklist in which these responses and standards are repeated, even in their exact wording, over and over.

Chapter Three focuses on teachers and their role as leaders. Although he states in the book that his focus is on schoolwork as the centerpiece to success, he rarely mentions schoolwork and instead focuses on how to improve teachers. Teachers must morally and intellectually lead; they must have discipline, they must constantly re-evaluate themselves, and they must read more. Teachers should also invite the principal or colleagues into their classrooms to help them improve by being observed. They, and their evaluator, judge how many of the students are actively engaged. While it is granted the teacher plays a major role in the classroom and should not be ignored, the author could have shown teachers, based on his premise, how to structure their classrooms so that most students will be easily engaged in their work.

Instead the book continues to blame teachers in a subtle way for not
having successful schools.

There are also chapters aimed at the principal and superintendent as
leaders. In the principal's chapter the author discusses the notion of
principals forming guided coalitions, or teams composed of people
with at least one of the following attributes: power, creativity, technical
competence, leadership, or credibility. The principal's foremost role is
that of a staff developer. The superintendent's primary role is to form
his/her vision and create strong, shared relationships. Schlechty asserts
that the moral leadership of the superintendent will be reflected
throughout the school district.

The major problem with this book is that it would have been more
appropriate in a lengthy article. Different size fonts, incessant repetition
of his ideas, down to the exact wording, and framing or placing in large
type statements, such as "Today, there is a demand for men and women
who can think, reason, and use their minds well" (p. 94) makes reading
the book difficult for anyone looking for a new idea. The bibliography
for the book is little more than a page in length. In conclusion, this
book rarely discusses how to make work be authentically engaging and
instead substitutes how to make the employees of the school be more
authentic without taking into account the many obstacles that prevent
people from becoming their authentic selves.

References

Schlechty, Phillip C. (1990) Schools for the twenty-first century : Leadership
imperatives for educational reform. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Schlechty, Phillip C. (2001) Shaking up the schoolhouse: how to support and sustain
educational innovation. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Pages: **128**   Price: **$28.00**   ISBN: **0-7879-6165-5**

Reviewed by Regina Pauly, University of Wisconsin-Platteville

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Smith, Margaret (2002) *Aspects of Teaching Secondary
Geography: Perspectives on Practice.* **London:
RoutledgeFalmer.**

A plethora of unfamiliar acronyms and organizational details about the
history of British standards and curricula development might
discourage an American reader from further investigation of the
potential applications of this rich collection of articles on teaching and
learning. *Aspects of Teaching Secondary Geography: Perspectives on
Practice* is one volume in a series for the Open University Flexible
postgraduate certificate of education program. With its companion
reader, this edited book is part of an integrated course and has articles

that will pique the intellectual curiosity of pre-service teachers, practitioners, and teacher educators from many communities.

The persistent reader is rewarded in the second section, which is by far the largest segment of the book. It is here that the practical issues of teaching and learning are addressed. The chapters discuss specific strategies a new teacher might employ for effective planning with diverse groups of students as well as strategies for evaluation of assessment procedures that will " further teaching and learning" (Howes & Hopkin, p. 172). In this section is a challenge (Kitchen) to consider the landscape of a limiting environment as an example of the denial of democracy and social justice. Students read about a wheelchair patron who is denied access to a theatre because she presents a fire hazard to the other 30 patrons. The teacher helps students respond to this literary excerpt by observing the environment, drawing maps, and proposing design options so the text of the environment reads: equitable and just.

This section also discusses the need to integrate the cognitive domain of teaching and learning with the affective domain in deeper fieldwork (Job). The author justifies the use of qualitative measures in reviewing field work to show experiences which "engage the head and touch the heart in pupils' experience of fieldwork." (p. 133). Other articles (Smith, Martin, Williams, Taylor) describe educational uses of information and communications technology with specific examples of projects used in classrooms and many opportunities for additional applications in teaching geography.

Sections three and four direct the reader's thinking toward global concerns with issues of injustice, economic development, sustainable resources, and our national socio- political image. Several selections invite 21st century educators to take an active role in "pushing the frontiers of geography teaching forward" (p. 300) and to confront the difficult questions. Included is an essay on geography and race (Morgan) and another that asks readers to take a critical look at sustainability and our vision of a better world (Hicks).

The twenty-six chapters range in complexity from how-to chapters on sequencing questions for inquiry to chapters analyzing implications of current research for teaching secondary geography. Editor Smith has selected contributors who offer multiple perspectives on current topics of concern and they punctuate their theoretical positions with relevant case studies and particular classroom practices for the student to review. Many authors present information with charts, diagrams, maps, sample surveys, and student work, making them more easily accessible for the reader.

The title of the second section of the text, "Geography in (and out of) the classroom" clearly communicates the message of the book. Geography education begins with the classroom but reaches into the larger community and its social, economic, and political issues that

face tomorrow's teachers and students. While the arrangement of writings suggests a sequence for reading, each chapter offers unique solutions to teaching geography. The book draws non-British readers into the practical concerns facing certified educators in many school situations in the professional field of geography education. The collection of articles successfully engages both pre-service teachers and experienced educators in reaching the book's overarching purpose: "to develop critical understanding and discuss complex issues that surround teaching and learning in the 21st century" (p. i).

Pages: **384**   Price: **$30.95**   ISBN: **0415260868**

Reviewed by Reese H. Todd, Ph.D., Texas Tech University

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