Bruce, Bertram C., editor (2003) *Literacy in the Information Age: Inquiries Into Meaning Making With New Technologies.* **Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association.**

Bruce as editor of the Technology Department column of the *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* has collected thirty-two columns from between 1998 and 2002 on the subject of literacy, technology, and their interactions. These columns are written by Bruce or by guest authors. A professor at the Graduate School of Library and Information Science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Bruce has developed this collection to serve as an introduction to the interplay between literacy, technology, instructional practices, and how individuals and societies derive meaning from these new literacies. Keeping in mind these broad parameters Bruce and his guest authors set out to "…present multiple perspectives on a variety of topics in the area of the new literacies, all tied together by a vision of collaborative inquiry" (p. 9)

Each column from *Literacy in the Information Age* follows a rough structure. An updated Editor's Message introduces the issue and then the issue is addressed in essay form. Following these essays there are smaller sections with more practical information. These sections within each column may include; Other Views, How You Can Participate, Website of the Month, and Listservs, as well each column has a glossary and reference list. Many of the authors also provide lists of resources for further reading or exploration. This structure works well and the columns are well written and researched.

The book is structured conceptually into six sections; Historical Perspectives, Evolving Media Practices, Personal Meanings, Ethical and Policy Issues, Learning Opportunities, and Community. Section One: Historical Perspectives deals with how new technologies are incorporated into our lives until they form our practice. Bruce also describes a dynamic learning technologies timeline created by his students, which is still growing.. Section Two: Evolving Media Practices includes columns on hybrid literacies, electronic publication, art in a digital world, information literacy and the library, searching the web, information overload, the open source movement, and free software such as that developed by Linux.

Section Three: Personal Meanings looks at media literacy, online identities, personal expression on the Internet and a web publishing project for student writers, TeenLit.com. In Section Four: Ethical and Policy Issues the Kids Learning in Computer Klubhouses or KLICK program is explored for its relevancy to the students existing practice and their relationships with computers. Section Four also discusses access to skill development, support, and equipment, evaluation of new technologies, and the effect of technology on educational reforms.

Section Five: Learning Opportunities addresses Dewey and technology, inquiry based learning, online writing centers, hypermedia authoring, computer mediated learning and play, online education, new technologies incorporated into inquiry-based learning with the Chickscope project, and program evaluation in a virtual school setting. Section Six: Community looks at virtual collaborations called collaboratories, the cultural use of new technologies, the internationalization of domain names, and the use of technology through community networks.

A major strength of *Literacy in the Information Age* is the ability of both Bruce and his guest authors to effectively explain complex concepts surrounding the use, adaptation, and potential of technologies into learning environments. The content is challenging but is presented in small pieces that easily stand on their own. A weakness is the lack of a back of the book index that would have greatly contributed to helping the user see the interconnections that occur between various sections of the book. Bruce does provide an extensive final glossary that combines all of the previous glossaries into a cross referenced, searchable tool. As pointed out by Bruce himself, the ephemeral nature of the Internet may result in expired links from the lists provided in the columns.

Many of the virtual projects such as the Learning Technologies Timeline mentioned in Section One and a computer mediated learning program, the Fifth Dimension from Section Five are ongoing. Where possible the authors provide contact information for interested individuals or groups who may be considering such a project or program for their students. This book should appeal to educators trying to help their students gain a starting point for their own explorations of the issues surrounding technology, learning and the literacies that evolve from them.

Pages: **364**   Price: **$30.95**   ISBN: **0-8720-7003-4**

Reviewed by Laura Koltutsky, University of Houston

Coles, Mike, White, Chas & Brown, Pip (2003) *Learning to Learn: Student Activities for Developing Work, Study and Exam-Writing Skills*. Markham, Ontario: Pembroke Publishers, distributed by Stenhouse.

Learning to Learn: Student Activities for Developing Work, Study and Exam-Writing Skills is intended for teachers, parents and volunteer tutors to use in helping students develop study and exam-taking skills. The specific grade or age group for this book is not specified, but the content suggests a middle school to high school audience. *Learning to Learn* was adapted from a somewhat longer book, *Learning Matters: Active Approaches to Studying* which is geared to the 11-18 age range and is still available from Carel Press, Carlisle, UK, (£24.95, 132 p.).

The book consists of seven units covering: managing time and space, note making, library and research skills, reading strategies, learning, writing essays and exams. Each unit includes six to ten student

activities preceded by suggestions for teaching that include the purpose and estimated time for the activity and often, discussion questions and additional activities or instructions. The student activity pages are reproducible.

The teaching instructions are very brief, usually two or three paragraphs. Not much context is provided to assist in presenting the materials. For instance, the first exercise in the note making unit is to compare "effective" and "ineffective" notes, but the "effective" notes, although neater, lack information available in the "ineffective" notes. There is no explanation of what makes good notes or specifically how to create effective notes, and no key to the exercise. In another exercise, there is no key to the meaning of the abbreviations being taught. Although only one of the exercises in the book includes a key, and many of the exercises would not necessarily require one, some of the exercises would be difficult to teach without information that is not provided in the exercise or teaching instructions.

The exercises vary considerably in quality. Some would be fine to use as is. An exercise on how to determine whether a book would be useful for a research project was very self contained and would be easy to teach. Some would require a little tweaking, such as an exercise clearly about revising an essay assignment, until the last sentence (in bold): "In an exam, it is a foolish waste of time to write an essay once and then to copy it out again." In another instance, a handout on "Exam do's and don'ts" includes the advice "Don"t shun absolutely all delights to live laborious days." Some exercises are problematic. One on "Unlocking new vocabulary" uses a somewhat random selection of prefixes of doubtful usefulness in decoding new words, including "Ab" (meaning "away from" or "out of") and the example "abscond."

There are some gaps in coverage for a work that claims to be a "systematic and flexible approach to the key components of succeeding at school." For instance, none of the note making exercises help someone take notes in class rather than from text. Many of the exercises require the student to analyze his or her own faults and learning processes, but do not provide guidance in doing so. However, a good teacher could use these exercises to help develop metacognitive skills.

Learning to Learn includes an extensive index, but no references. It would be useful to expand the experienced teachers' repertoire of study and examination skills, but the lack of background reading and context would make it difficult for less experienced teachers, parents and volunteer tutors to effectively use the exercises.

Pages: **104**   Price: **$18.00**   ISBN: **1-55138-153-2**

Reviewed by Cheryl Grossman, ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career and Vocational Education, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

---

Crone, Deanne A. & Horner, Robert H. (2003) *Building*

Positive Behavior Support Systems in Schools: Functional Behavioral Assessment. **New York: The Guilford Press.**

School personnel are increasingly charged with the responsibility of working with students who exhibit problem behaviors in schools. Crone and Horner have provided valuable guidance to both individuals and teams that deal with student behavior issues. The focus is on the processes of using Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) to determine students' behavioral needs and Behavior Support Plans (BSP) to address students' behavioral needs. Right out of the gate, Crone and Horner provide the reader with the overall purpose of the book. Most school personnel short on time are sure to appreciate this technique.

The book is divided into three succinct parts. The first provides readers with answers to several "what" questions, including describing what is happening in schools right now, what human behavior is, and what FBAs and BSPs are. The section in part one describing human behavior is superb. Important considerations regarding student behavior are presented to help the reader clarify why students misbehave and how to avoid reinforcing inappropriate behaviors when writing and implementing BSPs.

Part two builds from that foundation by providing descriptions of FBAs and BSPs at work in three case studies (students described are 5, 8, and 13). The case studies are detailed in nature and include completed forms that serve as models.

Although the case studies did have variance in described student attributes and problem behaviors, the lack of a case study representing a student of high-school age was evident. As it is assumed that most readers would look for examples of both similar behaviors and similar age groups to those with whom they work, school personnel in high schools may not feel the book is as applicable to them as personnel in elementary schools and/or middle schools.

Part three is presented in a frequently asked questions-type format in regards to team issues that may arise. In devoting a third of the book to the workings of behavior support teams, Crone and Horner have placed great importance on the team approach.

The appendices are blank versions of the forms used throughout the book, with most containing brief instructions for proper completion. Figures that illustrate the processes of FBAs and BSPs are peppered throughout the book and compliment the text nicely.

In essence, this book provides behavior support personnel (school psychologists, counselors, administrators, and teachers) a solid system for the purposes of identifying, addressing, and alleviating problem behaviors in schools.

Pages: **171**   Price: **$28.00**   ISBN: **1-57230-818-4**

Reviewed by Jonella Kimmel, University of Texas-Pan American

England, Crystal M. (2003) *None of Our Business: Why Business Models Don't Work in Schools.* **Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.**

Crystal England offers readers a critical view of the present state of the American educational system. She voices an opinion that is shared by many educators having to deal with the system's politics. She offers research and statistical facts in opposition of the educational path headed by today's political and corporate leaders. Her philosophical point is passionate and well intentioned, but offers few solutions to remedy the complex problems that she highlights.

England compares the educational system to a pizza plant, "the clean efficiency, the measures taken to secure against contamination, the way the standards could be enforced time and again and again and again" (p. ix). She points out those supporters of public school reform, like Martin Gross, Myron Lieberman, and President George W. Bush, who compare public schools to businesses. "They pull their analogies out of their pockets and gaze at them fondly, tucking them carefully away and getting on with the business of rhetoric and impracticality, satisfied that at last they have told us what we needed to know" (p. x). The reader discovers a side to the educational system that is hidden from the public. England analyzes controversial issues, such as "teaching to the test" (p. 7), "poverty" (p. 9), and "divergent cultures" (p.10), and identifies their impact on education. Her goal is for the reader to be informed, to make independent decisions, such as "is education an art or an industry? Which matters more…product or process?" (p. x)

England addresses fundamental questions for the purpose of education. She believes that "schools are a reflection of society as a whole" (p. 53), and when referring to school failure one must ask in which ways society is failing students. She believes that schools should not be concerned only with "academic standards, but character standards" (p. 54) as well. She believes that educators have "creativity and talents" for delivering instruction and schools should be encouraging and flexible. She believes that school environments should focus on student needs rather than test scores (p. 54). There is more than meets the eye. Education leaders and policy makers need to look beyond test scores and standards to aid in the improvement of schools.

I applaud England for bringing such intricate issues to light. I was expecting hope, or ideas in which I, as an educator, can use to change my reality of the top-down management system education has become. There are no easy solutions for the complexity of the factors involved in the American educational system. This book is an excellent read for people outside of the educational field. It will allow them to see what the system is all about from the eyes of someone who has been a teacher, administrator and professional speaker. Maybe the hope lies primarily with the public knowing the truth, then acting upon it, especially through the political arena.

Reviewed by Claudia Mitchell, Point Loma Nazarene University-Mission Valley

---

Heard, Georgia (2002) *The Revision Toolbox: Teaching Techniques That Work.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Many students struggle with the daunting task of revision, as do many teachers who are attempting to teach revision. Author Georgia Heard has created an exceptional guide for teaching students the revision process of writing! Her knowledge and skill are clearly apparent as she leads teachers through what can be an otherwise overwhelming task.

Georgia Heard is the author of several books that address the teaching of writing and specifically the genre of poetry. Her 20 years of experience in writing and the teaching of writing enable her to successfully guide other teachers and students through the intimidating tasks of writing and revision. "The true meaning of revision is this: to see again…. I need to see again to make sure those words reflect precisely what my eyes and heart see" (Heard, 1995, p.121).

With *The Revision Toolbox; Teaching Techniques That Work*, Heard makes it easy to see how her ideas make sense and how they will work. This text is extremely teacher friendly. I found that *The Toolbox* is not about new revision content; it is more about the approaches that Heard uses to connect the lesson and the learner. I believe that through Georgia Heard's methods my students will be able to gain a better understanding of the revision process. I am also confident that with the use of the organizational 'tools,' they will attain empowerment, and even enjoyment, within the progression of their own writing.

Georgia Heard has created a book design that can be easily implemented into classroom mini-lessons, one-on-one conferences and centers that students rotate through. Heard provides reference guides for student and teacher use; she also uses many examples from student writing and her own writing in order to model the instructional ideas. This book can enable teachers to guide their students into the joy of the writing process, while filling their revision toolboxes with precise and realistic tools that will allow students choices when it is time for revision.

The text quickly moves into a series of three "toolboxes," which provide insight and organization to the tools which students can use to conquer the revision of words, structure, and voice. The first of these addresses the revision of words. This chapter offers engaging lessons that shed a great light of understanding on the entire revision process. These lessons include such concepts as collecting words to use later and using words to add details to our writing. The next chapter focuses on the structure of a student's writing. The structure that Heard is referring to is the genre or organization, (and the consistency or inconsistency of that organization), that a student uses in his or her writing. Lessons from this toolbox revolve around time sequences and genre usage. The third toolbox that Heard offers is that of voice. This chapter also contains many teacher friendly lesson plans. The concepts

covered in this section range from point of view to creating character. These three toolboxes contain essential skill development, which Heard has made creatively accessible through these easy lessons.

The next few chapters cover the strategies of rereading for revision, teacher-student conferencing and the development of revision centers that can be used in the classroom. Heard again covers these areas of the strategies enabling the teacher to guide students through each process and allowing the students to carry these skills forward in their very own 'revision toolbox.'

The Revision Toolbox is a great way to help students help themselves. Students will be able to carry these tools with them and be prepared for future writing tasks.

References

Heard, Georgia. (1995) *Writing towards home: Tales and lessons to find your way.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Pages: **134**   Price: **$17.00**   ISBN: **0-325-00460-9**

Reviewed by Kelly Oakes, Point Loma Nazarene University

Kincheloe, Joe L. (2003) *Teachers as Researchers: Qualitative Inquiry as a Path to Empowerment.* New York: Routledge.

Joe Kincheloe, professor of education at City University of New York Graduate Center and Brooklyn College, urges teachers to become researchers in his latest book. Kincheloe traces research philosophies as well as how the teaching profession became less of a professional position. He has very strong views regarding education and at no point shies away from stating them. He sees the current state of research as a place where "Teachers are 'studied down' in the sense that those who control the research use their inquiry to inform themselves about their subordinates (mere practitioners), later using their information to manipulate and control them" (p. 35).

Kincheloe feels that if teachers will get involved in research they will be able to liberate themselves from the standards imposed upon them by outsiders. Kincheloe proclaims "Teacher researchers can revolutionize professional practice by viewing themselves as potentially the most sophisticated research instrument available" (p. 52). Kincheloe believes that both teachers and students will benefit from teachers conducting research. He makes a special point to defend qualitative research as a valid science and makes it clear that qualitative research is the best way to study humans in their natural setting.

Kincheloe's book is definitely not a casual read, but teachers who are interested in sociology or research and professors of education will find it informative. Teachers considering conducting research will likely be inspired to do so by this book.

Reviewed by Jeff Luzius, Auburn University

Luskin, Bernard J. (2002). *Casting the Net over Global Learning: New Developments in Workforce Training and Online Psychologies.* **Irvine, CA:** Griffin Publishing Group**.**

Casting the Net has a lot in common with the TV infomercial; it is for the busy person who doesn't have a lot of time and needs to buy a solution to a problem rather than understand it deeply. The chapters are short and punchy; the writing remarkably jargon free. Luskin states that "each chapter may be read individually." (p. i) The author identifies, in the Introduction, a long list of people who could benefit from his book, and at the top of the list is "Corporate executives who need to stay competitive in the new Information Age." (p.iv)

Luskin covers a lot of educational territory in 226 pages. After the Introduction, Summary, Author's Notes and Preface, the book begins with a chapter entitled "Shaping Global Learning: Everything Changes Everything". The main thrust here seems to be that the various media are converging onto the Internet and that this trend will have a significant impact the ability to train the workforce. Luskin says: "Simply put, boundaries are disappearing. The furture is blended and it is screen deep in entertainment, education, and workforce training. Screen deep implying that all devices converge in various forms." (p.2)

This is followed by two chapters on "corporate universities"; one simply a list of these institutions. Chapter 4, "Hail to the Chiefs," is one of the more interesting and informative. This one defines and explains, briefly, the business roles of the alphabet soup of CEO, CIO, CTO, CKO, CLO, etc. This may be worth the price of the book; luckily it's an inexpensive one. These are followed by chapters on higher education ("Ivy Covered Clicks"), a couple on learning styles and theories ("If I Only Had a Brain" and "Learning Theories"). Chapter 8, "The Psychologies of Producing Media," is a more practical one featuring a list of 22 production techniques that Luskin says "are essential to making better programs..." (p. 148)

The book ends with an appendix containing a reworked version of a previously published article by Luskin and Toni T. Luskin, "Media, Communication, and the Socio-Psychomedia Effect." This essay briefly explores the various mass media in their historical context. It concludes: "Those who understand the media psychology of producing newspapers, magazines, books, movies, recordings, radio, television, CD-ROMS, Websites, and Internet-based interactive communication, will have major impact impact on our future lives."

The message seems to be, like the infomercials: Don't be left out of this wonderful opportunity.

Marland, Ken (2002) *High Frequency Words: Strategies that Build Skills in Spelling, Vocabulary, and Word Play.* **Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.**

This brief, colorful book is aimed at the new teacher of reading for the primary grades, and is written to the education professional. It would also be useful to the experienced teacher looking for links to learning theory and a fresh approach to teaching these important word skills. Teachers of older students who are learning English as a second language might also find this helpful.

The book starts with a brief overview of theory and ties multiple-intelligences theory to very specific examples of activities. It continues with descriptions and examples of eleven specific spelling strategies.

The overview for conducting the lessons is very specific, listing materials, time required, general directions and three-step lessons. The lessons include Review, New Words and Strategies, and New Words and Mastered Words. The lessons are very prescriptive, but provide a sound foundation for setting up spelling lessons based on learning theory. A very helpful chart lists the words covered and shows specifically which strategies for teaching are used in the lessons.

In Part II each word is given a one-page lesson plan including discussion, Strategies, and a sample mnemonic. The words covered include foundation words, the target word, common errors, instructional sequence of words and new words based on the word being taught.

A section with activity sheets provides handouts for eleven of the words and can serve as a model for teachers to create handouts for other words. The concluding section is Teacher Observation Tools, which are reproducible forms for teachers to use for recording student progress.

This book can provide a sound foundation for teachers to build a theoretically sound program for students to learn the often-used words that form the basis of good spelling and vocabulary for the early learner.

Pages: **112**   Price: **$19.00**   ISBN: **1-55138-144-3**

Reviewed by Kesten Blake, Fullerton Joint Union High School District

---

Paterson, Kathy (2002) *How Do I Teach?…and Keep My Sanity!* **Markham, Ontario: Pembroke Publishers, distributed by Stenhouse.**

Many teachers have asked themselves the question this title poses! The answer according to Kathy Paterson is with organization, time management, care and compassion. This resource is full of a wide range of creative and common sense ideas to help teachers manage their classrooms, build relationships, and save time. Each chapter begins with two pages of narrative explaining the focus of the chapter, followed by many activities and ideas. The activities and techniques are quick and easy to implement, and most are classroom-tested.

Other books may treat the topics presented here more thoroughly, however, this is a great book for one stop shopping of practical ideas. Some topics that stand out include:

- Ways to help quiet kids speak up
- Refocusing activities
- Managing group work
- Ways to discourage bully behavior
- Handling homework issues
- Alternatives for studying spelling
- Using volunteers effectively
- Year end review and closure

Of particular note are the two appendices: "Enjoying Impossible-to-Put-Down Books" and "Reading Books that Turn On Even the Most Reluctant Readers." Another great feature is the reproducible sheets scattered throughout the text. The material is aimed at grade school classrooms, and can easily be adapted for middle school classrooms.

Pages: **96**   Price: **$16.00**   ISBN: **1-55138-149-4**

Reviewed by Kathy M. Irwin, University of Michigan-Dearborn

Toch, Thomas (2003) *High Schools on a Human Scale: How Small Schools Can Transform American Education.* Boston: Beacon Press.

Thomas Toch takes on the challenge of the failing, large, comprehensive high schools, where he has discovered the human side of education has been lost. The author does not just leave us without a solution, but through investigation and research finds models and successful examples of secondary education. *High Schools on a Human Scale* is organized as a quick reference book with answers that are concise, workable, and easy to implement in any high school. As a parent, teacher, guidance counselor, and administrator, I was able to find useable nuggets and ideas for change in every chapter.

Education must reflect society today in order to prepare students for their future. Toch supports this idea in his statement "The problem is that comprehensive high school were created to do something quite different from what we want, and need, high school to do today"(p. 1). "The result, in many comprehensive high schools, is a high level of alienation and apathy among students and teachers" (p. 7). Toch was not only a teacher and lecturer at Harvard, but also an education

correspondent at U.S. News and World Report. He is currently writer-in-residence at the National Center on Education and the Economy.

Technology, internships, alternative ways of learning and performance-based assessment should drive our changing educational future. Toch does an outstanding job of presenting working high school models across the United States that are diverse both socioeconomically and culturally. He not only researched a variety of facilities, but visited and observed for himself "schools in action" witnessing students needs being met while relationships were being formed.

Thomas Toch has made a courageous stand in his book for small schools and bringing back relationship and ownership for students in the place they spend the majority of their adolescence years. I agree with the author that many fear that smaller schools means going backwards in educational growth. Toch claims this is simply not true. The focus on quality should be more important than quantity. The programs he describes of lap top computers at High Tech High, dividing Julia Richman High School into four separate units, learning to debate verses violence at The Urban Academy, experiencing internships at The Met, and finding ownership in Minnesota New Country School, are all refreshing new avenues of meeting students individual needs.

High Schools on a Human Scale is a useful tool that should be on the shelf of anyone who is involved with the educational system today. Large comprehensive high schools are not working. The high school human scale and achievement scale need to coincide to bring back the success of American education once again.

Pages: **144**   Price: **$15.00**   ISBN: **0-8070-3245-X**

Reviewed by Jeanne Cochran, Tri-City Christian School

Tomlinson, Gerald, comp. & ed. (2003) *School Administrator's Complete Letter Book*. Second edition with CD- Rom. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Tomlinson has prepared a useful and informative book for practicing school administrators. Not only does it offer sample letters and memos to educational leaders in hard copy and on CD-Rom (to allow adapting correspondence through 'cut and paste') but in doing so it also provides some guidance on what is acceptable phrasing and content.

The book is a large collection of reportedly authentic letters, memos, statements of philosophy, mission statements, school and school district policies, and even model web pages. Contributors are purported to be educators from across North America - however, I noted no Canadian contributors. There are letters to parents, teachers, teacher applicants, students, to members of the community, newpapers, etc. All kinds of schools are included with in the examples -- pre-kindergarten, as well as elementary, middle and secondary schools.

The book is clearly organized into chapters that, on the title page of each chapter, explicitly list the topic of each correspondence and type of correspondence (e.g., memo to a teacher). The last section in each chapter is entitled "Write it Right" and includes some important writing suggestions, e.g., double-check spelling, emphasize the word 'you,' and even how not to say/phrase something. I especially liked how appropriate this final section was. For example, under chapter eight, Get-well and sympathy chapter, the "Write it Right" section contained a suggestion about being tactful. While this suggestion may seem mundane to some, I believe that it acts as a reminder to a busy leader to do it right; for as Bennis and Nanus (1995) have been often quoted, "Managers are people who do things right and leaders are people who do the right thing."

The chapters are mainly in the order of a 'normal' school year. The first chapter contains letters and memos welcoming staff and students back to school. The next chapter provides some statements of philosophy and policy, simulating the principal's role in a school early in the year. Next, there is a chapter on communicating about the curriculum - letters that are both proactive (announcing and then planning a new curriculum) and re-active (responding to a phone call or letter from an irate parent about some aspect about the school curriculum). Subsequent chapters deal with the physical plant of the school; the inevitable correspondence about busing; money matters - especially helpful letters asking the reader to support the school in some way; and announcing upcoming events.

The next few chapters deal with interpersonal issues. There are letters containing recommendations of some sort; get-well and sympathy notes directed towards students, teachers, support staff, and parents; and letters, memos and forms about the evaluation of personnel. The final suggestion here is pragmatic but almost too simplistic: leave nothing out. Evaluating personnel is undoubtedly one of the more difficult yet necessary tasks of a principal, and certainly more guidance than that offered in this brief chapter is necessary in order to prepare school administrators adequately. In a chapter on "answering criticism and complaints" the varied examples of correspondence are followed by the suggestion that all responses should be brief, but persuasive as well. This would be sound advice from a lawyer too! Chapter 11 deals with discipline, suspension and expulsion issues of children. Twenty-seven examples are included in this chapter revealing the widespread nature of this issue. Chapters on congratulations and showing appreciation round out this section.

The next chapter is entitled Internet Communications. While this is new to the second edition of the book, I believe that is somewhat misnamed. The chapter is only about Web pages, but there are many different ways to use the internet. This chapter contains 25 different web pages to illustrate the kinds of information that a school or district can offer to the general community before and during the school year. It includes welcoming information, current school events and activities planned. Unfortunately the graphics are in black and white, substantially reducing the impact of the web pages. A section on e-mail, should definitely be included in any later edition of the book. How to respond to e-mail communication, and what to send out and

what not to communicate both individually and on school listservs are topics that should be addressed.

The remaining chapters describe general types of communication that educational administrators must deal with as the year proceeds: offers, acceptances and approvals, reprimands and complaints, rejections, dismissals and cancellations. All these letters illustrate the empathy and compassion of a concerned school leader.

The penultimate chapter is on public relations and the media. The 18 included items reveal ways that school administrators interact with the public. It includes such eclectic examples as a newsletter article about the school, an announcement about the death of a student, and a media release form for parents to complete. I think this chapter is perhaps the weakest in the book. The editor himself knowledge that everything that goes on in a school is or can be an issue of public relations. Many books and training programs and packages have dealt extensively with the ways and means of public relations.[1] I found the content of this chapter lacking in substance. For example, I would suggest examples of responses to a newspaper criticizing/applauding an event/incident at the school. These, in my opinion, are the most taxing for school administrators and certainly require the most tact. For this book to have the impact and widespread use it deserves, I recommend more attention to this chapter.

The last chapter contains the end-of-school-year letters, as a natural closure to the book. It contains letters of appreciation, information notices about the school's achievements, and even plans for next year. In many ways, it effectively summarizes the types of communication offered in the previous chapters.

I think that this is quite a good book for both practicing school administrators (both new and experienced) and aspiring school administrators. Aspiring school principals need such examples in their principal preparation program to become aware of the gamut of issues that they will be confronted with every day in their school leadership positions. School administrators need to be constantly reminded that the impact of their words (and letters) will become part of their legacy at the school. In addition to the suggestions mentioned above, I recommend that subsequent revisions of this book be physically smaller so that it will fit on a 'normal' sized bookshelf. I compliment the editor on including a CD-Rom with the book. School administrators must be computer competent; this book reinforces that reality.

Notes

[1]Meek, A. (1999). *Communicating with the public: A guide for school leaders.* Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
Jessop, P., Lennon, G., & Sumner, S. (1996). *Renewing bridges: Celebrating public education: A resource book.* Toronto, ON: Educational Services Committee, OSSTF.

References

Bennis, W.G., & Nanus, B. (1985). *Leaders: The strategies for taking charge.* New York: Harper & Row, p. 112.

Reviewed by by Ruth Rees, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada

---

Watson, Marilyn & Ecken, Laura (2003) *Learning to Trust: Transforming Difficult Elementary Classrooms Through Developmental Discipline.* **San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.**

Flying in the face of conventional wisdom on how to maintain classroom control using assertive discipline, especially at the lower grades, Marilyn Watson, in collaboration with Laura Ecken, presents a strong case for an alternative approach utilizing Developmental Discipline.

Watson serves in the double capacity as the program director of the Northern California Developmental Studies Center's Child Development Project (CDP) as well as the head of the center's Teacher Education Project. She is a strong advocate of the concept that the more teachers can create caring classrooms and school communities, the more likely students are to become good people as well as good learners. To this end CDP encourages the use of the Developmental Discipline classroom management plan.

The stress here is on teachers forming warm and supportive relationships with and among their students. They help their students understand the reasons behind classroom rules and expectations while teaching any relevant skills the children might be lacking. The instructor also engages the students in a collaborative, problem-solving process aimed at stopping misbehavior and, if necessary, uses nonpunitive methods to externally control class behavior.

Since the key to implementing a Developmental Discipline approach is understanding attachment theory, Watson takes some time to explain the tenets of this belief. Offering an alternative to the selfish, individualistic view of children that the author believes "we have inherited", she explains that, "the attachment theory assumes that children are socially oriented from birth. They depend on the care and support of their caretakers for their survival and development" (p. 9).

Since most caretakers are sensitive to the child's physical and psychological needs, the youngster enters into a collaborative relationship with the adult and strives to maintain that positive connection. "Socialization from the perspective of attachment theory," writes the author "is a collaborative process between child and adult rather than a coercive one. This provides an explanation why some children do not respond appropriately to our caring and also offers workable suggestions for ways to break through their resistance" (p. 9).

With the help of Louisville, Kentucky, teacher Laura Ecken, Watson applies this theory to a real classroom setting to show how it can build collaborative, trusting relationships even with the most challenging

students. As the reader follows the daily efforts of Ecken to create a environment that centers on her students' needs, the reader will see the strengths and weaknesses of the program. It is essential to also point out that Developmental Discipline does not provide a quick fix; in fact just the opposite is true. A commitment of time is necessary and patience is of paramount importance because the desired changes will not occur overnight.

"This book once and for all dispels the myth that we simply must resort to bribes, threats, and other instruments of coercion in order to deal with angry, resistant students," writes Alfie Kohn in the Foreword. "That alone is reason to buy it, read it, read it again, and then buy more copies to hand out to one's colleagues" (p. xv).

Pages: **352**   Price: **$29.00**   ISBN: **0-7879-6650-9**

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

---

Whitehead, David (2003) *Writing Frameworks: Easy-to-Use Structures for Creating Confident, Successful Writers.* **Markham, Ontario: Pembroke Publishers, distributed by Stenhouse.**

Written in an approachable and playful style, Writing Frameworks provides a starting point for teaching students how to clearly communicate factual information. Designed for use in the classroom, this book offers useful strategies and step-by-step frameworks for focusing thoughts and writing about events or providing technical instructions. The book is divided into seven sections, each addressing one of the following types of factual writing:

- · Recounting
- Procedural
- Descriptive
- Reporting
- Explanative
- Argumentative
- Discussion

Every section begins with a brief statement to the teacher, providing a brief explanation and a situational basis for using the materials that follow. The bulk of the book consists of reproducible worksheets designed to walk students through the process of recreating an event on paper. Examples are prominently included in most sections and are geared at engaging students, usually describing familiar topics and often incorporating a touch of humor.

A brief section including materials to help busy teachers assess student writing is included at the end of the book. These "Writing Record Forms" are designed to rate the level of independence each student is showing in his or her writing, while allowing teachers the flexibility to judge students individually, rather than forcing a comparison between

students.

The approachable manner in which Whitehead presents factual writing makes this book appropriate for use with students of varying skill levels, particularly those in the middle grades. Its straightforward layout and browsability make it an appropriate addition to most curriculum collections.

Pages: **88**   Price: **$16.00**   ISBN: **1-55138-154-0**

Reviewed by Camila Gabaldón, Western Oregon University

Wilhelm, Jeffrey D. (2002) *Action Strategies for Deepening Comprehension.* New York: Scholastic.

In this very valuable and practical book, Jeffrey Wilhelm describes how using "enactments" in the classroom can deepen students' comprehension by giving them opportunities to engage with, challenge and confront texts from various points of view. Based on research and practical experience, Wilhelm provides a blue print for encouraging rigorous creative and critical thinking by guiding students through exercises in which they actively imagine their way through a text.

When teachers stage enactments, they invite their students to respond to texts by "living through" what they have read. For example, students might be given a scenario and asked to role-play how various characters from their reading would react to it. They might also be asked to become certain characters while the rest of the class puts them on the "hot seat;" asking them questions to determine the motivations and justifications for their behavior.

The range of enactments suggested by Wilhelm makes this book a very worthwhile resource. Exercises designed for every grade level and for before, during and after reading are included. There are detailed step-by- step instructions for teachers. He even reprints a short story and explains a variety of enactments in terms of this example. Sample student activity sheets, examples of student work and written guidelines for activities are also included.

As someone who has long believed in the unique value of dramatic play as a response to literature, I am happy that this book makes teachers aware of its potential to transform students' reading experiences. I am particularly grateful that *Action strategies for deepening comprehension* has such a "teacher friendly" format so that more and more teachers will actually try some of these exciting ideas.

Pages: **191**   Price: **$17.95**   ISBN: **0-439-21857-8**

Reviewed by: Irene Rosenthal, College of St. Rose, Albany, NY