



Behrman, Carol H. (2004) *Ready-to-Use Writing Proficiency Lessons and Activities, 10th Grade Level*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

This book is a reality check. The premise of a workbook contradicts findings in literacy and learning research of the last 20 to 25 years that have emphasized the importance of context, critical thinking, learner ownership, and task authenticity. However, the purpose of this book is to facilitate basic writing skills needed for students to pass the increasing number of state and national standardized tests. Therefore, *how* this book is used will determine its effectiveness.

The first three sections of the book offer short explanations and simple activities for word choice, mechanics, and sentence writing, accompanied by review tests. The last six sections address paragraph writing, topic choice and development, and steps for basic forms of informative, persuasive, or narrative essays, as well as types of letter writing. These sections contain general information regarding standardized testing formats and expectations, as well as practice tests for which sample scoring rubrics are provided. In each section, general teacher preparation notes for lesson procedures precede various skill activities.

Traditional in its linear approach, this workbook attempts to direct teachers to define and reinforce specific writing techniques. Consequently, students are largely expected to respond to ideas and expressions that are not of their own invention. The trade-off for the lack of task authenticity is the convenient reproducibility and opportunity to practice isolated skills. These activities may have merit as quick five-minute lesson openers or advance organizers, not full lessons. Later sections suggest assignments that require students to apply writing process elements, but they follow rather formulaic steps. This approach to writing has the strength of guiding students, but the weakness of curbing originality in thought or expression.

Too often in the past, such workbooks have deadened student desire to write and caused the less academic students to give up on themselves as writers or learners. Relying solely on a workbook such as this to teach lessons on writing would disservice students. All students deserve to be encouraged to express their own thoughts and in doing so, to refine personal language use for better accuracy and clarity for their own sake. With such opportunity, all students can succeed on any standardized writing test they may be forced to take.

Pages: **320** Price: **\$32.95** ISBN: **0-7879-6600-2**

Reviewed by Patricia A. Gross, Ed.D., Associate Professor of Education, The University of Scranton, Scranton, PA.

Diller, Debbie (2003) *Literacy Work Stations: Making Centers Work*. York, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

Looking for new “activities” for your primary grade classroom? Don’t read this book. Debbie Diller’s, *Literacy Work Stations: Making Centers Work*, is for teachers who either already understand their role as a curriculum maker or who are interested in making the transition from curriculum dispenser to curriculum maker. Diller has mined her experience as a classroom teacher with over twenty-five years of experiences in Pre K through tenth grade classrooms, as a Title I reading specialist, a literacy coach, and a consultant/author to provide “sensible, realistic ways to meet the needs of all students in the classroom” (back cover) through work stations. Her book is easy to read and organized to encourage/challenge teachers to construct tasks based on what THEIR students need. Therefore, the tasks at the “work stations” from classroom to classroom or even from year to year in the same teacher’s classroom will never be exactly the same. This is one of the strengths of this text. Diller assumes that teachers are intellectually equipped to make decisions which tailor the demands of district and state standards and curriculum guidelines to the individual students in her/his classroom.

No need for extra space to create work stations in the classroom; take advantage of spaces already carved out. For example, the overhead projector becomes a work station, the tape recorder/earphones become a work station, the Big Book easel becomes a work station, etc. Using these permanent classroom spaces eliminates the onerous burden of setting new spaces each time new tasks are introduced to the work stations. The materials in the work stations are determined by the students' needs, strategies being taught, and current classroom topics. Using permanent classroom spaces and crafting tasks out of materials already used for instruction gives more “bang for your teaching buck” (p. 9) In addition, while students work in pairs or small groups at each work station, teachers have the time to work with small guided reading groups.

Work stations demand that students take more responsibility for their learning. Chapter 1 gives step-by-step guidance not only for students but also for teachers. Releasing control over responsibility is often scary. Diller provides not only the how to but also the supporting theory. In other words she provides teachers with the language to talk about why they are doing what they are doing as well as her expertise in step by step implementation of work stations. There is a nice summary of the theory/practice of balancing responsibility for learning between teacher and student in a chart on page 7. Another one of the strengths of the text is the reader friendly charts sprinkled throughout

the book that summarize important points succinctly.

Fluid and effective use of work stations comes as students and their teacher work together to develop dispositions of respect and integrity—a sense of community is the foundation of successful work stations and individual learning success. Developing this sense of community and individual responsibility for learning are not left to the imagination of the reader. The author provides ample support. She shares mini-lessons which support students in the beginning of the year as well as mini-lessons for later in the year when specific problems arise. Three pages of frequently asked questions and answers in the chapter on how to begin using work stations and sections on how to solve ongoing problems as well as other pertinent management tips lessen the discomfort of the unfamiliar.

Diller includes whole chapters devoted to successfully implementing literacy work stations: Classroom Library, Big Book, Writing, Drama, ABC/Word Study, Poetry. Each of these chapters is accompanied with an Appendix of resources for the support of that particular work station in English and Spanish. A separate chapter outlines a variety of other literacy work stations. Each of the chapters provide pictures of children in actual classrooms using the stations, visuals of materials used, and step by step instructions for setting up each station.

An important element of the work stations as envisioned and implemented by Diller is the differentiation of instruction. The final chapter provides insights and support for that differentiation. For example, she shares the idea of creating a clipboard whose surface is covered with layered index cards one for each student. The student's name is written on the bottom right-hand corner and taped to the clipboard so that the name fits just above the last one taped on. This clipboard is a ready space to record the individual needs of students as you observe them during the day. To get you started the author provides a set of examples of things you might record. You then use these observations as you make decisions about the tasks in specific work stations. Another strength of this chapter is the set of literacy stage charts with four columns labeled: If you see this, Directly teach this, Then have the child practice at this literacy work station, and Suggested activities at the work station. Support for grading, communication with parents, and keeping running records make this chapter rich with in-depth support.

In a market proliferated with products for teachers, this book stands out. Some might be skeptical of Diller's claim early in the book for work stations' support for individual student learning without a substantial increase in the teacher's workload. Such skepticism dissolves chapter by chapter. You close the book knowing work stations give teacher and students "more bang for the buck."

Pages: **218** Price: **\$20.00** ISBN: **1 57110 353 8**

Reviewed by Sharon Solloway, Associate Professor, Early Childhood & Elementary Education, Bloomsburg University

Garan, Elaine M. (2004) *In Defense of Our Children: When Politics, Profit, and Education Collide*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

In Defense of Our Children: When Politics, Profit, and Education Collide is a well-written and engaging book by Dr. Elaine M. Garan. Using a question and answer format she crafts a work that reads more like a conversation among friends than a serious look at contemporary educational issues.

Garan asserts her goals for this book relative to school reform to "... build a bridge between the home and the school and even the media, because our common goal is doing what's best for our children" (p. 1). She goes on to say, "My goal is [to] give you the tools and the perspective to make the wisest choices for your children and students – *yourself*" (p. 8). With that, Garan begins an assault on the No Child Left Behind Act.

Although she does not achieve her stated goals, the book is not without merit and contains an interesting perspective of contemporary education. Garan does a very good job explaining the various types of tests and their utility. She explains criterion-referenced and norm-referenced tests in detail. She puts them in layman's terms highlighting their shortcomings. Garan makes no secret of her disdain for standardized testing as well as testing in general, citing the work of Alfie Kohn.

In Defense of Our Children's strongest indictment is in suggesting that the educational crisis reported today is a fabrication by our government, particularly President George Bush, to line the corporate pockets of educational testing services and consultants. She states "... testing profits the test preparation companies" (p. 29). She also intimates that our educational failures have created "... another big growth industry, for-profit education companies such as Sylvan Learning that our tax dollars now subsidize" (p. 44). Her insistence that education's current situation is not reality but rather government manipulation does not address educational debate since the 1890s. She fails to provide historical perspective dealing with the "Swinging Pendulum Theory" and the present phase that began with the Commission on Excellence in Education (Nation At Risk) Report (NCEIE, 1983). In addition, her premise discounts all who contributed to and/or testified during the proceedings of the commission.

Garan dedicates a large portion of the book to reading and reading strategies, an area in which she is considered an expert. She then generalizes the concepts to all disciplines in a teaching-learning debate.

At the root of this debate are the teaching strategies and methods used to satisfy the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act, specifically the requirement that these strategies and methods be researched-based. Her contention is that the data used for these programs are flawed thereby not serving students and their needs. This argument ties into her assertion that the crisis in education was manipulated to create a market for testing companies.

Garan makes strong arguments throughout the book. She has good credentials and is a persuasive writer. It should be noted, however; that her incorrect acronym for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) detracts from her credibility.

This book is a good read and raises many relevant issues pertaining to high-stakes testing. Garan's vitriol is at times distracting and takes away from her concerns for the direction of education. Ultimately, as with all debates, each individual must decide what is to be believed and the direction that should be followed. As Garan implores of her readers, question everything you read and understand the motives of the author.

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Pages: 168 Price: \$18.00 ISBN: 0-325-00647-4

Reviewed by Randy Anderson, Assistant Professor, Educational Leadership & Research, The University of Southern Mississippi.

**Intrator, Sam M. & Scribner, Megan, editors. (2003)
Teaching with Fire: Poetry that Sustains the Courage to Teach. San Francisco, CA: Jossey- Bass.**

Teaching with fire: Poetry that sustains the courage to teach, edited by Sam M. Intrator and Megan Scribner, and published by Jossey-Bass in 2003, is a wonderful little book. If you are feeling discouraged about your teaching life, if you need to remember why you went into this

field, if you want to hear from teachers about the ways in which they help themselves continue to teach with passion, be sure to pick this book up.

The editors of this book asked teachers to send in their most beloved poems, and then to explain why they loved those poems. College professors, principals, elementary school teachers, organizational consultants, high school teacher-development-coordinators, college presidents, retired middle school teachers, and poets-in-the-schools coordinators; teachers from Indiana and Israel, from Oregon and Ohio, teachers whose names you'll recognize and those whose names you won't, all sent the editors the poems that have sustained them through their years of teaching. The book contains eighty-eight beautiful poems by such diverse writers as John Milton and Galway Kinnell, by young writers like Barbara Kingsolver, Billy Collins, and Li-Young Lee; by classical writers like T.S. Eliot, Robert Frost, and E.E. Cummings; by female writers like Mary Oliver, Margaret Walker, and Marge Piercy; by Langston Hughes and Pablo Neruda, Rilke and Nikki Giovanni and Rabindranath Tagore. The book contains poems by writers I've never heard of, who may not even be well-published poets yet, like Bettie T. Spinner and Judy Brown. Each poem is introduced by the teacher who sent it in; each introduction is personal, reflective, surprising.

The book is broken up into sections: "Hearing the Call" and "Cherishing the Work" are the first two sections; in these, poems reflect reasons teachers chose the profession. The titles of the poems in the first section of the book give glimpses of teachers' reasons for entering the field: "To be of use" by Marge Piercy, "The Way It Is," by William Stafford, and, by Marion Wright Edelman, the wonderful prayer, "I care and I'm willing to serve." In the section called "Cherishing the Work" are poems that remind teachers of their successes, of the wonder of language, and of the messages these teachers want their students to take away with them when they leave the classroom.

The next two sections of the book, "On the Edge" and "Holding On" remind readers of the price students must pay for teachers' failures, and help encourage teachers to take risks in their work. In these sections, an Israeli teacher explains why she rereads Yehuda Amichai's searing poem "God has Pity on Kindergarten Children" to her class of teachers-in-training each year; an elementary school teacher describes how he uses Billy Collins' poem "On Turning Ten" to remind himself of the reality of the lives of the children he works with, a high school English teacher tells how Mary Oliver's poem "Wild Geese" grounds her and consoles her in her teaching life, and why she keeps the poem on her classroom door.

The middle sections, "In the Moment" and "Making Contact," contain poems that help teachers remember how important relationship is in teaching, and how important it is for teachers to keep growing. In this section a teacher describes how she used Neruda's poem "Keeping

Quiet” with her students after 9/11; another reminisces about a retreat in Singapore, and how Naomi Shihab Nye’s poem “Shoulders” helps her remember the importance of our caring for each other; a teacher in the Poets-in-the-Schools program explains how he uses a Gary Snyder poem both to help him teach writing and to remind him of the importance of the “hard pleasant tasks” of teaching.

After a section called “Daring to Lead,” in which poems encourage teachers to work to make schools more caring, humane, and just places, the book ends with a wonderful essay by Sam M. Intrator, called “The Utility of Poetry in a Teacher’s Life.” In this essay, Intrator reminds teachers of the uses of poetry in their lives and in their classrooms. In “Poetry in Service of Turning Inward,” he suggests that teachers remember that good poems can be playful, not only solemn; he reminds us that poems can be a daily gift (and provides web sites where readers can get a ‘daily fix’ of poetry); he suggests that we place poems where we will see them each day—on the back door or the computer screen saver—he reminds us to revel in the sounds of poems as well as their meanings, and to remember that, as one teacher joked, “a poem a day can keep burnout at bay.” In “Poetry in Service of Reaching Out,” Intrator suggests that poems can be used in teachers’ meetings, or as gifts to those who work beside teachers; in “Poetry in Service of Social Change,” Intrator suggests that poems can be used to provoke students toward new ways of thinking, to help students move quickly into “edgy” and deep conversations, to create a sense of commonality among the people in the room, and, finally, to preserve the fire in each teachers’ heart.

I am very glad to be able to read and reread all of the poems in this book, and I appreciate the thoughtful introduction by Parker Palmer and Tom Vander Ark, but most valuable for me are the words of the teachers who sent in the poems. Some of those who write about their favorite poems in this book are educators I have long admired from afar, like Joe Nathan, Ted Sizer, and William Ayers, some are people whose names I’ve never heard before. The surprising, thoughtful, story each teacher tells to introduce each poem bespeaks the pride of the profession, and will make readers wonder what story they would tell, which poem they would send in, if asked. This book is inspirational in the best sense. Go get a copy. Keep it on your night table. Read it, and then read it again.

Pages: **256** Price: **\$14.95** ISBN: **0-7879-6970-2**

Reviewed by Cynthia Miller Coffel, University of Iowa

Larner, Marjorie (2004) *Pathways: Charting a Course for Professional Learning*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Larner’s book is powerful read that takes you through the school

reform and systemic change process. Starting with the effective use of literacy coaches, the author creates a pathway for school improvement by illustrating the steps necessary to achieve high performance.

This book is full of practical ideas, tips, and suggestions on how to foster great teaching and learning. The author capitalizes on her practical experience to validate her conclusions. Hats off to her for taking a much written about subject, and making it interesting and inspirational.

A book that conveys more than facts and techniques, you simply feel the passion and conviction of the author. It gives us hope for the future of education.

This book is a must read for anyone interested in quality teaching and schools. It can be a springboard to foster greater performance.

Pages: **165** Price: **\$19.50** ISBN: **0-325-00624-5**

Reviewed by Dr. David Lee, Assistant Professor of Education in the Educational Leadership Department at The University of Southern Mississippi. He has been a teacher, principal, superintendent of schools, and deputy state superintendent for the State of Louisiana.

Lundy, Kathleen Gould (2004) *What Do I Do About the Kid Who...? : 50 Ways to Turn Teaching Into Learning.* Markham, Ontario: **Pembroke Publishers, distributed by **Stenhouse.****

The author approaches the challenge of motivating students in a straightforward, practical manner in this easily digestible book. The sturdy workbook format includes clearly detailed descriptions of activities, inspirational quotations, questions for the teacher to contemplate, and reproducible templates. The ideas presented are a creative mix of familiar favorites as well as original activities designed to engage students and keep them motivated to learn. Lundy uses her background in the arts to emphasize the excitement generated by the use of movement, drama, art, and sound into lesson presentations. She also suggests effective methods for organizing small and large group activities, inspiring shy students, and motivating reluctant readers and writers.

What Do I Do About the Kid Who...? is organized around five strategies: establishing the learning environment, engaging students, exploring curriculum, extending learning, and evaluating and assessing learning. This book would be a very helpful guide for beginning teachers, but the wealth of creative ideas it contains could certainly benefit any teacher who seeks to bring simple, yet, exciting motivators

into the classroom. Most of the techniques discussed in this book are best used in 4-8 language arts and reading instruction, though some could be modified to accommodate other subject areas and grade levels. Lundy gently guides the reader through first day introductions to end of term assessment strategies. This is the kind of friendly resource teachers are sure to keep handy to for simple, fun, and effective teaching strategies to use throughout the year.

Pages: **112** Price: **\$20.00** ISBN: **1-55138-165-6**

Reviewed by Josephine Gonsalves, Assistant Principal of Curriculum, St. Francis High School, Sacramento

McNiff, Jean, Lomax, Pamela & Whitehead, Jack (2003)
***You and Your Action Research Project*. Second edition.**
New York: RoutledgeFalmer.

Novice and experienced action researchers across the professions will find this book helpful. It is a second edition, thus the authors have benefited from the experience of producing their first book. Their goal has been to make people feel more confident in doing action research. They compare learning about the research process to learning steps before one can dance.

Action research was mainly used in teacher education; however the scope of use has broadened to include virtually all professions. It is focused on learning, and personal and social growth, serving as an intervention in personal practice to encourage improvement for oneself and others. It is driven by educational values that need to be explored and defended and focuses on how you can improve on what is being done.

This type of research embodies good professional practice, is problem posing, and intentionally political because it has consequences for someone else. The research is practitioner based and geared toward learning: with both personal and social aim. It focuses on change, with the self as the locus of change asking: What can I do? How do I do it? It is about your action, not the action of others because you are at the center of the research, thus the use of "I" not third person. An outcome of action research is that you change your understanding of your practice, and your understanding of how that happened.

The text is written in a simple, straightforward manner and describes the evolution of and debates about action research. Among the pertinent topics included; criteria for selecting and judging projects, common pitfalls, and how to share the research findings. The book also provides numerous checklists, tips, and suggested tasks.

You and Your Action Research Project is definitive in its description of

the process and thorough in helping the reader know how to begin, follow-through, and evaluate a project. It can serve as outstanding tool for anyone choosing to conduct action research.

Pages: **216** Price: **\$129.95(Hardcover) \$32.95(Paper)** ISBN: **0415318874(Hardcover) 0-415-31885-8(Paper)**

Reviewed by: Dr. Kathleen E. Fite, Texas State University

Melton, Reginald F. (2002) *Planning and Developing Open and Distance Learning: A Quality Assurance Approach*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Melton, the resident expert on open and distance learning (ODL) at the renowned Open University in London, provides a how-to for those venturing into ODL or help for those already involved. The author states, "The whole book is ... about the building of quality assurance into the development process" (p. 2). To this end, the first half of the book addresses design, while the second half focuses on procedures that will enable the fulfillment of the determined ODL specifications. The author stipulates that these principles can be applied to non-ODL learning environments, especially for the development of teaching materials and student support systems.

The book is divided into four parts: "Aims of open and distance learning," "Characteristics of ODL," "The development of materials and systems," and "Institutional support." It begins with an introduction to ODL and a discussion about the goals of different approaches. This information serves as a foundation from which users will be able to find the best fit for their specific needs. Melton deals with opening access to students, responding to student needs, the design of self- study materials, cost-effectiveness, and the quality of materials and systems used. The section concludes with a listing of typical ODL aims: opening access to education, responding to student needs, the design of self-study materials, student support, cost-effectiveness, and the quality of materials and systems. Melton specifically addresses each of these issues throughout the book.

"Characteristics of ODL," contains a synopsis of possible self- study materials, usages of media, and student support methods. It begins with a description of enrolling in a course, the broad characteristics of courses, and the types of parameters that need to be defined, including materials development. Melton moves on to the design of materials for self-study and includes visual examples of actual ODL courses. Scenarios provide the reader with an awareness of how media can be used in ODL. After discussing both traditional and high technology media, Melton offers a methodology for media selection decisions. A detailed discussion of student support systems closes this section. Melton discusses four types of support: individualized, group- based,

counseling, and center-based and then assists the reader in selecting appropriate student support systems.

Part 3, provides principles for developing materials and focuses heavily on quality assurance. Assuming that the reader has a good grasp on the information from the first two sections, Melton presents a detailed description of the course development process, focusing on both materials and systems. He asserts that typical principles upon which development builds include: translating your vision of what students need into reality, ensuring the quality of the ultimate products, and supporting creative thinking and a meaningful exchange of ideas. As the first stage in the development process Melton suggests developing a framework for the course, materials and systems, and assessment strategies, Next Melton discusses developing course outlines, unit outlines, study guides, study materials and editing and layout. In the chapter entitled "Collecting data for quality assurance and quality control," Melton suggests specific methods for including quality assurance and control in the development process by collecting data during the first stage, subsequent stages, and during the course presentation.

In the last section, "Institutional support," Melton encourages the reader to carefully consider the level of support needed from the institution to see ODL goals fulfilled. He acknowledges the need for varied levels of support in order for ODL to be successful and meet its distributed learning goals. Melton provides justification for the development of an ODL program: main advantages of ODL, key issues, and levels of required institutional support. He continues by presenting a checklist for quality assurance procedures. He predicts that readers will be preparing a proposal for the purpose of developing an ODL program and that principles in this book will prepare them for that task and the actual development of the program.

Melton has provided a practical guide for setting up self-study courses, targeting students, expanding the student base, and ensuring cost-effectiveness while maintaining quality. His examples and case studies enhance the principles of planning and developing ODL courses - thus meeting the goals for the publication. While these principles are transferable to many educational settings, the focus on self-study, much like the historical independent correspondence school model, does not address the collaborative and social process model which permeates current distance learning literature. Though this one important element of distance learning is not addressed, all that is offered is insightful, practical, and beneficial for developing and maintaining ODL systems.

Pages: 223 Price: \$28.95 ISBN: 0-415-254481-7

Reviewed by Cheri A. Toledo, Ed.D., is an assistant professor of Curriculum and Instruction at Illinois State University, Normal, Illinois, USA. She is the Co-Coordinator of the Instructional Technology and Design master's program, teaching both

undergraduate and graduate courses. Dr. Toledo's current research interests involve asynchronous learning networks, online faculty mentoring, and the integration of technology into teacher education curriculum

Ransdell, Sarah E. & Barbier, Marie-Laure, editors (2002) *New Directions for Research in L2 Writing*. Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

This edited volume of research studies with an international scope presents in-service and pre-service teachers of world languages with a look at the issues surrounding writing processes for an increasingly multicultural student population. Included are a series of research studies that present the results of writing process research conducted globally. The book seeks to reveal how native language (L1) processes are influenced by linguistic-cultural factors, while examining ways that second language (L2) students cope with writing. The studies in the volume generally support the fact that there are more similarities than differences when comparing factors leading to good L1 and L2 writing, and that L2 writing can be as strong as L1. Much of the research in this volume presents cognitive advantages to having writing experiences in both L1 and L2.

Central to this volume are several studies that involve the cognitive mechanisms inherent in the transfer of writing abilities across languages. The book presents empirical research that supports the assertion that bilinguals show cognitive advantages over monolinguals, and that it is the processes and skills used during the learning of the second language that supports these cognitive advantages. Processes such as

- using a greater variety of strategies to learn a new language system
- encoding thoughts in two languages which leads to a different view toward language and its properties
- demonstrating the linguistic activities of understanding, writing and reading through note taking

are only a few of the areas of research that are presenting as potentially influencing pedagogy in foreign language acquisition.

While some of the research presented in this volume supports the findings of previous research studies, there are some new findings which provide significant support for a better understanding of L2 writing and how it relates to L1 writing research in the psycholinguistic tradition. One important theme, the importance of situating writing tasks within the context from which the type of task has been selected, rather than a context which may be meaningless to the student, speaks to the significance of paying attention to the social/cultural contexts

where the writing takes place. Several studies focus on the move from speaking to writing, and present findings on the impact of oral interaction with others on the subsequent performance of L2 writing.

A variety of teaching levels, including elementary, secondary and adult education are the contexts for the research in this book, which make the findings relevant to a wide variety of educators. Practicing teachers interested in aligning new instructional techniques based on recent research findings in the field of L2 writing will find this volume of value. The presentation of empirical evidence, including detailed methodology, will be of interest to educational researchers who may want to replicate the studies internationally. The research findings, which help to increase our understanding of L2 writing and its relationship to L1, irrespective of the country and the language, make this volume attractive to university professors working with pre-service and in-service teachers whose major area of study is foreign/second language instruction.

This book is the 11th volume in a series called *Studies in Writing*, which aims to cover theoretical issues, supported by empirical research, that focus on the foundations of writing and learning, as well as the teaching processes in written composition. This volume makes a valuable contribution in extending the scope of research in L2 writing across multiple linguistic regions and a variety of research designs.

Pages: 276 Price: \$117.00 (Hardbound) \$50.00 (Paperback)
ISBN: 1-4020-0538-5 (Hardbound) 1-4020-0539-3 (Paperback)

Reviewed by Marianne Justus, a Ph.D. Candidate in the doctoral program at George Mason University, Fairfax, VA. Research interests include multicultural/multilingual education and the integration of technology, including virtual learning, in foreign language acquisition.

Romano, Tom (2004) *Crafting Authentic Voice*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

According to Romano, a thirty year veteran of teaching writing and language arts methods in schools and universities, “voice is the writer’s presence on the page” (p. 5). It carries the sense that someone (not a committee or a computer, but a single human) has written these words and made them vivid on the page.

The five parts of the book each begin with an antipasto, a brief anecdote about writing from the author’s experience, told in first person. This is followed by anywhere from four to over a dozen short chapters explaining the concept and providing examples of writing from students and from Romano himself. He is addressing an audience of teachers, but also those who are writers and students as well and he

is urging all to encourage the authentic voice of the writer to come through everything that he or she writes. Romano's own voice is conversational, storytelling, and passionate, focusing on meaning, on flowing language, and on honesty in perception. His work is liberally sprinkled with samples from his students, both in high school and college, and also from elementary students in his workshops. In addition, he uses many examples from his own writing, something too rarely seen in works by teachers of writing.

"Voice will come" says Romano, "when you heed passion, push forward with language, are brave on the page, everything else be damned. And voice will also come, later, when you take time to craft the words" (p. 51). He decries an over-emphasis on grammar and punctuation as silencers of voice, yet he still values good English, but not as a first requirement. To illustrate, he presents wonderful examples of children's early attempts at writing, full of misspellings and poor grammar, but also full of the voice of a genuine person excited about something.

Tom Romano has written several books about writing, including one entitled *Writing with Passion*. This one clearly follows that title's dictum and is a joy to read for there is clearly an interesting and challenging person behind these words, an intriguing voice. Anyone involved with teaching writing at any level will find this book useful, thought provoking, and challenging. It especially might be useful for one frustrated or overloaded by the drudgery of correcting themes and compositions to absorb the passion, the excitement, the genuine interest in students that is exhibited on every page. The results shine forth in the examples of student writing and thinking, and in Romano's own words as well. Highly recommended.

Pages: **240** Price: **\$24.00** ISBN: **0-325-00597-4**

Reviewed by Roland Person, emeritus librarian, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale

**Romano, Tom (2004) *Crafting Authentic Voice*.
Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.**

For over 30 years Tom Romano has taught writing to a wide range of students and adults. Currently teaching writing and language arts methods in the Department of Teacher Education at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, Romano shares some of his expertise helping writers find authentic voice.

Although it may seem to be an oxymoron - "creating" authentic voice - what Romano is really doing is suggesting ways to not inhibit the emergence of authentic voice. To this end he shares strategies and techniques that provide writing opportunities for students where they

can experiment with voice. Romano also looks at the components of "voice" and debunks some of the "one size fits all" writing strategies that can often keep a writer from developing his or her authentic voice.

Romano teaches by using a plethora of examples from students and other instructors. Whether he is writing about the qualities of voice, crafting authentic voice, or voice and identity, there will be an illustration or two to hammer home his point.

The major sections of the book are divided into short, pithy chapters which are easy to absorb quickly. Where appropriate, Romano suggests exercises that will loosen up students or help them find their own voice. For example, in "How Voice Is Lost" he suggests, "If you have student writers who are particularly jammed up and self-conscious in their writing, ask them to write rapidly about a time when a particular audience made speaking or writing difficult. Guarantee anonymity so that the thinking has a better chance of honesty. Such writing can lead to helpful classroom discussion or dialog with individual students" (p. 55).

A few of the more recent attempts at structuring writing for younger writers come under attack in *Crafting Authentic Voice*. Not a big fan of the five paragraph essay, so popular in secondary schools, Romano believes that this format and "the formal, sterile, abstract notion of academic writing that goes with it can be a killer and lead writers to all kinds of bad habits" (p. 60). He continues that the five paragraph essay has no currency beyond the classroom. "In fact," Professor Romano writes, "with many of my colleagues across the nation in English and education departments, it has no currency in the classroom either. It is not uncommon for teachers of first-year composition to talk about the bad habits that students must unlearn, bad habits derived from the superstructured pseudo-essays they wrote in high school" (p. 62).

Romano also disagrees with such commonly accepted taboos as never using first person in a formal essay and he does not believe that humor, dialog, and narrative must be avoided at all costs. These rules can also be inhibitors of authentic voice.

Although Romano's views may rankle a few readers, he cannot be summarily dismissed as some type of "structure anarchist". He makes valid points about fostering voice and many of his suggestions will make students comfortable expressing themselves. Anything that will help engage the struggling writer or the student who lacks confidence in his or her writing is certainly worth considering.

Pages: **240** Price: **\$24.00** ISBN: **0-325-00597-4**

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

Sipe, Rebecca Bowers (2003) *They Still Can't Spell? Understanding and Supporting Challenged Spellers in Middle and High School*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

They Still Can't Spell? is a compassionate and comprehensive review of the needs of challenged spellers. It combines what research and the practice of author Rebecca Bowers Sipe and her middle and high school teacher collaborators can offer to readers. Sipe and her colleagues, Dawn, Jennifer, Karen, and Tracy, in the Eastern Michigan Writing Project (an affiliate of the National Writing Project), offer views of individuals who continue to struggle with spelling even though they are in middle school and high school. The effects on self-esteem and even on sense of ability are profound. One teacher, quoted in the book, notes that "The thing about spelling is that it's just so trivial" (p. 2). Sipe's son, a chronically challenged speller and a successful university student, replied, "Yeah, Mom...but it's only trivial to people who know how to do it..." (p. 2).

They Still Can't Spell? is divided into five sections. In the first section, Sipe reviews the research on spelling development and the link between spelling development, language development and word awareness. She classifies spelling errors into five categories:

- homophone/wrong words
- structural and pronunciation concerns
- incorrect splitting or joining of words
- faulty grammatical knowledge
- prefix/suffix errors

She uses these categories for error analyses and also does personal interviews taking the form of spelling histories. From this Sipe identifies profiles of four categories of challenged spellers: full literacy life, literacy at arm's length, literacy resistant, and literacy avoidance. The text offers sample writing from students of each type as well as descriptions of the students' prior writing and spelling experiences. These are often painful to read, because as teachers we see ourselves well described and, perhaps for the first time, the clear view is of persons engaging in nonproductive repetitive behavior that damages learners. Sipe offers templates for the error analysis and spelling histories of readers. Purposeful use of these templates would serve teachers better than weekly spelling lists; spelling should be seen as *part of* writing, not an end of its own.

Sipe's intention is not to indict teachers, however. In section two, she describes effective classroom strategies, complete with descriptions of dialog and instruction from the middle and high school classrooms of the Writing Project colleagues. Students at the middle and high school level are well suited to keeping track of their own spelling errors, learning to analyze them, and developing techniques that may help them avoid repetition of their own typical errors. Sipe recommends that

students be required to analyze their own writing, develop personal spelling dictionaries (unlike standard dictionaries because the definitions are not the focus and are not included), and use reflection logs. Students become aware of their own uncertainties, as expressed in this example of a challenged speller with whose teacher I have consulted: "How do you spell Mrs. Soupe River?" He gave this message to this teacher, knowing that he had not spelled the word correctly and using all of the word awareness tools in his repertoire to get as far as he could independently. Knowing there is an error or a question about the spelling of a word is half of the battle. Extensions of other pedagogical techniques, such as literature circles (Daniels, 1994), reading workshop methods (Beers, 2003) and word wall (Cunningham, 1994) designs especially useful for spelling are described. Sipe even identifies the few spelling rules worth learning in English.

In the third section, Sipe suggests how spelling can be a part of a secondary classroom with some specific instruction in spelling (principally taking the form of minilessons) and plenty of experience using spelling in the service of writing. Strategies from have-a-go, in which a person writes down all possible spellings of word and then chooses from the list, to mnemonics are listed and examples are given.

In section four, Sipe helps readers see the need for some coordinated efforts and perhaps even some spelling policies across classrooms or even schools within a district. In the fifth section, Sipe describes assessment efforts for evaluating spelling progress. These include noting no more than several spelling errors in one assignment and the pitfalls of using standardized multiple choice spelling formats for spelling assessment. These final sections caution teachers against attempting too much too rapidly. Sipe asserts that deeper and more specific instruction on fewer rules will have better, more permanent results for challenged adolescent spellers. The appendices are quite useful, indicating words that are of high enough frequency in reading or writing to be worth learning.

The most compelling aspect of the book is the compassionate view of challenged spellers as persons for whom spelling has become an albatross, lowering their grades on assignments, making them feel incompetent for academic tasks, and becoming the lightning rod for their academic weaknesses. Sipe is the Codirector of the Eastern Michigan Writing Project, a former secondary teacher, and a parent of a challenged speller. The personal views she captures, interspersed with reporting research findings and integrating background sources, make this book a must-read, particularly for teachers who teach low track or low performing students. Advice on handling the spelling challenges is good advice for handling the sensitive issue of poor academic performance of any kind.

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Daniels, Harvey. (1994). *Literature Circles: Voice and Choice in the Student-Centered Classroom*. York, ME: Stenhouse.

Pages: **175** Price: **\$21.00** ISBN: **0-325-00539-7**

Reviewed by Meg Carroll, Professor of education at Saint Xavier University in Chicago. She teaches classes in middle and secondary school methods as well as courses in special education and curriculum. Her research interests center on classroom implementation of research- based information, especially for students who struggle.

Torrington, Derek, Earnshaw, Jill, Marchington, Lorrie & Ritchie, Eve M. D. (2003) *Tackling Under-performance in Teachers*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.

This book reports the results of a research project designed to evaluate capability procedures introduced officially in Britain in 1997 to deal with poor teacher performance. The author's research shows that 1) the teaching job is emotionally as well as intellectually demanding and much of the current pressure on teachers leads to negative emotions; and 2) "the current initiative devised to remedy under-performance [of teachers] is not generally succeeding" (p. 13).

Chapter 2 explains how capability issues in the schools are now being handled; Chapter 3 deals with the issue of ill health and capability procedures; Chapter 4 describes the key roles played by head teachers and the allegedly incompetent, but also others; Chapters 5-8 consider the points of view of law and management, outside schools and not derived from this research; Chapters 9-10 present case studies "where teachers have been challenged on their capability," showing both good and bad practices.

Throughout the book there are end-of-chapter references and there is an index.

The topic of poor teacher performance and the means to deal with it surely has appeal to all educators, but this work is so specifically British in application and context that it will have little appeal for American educators. There are some acronyms not explained, the legal basis for the capability procedures is British, and the examples from the British school systems generally are peculiar to that system. Except for the most inclusive collections, American libraries may pass on this report.

Pages: **157** Price: **\$29.95** ISBN: **0-415-30428-8**

Reviewed by Roland Person, emeritus librarian, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale

Watson, George (2003) *190 Ready-to-Use Activities That Make Science Fun!* San Francisco, CA: Jossey- Bass.

This book consists of 273 pages being divided into nine sections focusing on science disciplines and concepts. Each section has many activities, which can introduce, extend, or reinforce a lesson and enhance higher level thinking. They are not concept developing activities; the types of items include: word searches, puzzles, complete the sentence or fill in the blanks.

1. "Laying the Groundwork for Earth Science" consists of twenty-eight puzzles and activities.
2. "Essential Strategies for the Scientific Method," consists of twelve puzzles and activities.
3. "Revolving and Rotating with the Solar System," has thirteen activities.
4. "Universe Concepts, Puzzles, and Ideas to Stimulate and Enrich," has twelve activities.
5. "Chemistry: Fundamental Skill Builders," has ten activities
6. "Physical Science Concepts for the Modern Classroom," has thirty activities.
7. "Hooked on Life Science Techniques, Ideas, and Concepts," has thirty-two activities.
8. "Water and Erosion Facts and Insights," has twelve activities.
9. "Understanding the Processes and Cycles of Weather and Climate" has twenty-one activities.

There is an answer key section at the end of the book.

This is not a stand-alone text and there are no standard activities demonstrating an instructional or learning strategy, which a teacher can depend upon to reinforce all concepts. The book does not connect to any bank of information that puts these activities in context. It also does not provide any information about the utility or pedagogical base of the suggested activities. The sections are not arranged in any predictable fashion, nor is there any consistency of type and coverage. The sections contains different strategies and in no certain order or amount.

This might be a good extra book for a beginning teacher to have for use with the upper and middle grades. If used with care, this is a helpful book, which could energize a lesson before or after it was taught.

Pages: **273** Price: **\$29.95** ISBN: **0-7879-6601-0**

Reviewed by Dr. Shirley Key, Associate Professor of Science Education, at the University of Memphis, in Memphis, Tennessee.

Wellington, Jerry (2003) *Getting Published: A Guide for Lecturers and Researchers*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Jerry Wellington is a Professor in the School of Education, University of Sheffield, UK and, obviously, a writer himself. *Getting Published: A guide for lecturers and researchers* uses a case study approach, looking at lecturers and researchers attempting to get published, and the editors and publishers they face. Empirical evidence is interspersed with advice for aspiring writers and anecdotes from his personal experience of getting published.

Wellington addresses several questions surrounding the writing and publishing process. The general purpose of the book is to cut through the mystique behind writing an article or book, submitting it to a journal or publisher, and seeing it published or not.

From the start of the book, it is clear that Wellington writes to a British higher education audience, as he often mentions the RAE (Research Assessment Exercise), which clearly includes publishing requirements for lecturers and researchers. As a US reader, once I realized that the mention of RAE did not apply to me, I found that I could skim over those sentences without losing the flow of the book as a whole. The book is also clearly written for social sciences and education audiences; I think the similarities among these academic areas around the world means that the results of Wellington's study and his advice for aspiring writers can easily be applied in the US context, and perhaps other international arenas.

The book begins with a general overview to why people write for publication, why people do not publish (which is perhaps more interesting, although I found shades of myself in both lists), how lecturers and researchers can find writing topics, and how the writing process varies from person to person. Wellington introduces his case study approach and includes appropriate literature around these larger questions. Twelve lecturers at various stages of their careers respond to a series of questions regarding their thoughts on the above topics. The results are interspersed with advice distilled from case study responses and also based on Wellington's own experience. Wellington addresses the mystery of peer review, explains the editors' perceived roles and details editors' views on the peer review process.

For those seeking guidance for how to get published, the core of the book is chapters four and five. In these chapters Wellington discusses publishing in journals and book publishing, both from the writer's and editor's/publisher's perspectives. This is a great technique as beginning writers (and, sometimes, well-established ones) often have difficulties

identifying issues that are important to editors and publishers. First, Wellington provides thoughts of the 12 case study respondents, then he details results of interviews with editors and publishers who provide their views on the same issues. This section also includes information on developing ideas for books, book proposal ingredients, and sound advice regarding contract development.

The book moves on to more detail on different methods of writing. It includes a style guide of sorts, with writing tips interspersed effectively with quotes from authors and researchers. Although Wellington provides resources to tools of the trade and sources of guidance around the writing process, the style guide is also clearly written to a UK audience. I caution US readers inexperienced in writing for publication to follow the style guide specified by the journal they intend to approach. Check journal websites and previous editions for style and publishing guidelines before submitting articles for review.

Chapter seven addresses the future of publishing and questions regarding eJournals, a possible move away from peer review, and self-publishing on the World Wide Web. As Wellington says at the beginning of chapter seven, “[He] would not dare to predict the future of book and journal publishing” (p. 118) but simply puts forth some possibilities.

The organization of the book chapters is solid. Each chapter begins with an abstract and a quote about writing that clearly shows the contents of the chapter. *Getting Published* reads as 1) an example of case study research, 2) a guide to writing, and 3) a guide to getting published. One fault in the book is that if a reader is only interested in one of those three overall topics, there is no clear way to scan through and read the chapters or sections that are appropriate. For those reading the book as an example of the case study approach to research, Wellington includes questions asked to the writers and editors/publishers in two appendices. There is also a comprehensive reference list and an efficient index of terms.

A very valuable aspect of *Getting Published* is the practical advice for writers that is interspersed throughout. Wellington includes important tips regarding choosing a journal, including being aware of the suitability of the journal for your topic. He also explains referees' comments, including examples of them. For beginners it is quite good to know what might come, as well as common criticisms referees and editors have regarding article submissions. Wellington's advice allows the reader to create a checklist to run an article through before submitting it. Unfortunately, this advice is not well-organized and the reader must read through the whole book (even chapters unrelated to the “how” of getting published) in order to collate this advice. Including the advice sections as boxes, bulleted lists, or in the conclusion section of each chapter would be more effective and beneficial to the reader.

Overall, *Getting Published: A guide for lecturers and researchers* is a good introduction to writing and the art of getting published. Wellington's book seems most suited to those just entering an academic field and provides readers a head start towards understanding the mystique behind the process of getting published.

Pages: 136 Price: \$25.95 ISBN: 0415298474

Reviewed by Amy Garrett Dikkers, University of Minnesota

Willey, Liane Holliday, editor (2003) *Asperger Syndrome in Adolescence: Living With the Ups, the Downs and Things in Between*. London: Jessica Kingsley.

The title of this book alone will insure considerable interest. As several of the contributors note, there has been little written about the specific challenges faced by adolescents diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome. One of the few books currently available is *Asperger Syndrome and Adolescence: Helping Preteens and Teens Get Ready for the Real World* by Teresa Bolick, a title that will be mentioned later in this review. Another title worthy of note is *Asperger Syndrome and Adolescence: Practical Solutions for School Success* by Brenda Smith Myles and Diane Adreon, a work which as the title indicates focuses on providing teachers with suitable interventions.

Perhaps one reason that there are so few books available is that Asperger Syndrome was only added to the DSM IV in 1994. It is defined as a condition characterized by marked deficiencies in social skills, difficulty with transitions or changes, and a preference for sameness. It is sometimes likened to high functioning autism. Many of the authors represented in the Willey book will be familiar to readers who have previously sought information about Asperger Syndrome. Liane Willey, Tony Atwood, Steven E. Gutstein, Rebecca Moyes, and Mike Stanton are among the contributors who have previously written about the topic. Another familiar name will be Luke Jackson, who wrote both the introduction to this book as well as *Freaks, Geeks & Asperger Syndrome*, a book of advice for other adolescents who have Asperger characteristics. His mother, Jacqui Jackson, is included as the author of "Families and Parenting: The Domino Effect," her memorable personal account of her experiences in rearing seven children, four of whom fall within the autism spectrum range and five of whom are now adolescents.

The authors of the thirteen chapters in this book represent a variety of points of view and include psychologists, therapists, and parents. One chapter, "Safety Issues for Adolescents with Asperger Syndrome," was authored by a parent who is also a licensed private investigator and who has been a leader in training law enforcement officials to be aware of the issues involving autism recognition and response. Some of the

chapters by professionals are fairly technical. The first chapter by Richard Howlin, a clinical psychologist, gives an overview of Asperger Syndrome and focuses on the adolescent years. Tony Atwood, another clinical psychologist, writes about cognitive behavior therapy. One chapter that presents considerable new information is "The Sexuality of Adolescents with Asperger Syndrome," which was written by Isabelle Henault, a sex therapist. Although all of these chapters use some technical vocabulary and refer to research, they can be read and appreciated by the nonprofessional. Several of the other chapters recount the experiences of parents and how they have dealt with issues related to adolescence. All chapters include practical advice, in many cases formatted as bulleted lists.

This variety of viewpoints makes the book of interest to numerous audiences, ranging from persons who know nothing about the condition to professionals. I confess that as an academic librarian I might have overlooked this title since the approval program used by my library lists it as "popular" and since the publisher is not based in the United States. Although "popular" is a legitimate designation for the book given its readability and the fact that it will certainly appeal to parents, it will also be of considerable interest to professionals, including the teacher educators my library supports. Although the publisher is based in the UK, there is not a UK focus, and several of the contributors are from the United States. A quick search indicates that relatively few academic libraries own the titles by Teresa Bolick and Brenda Smith Miles that were mentioned in the first paragraph, and this is a regrettable omission. Academic librarians may need to seek out such titles since they are not always represented by large publishers or marketed to an academic audience. Although the suggested interventions may not yet be supported by extensive research, many teachers rightfully feel that they need to know any recent developments.

Since it has only been in the past few years that Asperger Syndrome has been generally recognized, teachers who did not receive their training very recently should find this book particularly informative. The number of students diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome is growing, and interest in the condition will undoubtedly increase. This book should be purchased for professional collections and by academic libraries that support programs related to autism spectrum disorders.

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Pages: **336** Price: **£13.95 \$19.95** ISBN: **1-84310-742-2**

Reviewed by Sharon Naylor, Illinois State University



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