education review

Allen, Barbara & Johnson-Wilder, Sue, Editors (2004)
Mathematics Education: Exploring the Culture of Learning.
London: RoutledgeFalmer.

In their introduction, Editors Allen and Johnson-Wilder state that the purpose of *Mathematics Education: Exploring the Culture of Learning* is to "bring together readings which explore the culture of learning in a mathematics classroom" (p. 1). The editors have selected thirteen previously published articles considered relevant to the themes of 1) Culture of the mathematics classroom - including equity and social justice, 2) Communication in mathematics classrooms, and 3) Pupils' and teachers' perceptions. In support of the readings, the volume contains numerous figures and tables.

The book, as Allen and Johnson-Wilder have affirmed, is suitable for postgraduate students in the field of mathematics education as well as professional mathematics educators, mentors and advisors. The initial purpose of this book, however, was for students in ME 825, Researching Mathematics Learning at the United Kingdom's Open University where the editors are actively engaged in the field of mathematics education.

The organization of the book is exceptional and provides the reader with the opportunity to preview each of the three sections by means of an overview written by the editors. Additionally, each article has an abstract or overview as well as summarizing statements.

The editors are accurate in their belief that the articles are of interest to those in the field of mathematics education! The author of each article presents information worthy of note frequently offering thought provoking information such as Paul Ernest's statement that some learners view mathematics as "cold, absolute, and inhuman" (p. 16), therefore producing negative feelings about the subject. Ernest encourages the educator to embrace a humanistic view of mathematics and to break down stereotypes and negativism towards this academic area.

Of interest to all mathematics educators is Celia Hoyles article, "Steering between skills and creativity: a role for the computer?" (Chapter 10, pp 159-172) which speaks to the Third International Mathematics and Science Survey (TIMSS) in which England's students appear to be performing relatively poorly in comparison to others not unlike students in the United States. A common goal of educators, urges Hoyles, should be to balance skills acquisition with creative and competent mathematical thinking and problem solving. Hoyles

suggests that computers may bridge the achievement gap and presents several examples of this link.

In the book's conclusion, co-editor Barbara Allen, states that numerous changes have been made to the math curriculum in the United Kingdom with respect to assessment and accountability. In addition, she indicates too few changes have taken into consideration the needs and interests of the students in the classroom. Allen, in linking the first article with the last, encourages mathematics educators to listen to pupils and to work with them to support their learning as well as to improve the environments in which they learn (p. 240).

This reviewer found the articles to be appropriate for discussion with both students and professionals in the field of mathematics. The articles selected for inclusion in the text present illustrations of the sociology of the learner, pedagogical theory, and instructional practice. The reader, however, must be acutely aware that even though the publication dates of the majority of the articles are current; the greater part of the references may be considered outdated with various publications in the 1960s and 1970s. Examples of this are found in the first article (p 31) where the author states, "more recently" and cites the 1984 date and on page 32 where "recent research" is referenced from the years 1982, 1984, and 1990. Editor Allen equally refers to research from the 1980s as relevant today (p. 173).

In reviewing the book, questions come to mind as to whether or not research in mathematics education came to a stand-still 20 or 30 years ago and whether or not current research is available. As a result, the reader could be challenged to initiate a quest for contemporary investigations and compare and contrast philosophies, teaching styles, or learning levels by decade. The reader could also be encouraged to initiate research appropriate for the 21st century. These options, however, were not addressed in the text.

All in all, *Mathematics Education: Exploring the Culture of Learning*, contains comprehensive and articulate coverage of the field and is thoughtfully organized. It does not succeed, however, in presenting the contemporary areas of research and scholarship in the field of mathematics education.

Pages: **245**   Price: **$129.95(hardcover) $39.95(paper)**   ISBN: **0415326990(hardcover) 0-415-32700-8(paper)**

Reviewed by Ann S. Hernandez, Ed.D. Dr. Hernandez is an Associate Professor of Education at the University of Saint Francis in Fort Wayne, Indiana. She has an extensive background in teaching and administration. Her academic areas of interest are mathematics education and service learning

Barton, Bob & Booth, David (2004) *Poetry Goes to School: From Mother Goose to Shel Silverstein.* Markham, Ontario: Pembroke Publishers, distributed by Stenhouse.

This book does not attempt to answer the unanswerable question: What is poetry? Why? Because poetry is everywhere, in everything. All we have to do is look, listen and respond to the world that we inhabit. Barton and Booth tell us exactly how to do that in their book, *Poetry Goes to School.* It is rich with ideas for introducing poetry to young children. In their introduction, Barton and Booth carefully explain how to bring words to life through read alouds, dramatization, dialogue and writing. Bulleting each idea, they explain exactly how poem makers can be supported through classroom environment, word play, visual exploration and interdisciplinary connections. In addition to providing classroom support for poetry writing, the authors also "want to help children see poets as working artists, part of our language and literacy community" (p. 13).

Barton and Booth also stress the important role that electronic resources can play in the life of a young poet, particularly using a computer to manipulate words and lines of a poem as children work in teams. The conversation that ensues contributes to the overall structure and helps students focus on meaning as well. Not all of the listed websites, however, are active and not all are related specifically to poetry.

Poetry Goes to School is divided into eight chapters. Chapter one, "The Patterns in Poems" suggests that predictable patterns "provide a useful entry point in bringing poetry and children together"(p. 17). It explores a variety of patterns that include rhyme, rhythm, and free verse, using the alphabet, counting, calendars, seasons, lists, acrostics, Haiku and limericks to demonstrate their use.

The chapter on wordplay encourages students to experiment with language and listen for sounds that are economical yet powerful. Tongue twisters, riddles, and playground songs all contribute to awareness. The authors also offer demonstrations of how to create a riddle by asking a question about a common household object and having students answer. Their answers form the foundation for the riddle. Demonstrations model the use of every day events to create riddles and rhymes and highlight the importance of listening for words that sound like a their meaning (onomatopoeia).

Subsequent chapters focus on the Mother Goose heritage of nursery rhymes and how they can be adapted for further patterning of words, and imagery; turning poems into pictures. A particularly intriguing idea is that of having students create their own anthologies of poetry. One example suggests collecting old rhymes about women. The authors advocate using the anthology to foster discussion of women's roles in

society from an historical perspective. Later chapters focus on voice, performance, poetic documentary and metaphor. Brief biographies are featured at the end of each chapter and include such noted authors as: Jack Prelutsky, Diane Dawber, Dennis Lee, James Berry, Michael Rosen, Nammi Shihaab Nye, Joseph Bruchac and Arnold Adoff. Lists of books of poetry are included as well as a bibliography of professional reading.

Although this book does not answer the question "What is poetry," it does direct the reader to many places one can look to find poems and offers suggestions for integrating poetry across the curriculum. This slender volume would be a useful classroom resource particularly for the beginning preK-12 teacher

Pages: **112**   Price: **$18.00**   ISBN: **1-22138-161-3**

Reviewed by Adelaide Phelps, MLIS, Director of the Educational Resources Lab at Oakland University.

Brophy, Jere (2004) *Motivating Students to Learn.* Second edition. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

I am writing this review on the first day of school in my community for everyone -- preschool students through graduate students. Although there are bound to be some jaded folks (students and faculty alike) who dread the first day of school, most of us from the newest to the most experienced look forward to the new year with at least a modicum of anticipation and positive motivation.

In the second edition of his book, *Motivating Students to Learn* , Jere Brophy addresses many topics that educators have considered probably since before Socrates and other topics that educators may never have considered. Many of his ideas are research based and described in such a way that educators may be able to formulate more succinctly their own unique philosophies of and principles for motivating students. Brophy begins the discussion by defining student motivation. Students are motivated when they believe that they are able to succeed at a given task and when they understand and value the outcome of the task. Teachers, therefore, need to emphasize the reasons for their lessons and to convince students that they can be successful. Students who do not value the activity and/or do not believe that they will be successful, may be expected to adopt a variety of maladaptive strategies in the classroom.

Brophy encourages teachers to establish learning communities in their classrooms by making students feel comfortable, cared about, and empowered. Learning should be emphasized but within a supportive climate. In order for optimal learning to occur, students must feel safe and secure whether asking for clarification, venturing opinions, or

seeking assistance. Brophy also urges educators to make their classrooms physically attractive to the extent possible. As someone who teaches in windowless and concrete classrooms, I wholeheartedly appreciate this perspective but wonder about its feasibility.

Brophy's positive approach to learning and motivation comes through in every chapter. His overarching principle in the book is that all students can be motivated to be successful in all subjects using a variety of techniques. He addresses the need to focus on achieving success rather than avoiding failure. When students are successful, that success should be attributed to their ability and effort. Any failures should be attributed to a lack of relevant information and/or effort but not to a lack of ability. Again, he ties this back to the idea that students must believe that they can be successful.

What kind of feedback motivates students? Brophy encourages teachers to provide informative feedback. It is less helpful to tell students simply how well or poorly they did. Instead, students should be told what they did particularly well as well as what they need to do to improve. Strengths as well as weaknesses should be discussed. It is also helpful to stress the connection between effort and outcome. All of us like to hear that our efforts are appreciated as well as useful in achieving our goals.

In addition to general guidelines for motivating students there are also some gems in the book that readers will want to copy and perhaps share with colleagues. For example, there is a list of strategies for test administration on page 81 (i.e., let students know about tests well in advance, avoid time pressures, avoid behavior during testing that may appear threatening) that I plan to copy and leave in our faculty lounge.

Brophy devotes three chapters to addressing the extrinsic versus intrinsic rewards debate of education. He offers suggestions about making the curriculum more intrinsically rewarding to students by focusing on student autonomy and competence, emphasizing relevance of subjects, and providing opportunities for project-based learning. On the other hand, he notes that extrinsic incentives can be effective at times although he cautions educators not to become too dependent on such rewards as they may undermine learning in the long run. Brophy notes that fostering students' motivation to learn may be more realistic than finding ways to make every subject intrinsically motivating. He defines motivation to learn as "a student's tendency to find academic activities meaningful and worthwhile and to try to get the intended learning benefits from them" (p. 249).

An additional useful wealth of information is chapters dealing with motivating discouraged, uninterested, and alienated students to learn. These chapters may be unusually helpful for discouraged teachers struggling with such students on a daily basis.

Overall, the book is recommended for teachers at all levels of

experience and at all levels of the educational ladder.

Pages: **418**   Price: **$45.00**   ISBN: **0-8058-4772-3**

Reviewed by Paula S. Wise, Professor, Department of Psychology, Western Illinois University

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Daniels, Harvey & Zemelman, Steven (2004) *Subjects Matter: Every Teacher's Guide to Content-Area Reading.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Harvey Daniels and Steven Zemelman readily state, "Our job is not so much to generate brand-new ideas as it is to spread rare but promising practices to a wider audience" (p. ix). Indeed, from the absolute dearth of adolescent literacy titles some ten years ago, there are so many publications in recent years that the average, or even above-average, teacher cannot possibly read all of them. These authors not only seem to have read all of them, but are presenting the best of the best for our benefit.

Daniels and Zemelman explain that teens shouldn't be "getting ready" to be life-long learners, but should be acting that life right now (p. 2). They show how teachers at Best Practice High School in Chicago employ a variety of nonfiction across academic lines. Faculty there teach specific "thinking strategies" to assist kids unpacking nonfiction of all kinds (p. 3). These strategies and specific tools to use them are not all that astounding, but reminders of what works well.

The authors assert that "making reading a more meaningful, more effective and long-lasting learning experience is something that we teachers can start tackling today, in our very own classrooms" (p. 13). WHAT is read seems of primary concern. Teachers are cautioned that making choices about what we ask our students to read is critical. The authors give lists of specific books, magazines, journals and websites that entice learners to reach beyond the absolutely minimum in reading. They go to some length to show how "Reading for Real" (a chapter heading) matters to today's adolescents.

Each chapter highlights specific subject areas and makes very specific suggestions for reading selections and activities to energize the act of reading. Innovative ideas for looking beyond textbooks are succinctly presented, but the book also presents methods for a profitable use of any text.

We are reminded of what good readers do as they read: visualize, connect, question, infer, evaluate, analyze, recall and self-monitor (p. 24). Multiple strategies show readers how to encourage kids to use these skills and make the connections essential for understanding and learning.

The authors recommend classroom libraries in all subject areas. Books lined up on shelves in English/Language Arts classrooms alone do not get the message out that reading is not only useful, but can also be enjoyable. Lists of high-interest titles and authors, as well as ways to build classroom libraries are very helpful.

"Notes" at the end of each chapter present sources for the teacher who would like to delve further into any of the tools and strategies presented. Chapter Five's (in fact every chapter includes hands-on reading energizers) extensive discussion/presentation of activities to use tomorrow satisfies those of us with immediate gratification needs.

I personally intend to weedle my administrators into buying multiple copies of this book for members of our new group of teachers who address the needs of the "average" and below students at our high school. Not that this is the point of the book; it is not a sourcebook for remedial instruction. It is a book that offers specific and concrete ways of energizing learning in all of the subject areas.

Pages: **288**   Price: **$25.00**   ISBN: **0-325-00595-8**

Reviewed by Charlene Roberts Koenig, English Department Chair, Teacher of college prep and reluctant juniors, Shasta High School, Redding, CA

England, Crystal M. (2004) *Uphill Both Ways: Helping Students Who Struggle in School.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

England is an educator who has worked as both a teacher and an administrator, with students who have been labeled "at risk". She argues that such labels create sets of expectations that may have no basis in reality but nonetheless affect how these students are treated by their schools, families, and society.

England addresses the real life reasons behind students' lack of academic success. High risk home conditions, the emphasis on test scores to determine school effectiveness, and the physical and material inadequacies of many schools all contribute to this lack of success. England effectively uses short biographical sketches of students to illustrate the many factors that result in students' behavior.

England identifies strategies for creating a safe learning climate in the classroom. She believes "Creating a positive classroom climate is the most important role that any teacher has" (p. 21). She initially identifies three aspects or "C's" of climate; Communication, Courage, and Curriculum; briefly exploring each using anecdotes and practical advice.

England devotes a whole chapter to classroom management which she identifies as the fourth "C" of climate. She encourages teachers to perceive the classroom as a fluid environment where the needs of students may change daily but an overall structure is necessary. Among the elements she discusses: classroom practices which should be strengthened through relevant reinforcement, character education, and learning.

England focuses on teaching students about purpose and organization. Strategies such as staging allow the students to take smaller steps towards larger goals. Short teaching strategies for organizational skills are also included. England discusses how "alphabet kids", those who have been labeled gifted and talented, special education, ADHD, face an unwelcoming, unchallenging, and inflexible school environment. The challenge is to create an environment where their differences are celebrated rather than denigrated.

England identifies four main categories of required changes. These are "practical, academic, social, and multisystemic" (p. 87). England notes that schools tend to focus on students' just-in-time needs because of funding inadequacies. Therefore a holistic approach towards dealing with students' external needs is unlikely. She argues that student engagement is crucial and that "authentic" learning is crucial for engagement of at risk students. She identifies constructivist classrooms, Thinking CAPs, and Positive Peer Group (PPG) training programs as potential solutions to meeting this need for "authentic" learning.

Uphill Both Ways is an excellent introduction to the concerns of an experienced advocate for at risk students. England set out to be "both pragmatic and thought provoking" with this work and she succeeded. However, at a slim 118 pages each section can only provide a superficial treatment of her concerns. A longer work would have allowed for more exploration of the teaching tools and strategies. The book would have been a more effective tool if she had included more information about the wealth of resources and programs mentioned throughout in a lengthier bibliography. *Uphill Both Ways* is a brief but effective general introduction to the issues involved in teaching "alphabet kids". Recommended for general audiences and new teachers of at risk students.

Pages: **118**   Price: **$14.00**   ISBN: **0325005559**

Reviewed by Laura Koltutsky, University of Houston

Fay, Kathleen & Whaley, Suzanne (2004) *Becoming One Community: Reading & Writing with English Language Learners.* **Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.**

Becoming One Community is based on the experiences of two language

arts specialists teaching third to fifth graders at Bailey's Elementary School for the Arts and Science in Fairfax County, Virginia. The goal of the book is to "share effective techniques for teaching English language learners" (p.12). This is an important goal. "In the last decade the number of English Language Learners has more than doubled. In 1989-1990, 2.1 million students in grades K-12 were identified as limited English proficient; the number of LEP students for the academic year 1999-2000 was 4.4 million. This represents a 105% rise during a period in which the overall increase in students was only 24.2 percent" (Freeman & Freeman, 2003, p. 34).

The assessment of ELL/LEP students is included in the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) that mandates all students must pass educational assessment standards by the year 2014. Experts believe that ELL students pose a serious challenge to this mandate. "State tests show that ELL students' school performance is far below that of other students, oftentimes 20 to 30 percentage points, and usually shows little improvement across many years" (Abedi, 2004).

Bailey's is an extreme example of the problem facing schools nationwide. The school has an unusually high number of low-income ELL learners. Bailey's qualifies for a school-wide Title 1 designation with approximately 80 % of the school receiving free or reduced lunches. Seventy eight percent of the students speak a language other than English. The largest language group is Spanish, but over twenty languages are represented (p.3).

The main strength of *Becoming One Community* is that it provides memorable anecdotes of ELL students interacting in a safe and respectful learning environment. The section called "Your Name is Important" (p. 24) illustrates the importance of using a child's real name instead of assigning an American name. A secondary strength is that the book provides examples of incorporating learning through non-print sources. The section "Drama in the Classroom" (p. 114) gives concrete examples of how to create a tableau for social studies.

The major weakness of the book is that it does not successfully address the question of how to help ELL students progress from speaking English to reading and writing effectively in English. Jim Cummins (2003) identifies three stages of ELL development: conversation fluency, discrete language skills, and academic language proficiency. In order to learn content from textbooks, ELL students must reach the stage of academic language proficiency for their grade level. The book does not provide strategies that can be shown to be effective in assisting ELL students through this process.

The authors gloss over second language acquisition issues in reading by stating, "Thankfully, English language learners already know from their first language that verbal communication should make sense, and they understand how the structure of their first language works. They draw upon both types of knowledge to help them understand what

makes sense and sounds structurally correct in English" (p. 72). Exactly how this implicit structural knowledge of the child's first language combines with verbal problem solving to assist in learning to read English is not explained.

Although this book is well intentioned and contains many examples of how to make classrooms safe and respectful, I cannot recommend it for teachers wanting to learn how to teach ELL students more effectively.

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Pages: **224**   Price: **$18.50**   ISBN: **1-57110-368-6**

Reviewed by Cynthia Crosser, Social Science and Humanities Reference Librarian/Education and Psychology Bibliographer, University of Maine. In addition to her M.S. in Library Studies from Florida State University, she has an M.A. in Linguistics from the University of Florida with a specialization in language acquisition.

Fisher, Ros; Brooks, Greg & Lewis, Maureen (2002) *Raising Standards in Literacy.* New York: RoutledgeFalmer.

Raising Standards in Literacy is the third book in the series *Language and Literacy in Action.* The editors' goal is to bring different research findings about literacy theory and practice to everyday classroom teachers.

The book is a compilation of chapters that are based on presentations by different well know scholars in the field of literacy research. Research is included from the United Kingdom, United States and Australia, giving an international view of literacy that is thought provoking.

There are three major sections in the book:

1. Research into the teaching of literacy. (six chapters)
2. What counts as evidence? (four chapters)
3. Developing teacher practice. (six chapters)

"Research into the teaching of literacy" contains information on the different roles research can play in teaching literacy and reviews of literacy research. It is important to note that all the chapters in this section except the last are written by scholars practicing in the United Kingdom, therefore the research tends to focus on issues related to the United Kingdom such as the National Literacy Strategy. (In fact several chapters throughout the book focus on the National Literacy Strategy, offering both overview and critical analysis. Readers interested in gaining a better understanding of the Strategy might find this book offers a helpful analysis.) While this section contains information that has a broad appeal, it does not present an extensive focus.

Other topics addressed in the first section include: comprehension development; developing written composition; what effective teachers of literacy know; believe and do; and family involvement in literacy. The family literacy chapter is particularly strong. It begins by listing three basic assumptions about parental involvement in reading: activities practiced with the student should be based on the activities done at school; that the parent reading to the child is the most beneficial practice to the child; and only the parent should be involved in the home literacy of the child, not other members of the family. The authors do a good job in citing examples that rebuke these assumptions. Seven Bangladeshi British families and six monolingual families were observed. The study found that the Bangladeshi students benefited from older sibling involvement. They also tended to have formalized literacy instruction outside of the family or school because they were required to attend Arabic lessons five nights of the week. There are excellent records of the interactions that were recorded, so the reader can see what transpired.

The only U.S focused chapter, written by James V. Hoffman from the University of Texas, offers an historical overview of the words used in basal readers. He finds that both the quantity and position of words in the readers has varied over time. He also discusses the textbook adoption process in California and Texas in depth.

"What counts as evidence" is all about assessment. Anybody who teaches in the United States knows how important assessment is, from elementary school through higher education. This section contains information on different concepts in assessment, from understanding national standards to test validity. In her chapter on reading instruction, Victoria Purcell-Gates argues convincingly that the "simple view" of reading is flawed. Rather than a process consisting of two parts: decoding and comprehension, research shows that the reading process is very complex. To be effective, teachers and researchers must take into account all the complexities of the reading process.

"Trying to count the evidence", by Greg Brooks starts off by stating that North America and Britain have two very different definitions of the term standards. In this chapter, standards are defined as "levels of attainment" (p. 136). The author offers two conclusions: levels of attainment in reading among school pupils appear to have remained very stable, and the proportion of adults with poor literacy skills has also been fairly stable (p. 137). Despite this stability, the author also focuses on intervention practices that have been shown to raise levels of attainment.

"Developing teacher practice" gives a glimpse into the different ways literacy standards are being addressed and raised in the United Kingdom, United States and Australia. Of the six chapters in this section three are devoted to the literacy block or literacy hour, with effective advocates both pro and con. Literacy hour is a key component of the British National Literacy Strategy, the literacy block is part of the curriculum in Australia. The final chapter in the section, "Globalisation, literacy, curriculum practice", argues that these programs are too simplistic because they do not take into account the economical and cultural issues facing some families and schools.

The chapter "Textbooks and model programmes: Reading reform in the United States", discusses the United States' efforts in regard to raising literacy standards. The United States has started to reform reading not at the national level, but at the state level by reviewing their textbooks. Author Elfrieda H. Hiebert finds this problematic because state governments have great influence on sales conscious textbook publishers; especially larger states like California and Texas. According to the author none of the changes are based on research.

The issue of literacy does not exist in a vacuum; it is a very real issue that many countries are struggling with. This book offers a global focus on what in reality is a global issue. The contributing authors bring a wide variety of backgrounds, opinions and research to their respective chapters. The book can be read as a whole or as individual chapters that are of interest. One of the books goals was to bring different research findings about literacy theory and practice to the every day classroom teacher. While the book does this, it is not a practical hands-on guide for integrating literacy theory into a teacher's curriculum.

Pages: **255**   Price: **$38.95**   ISBN: **0415263514**

Reviewed by Vanessa J Earp, Instructor and Education Materials Center Librarian at Texas A&M University - Kingsville. Her interests include vocabulary development and information seeking behavior.

Goodwyn, Andrew (2004) *English Teaching And The Moving Image.* London: RoutledgeFalmer.

I found Andrew Goodwyn's recent book, *English Teaching And The Moving Image,* to be a particularly timely and engaging summer read. I recently finished teaching twenty gifted elementary children digital filmmaking techniques using classic myths and stories. As I read Goodwyn's book, my excitement about the children's success as film crew members on eight different movies was both echoed and affirmed. I found myself nodding in agreement with a number of ideas that were already familiar and scribbling notes about new ideas for my own teaching and research. Goodwyn does an excellent job of bringing theory and practice on media education and English teaching together for experienced and beginning teachers alike. He skillfully weaves a range of practical classroom ideas and guidelines for assessment together with recent research findings on the use of media and technology in a format that will be helpful for teachers who want to make the most of film in English.

Goodwyn provides a sound rationale for putting the moving image into the center of English teaching in the first chapter. He analyzes relevant literature, reviews the philosophy of English and English teachers, reflects on the culture of young people and comments on the converging fields of technology. An initial stumbling block in reading this book, was the use of curriculum excerpts, acronyms and terminology that may be readily familiar to teachers in the UK. These examples may require some interpretation by teachers in other countries to match the chapter references to curricular requirements in local school systems. Goodwyn's discussion is engaging and accessible and makes good use of research to support the argument that film has a valuable role to play in the English classroom.

Goodwyn explores whether the 21st century child is different from previous generations, and concludes that difference centers on notions of identity and notions that children are more culturally resourceful in a multimedia age. He argues for necessary changes to the subject of English and also recognizes that these changes can serve to liberate English teachers and enable them to return to the creative and imaginative paradigms of progressive English teaching. Goodwyn also focuses on the issue of identity formation of young people in the digital age, and brings in their perspectives and those of current teachers to illustrate how exciting and meaningful moving image work can be.

Goodwyn examines the place of visual adaptations in the classroom, some issues to do with the nature of adaptation, and offers a new conceptual position on adaptation. He offers a number of practical classroom ideas that should appeal to teachers. He argues that English teachers should teach the concept of adaptations and move away from the essentially literary approach that renders adaptation as a useful but problematic teaching aid for the 'superior' original text. "In schools, at present, English teachers are faced with a dilemma: teaching either nineteenth-century or twenty-first-century literacy. In the new model, literature will continue to play a crucial part but not the crucial part. For many of our future pupils, the greatest textual experiences will

come from a whole range of media. Books will play their significant part. Pupils' initial contact with many long-lived and well-loved stories will come through an adapted form. Though this is not a problem, it challenges us to continue to make our transition" (p. 27). Goodwyn advocates teachers using their well-established literary and historical knowledge to enhance the developing textual understanding of students through active inquiry into film adaptations and interpretations of classic and contemporary stories. I found myself spending a great deal of time at two websites that Goodwyn identifies as useful: Film Education, http://www.filmeducation.org/, and The British Film Institute, http://www.bfi.org.uk/index.html .

Goodwyn focuses on the use of film in the classroom and students using film language to express their creativity. The author provides useful and relevant technical information on educating about film and cites several comprehensive resources on this topic. Each aspect of film is discussed and then illustrated with an example of classroom application. An appealing classroom idea developed by the author is the extensive, three-way analysis of the opening scenes of Danny, The Champion of the World, a film adaptation of Roald Dahl's novel by Gavin Millar. Goodwyn provides a detailed description of a school project in which students examine the use of text, the use of sound, and the use of shots in the film's opening scenes. This is a very good classroom example with excellent detail on what can be studied and which discussion questions might lead students' inquiry.

In a chapter entitled, "Making The Most Of Television," Goodwyn examines how to incorporate serious study of this ubiquitous but most neglected aspect of the moving image, in the English classroom. Goodwyn advocates taking a critical approach to analyzing content, culture, narrative and camera work using common television formats like the news, soap operas and documentary. Teachers will find many practical examples and key inquiry questions to guide student work and assessment in this chapter.

Goodwyn reviews the place and value of practical moving image work in English and strongly endorses both its importance and its feasibility. This was my favorite part in the whole book given my recent experience with elementary students and filmmaking. He provides a good overview of three major stages of filmmaking, from pre-production to production to post-production, and offers good ideas for translating this work into classroom projects. While a more comprehensive treatment of the filmmaking process from beginning to end can be found elsewhere (Theodosakis, 2001), Goodwyn provides a useful starting point for teachers who would like to design filmmaking projects for students. Goodwyn draws upon classroom based action research to support claims about the effectiveness of filmmaking with students of all abilities. This discussion is likely to be very popular with teachers because of the many ideas and classroom examples as well as references to additional sources of information about the filmmaking process.

In a chapter entitled, "New Technologies and the Moving Audience," Goodwyn explores the role of the internet and digital games as multimodal texts in the English classroom. He poses relevant questions for inquiry, such as should schooling try to engage with the internet in a much more challenging way and demand that pupils develop forms of cyber expertise? And, do games have a place as learning devices, or as texts for analysis and critique? While there are fewer classroom examples and ideas for assessment offered in this chapter than in other chapters, Goodwyn does provide a comprehensive analysis of the emergent concept of multiliteracies along with recent literature that expands this idea.

This book should become part of every English teachers' professional library. Goodwyn's straightforward and respectful approach to teaching about the moving image succeeds in adding to the store of ideas that teachers can draw upon to develop their own teaching. Both experienced and novice teachers from different subject areas will find the ideas for classroom application and the assessment of student projects to be helpful in rethinking their practice.

Pages: **174**   Price: **$124.95(hardcover) $31.95(paperback)**   ISBN: **0415306604(hardcover) 0-415-30661-2(paperback)**

Reviewed by Michele Jacobsen, University of Calgary. Michele Jacobsen teaches student teachers in the Master of Teaching Program and graduate students in the Graduate Division of Educational Research in the Faculty of Education at the University of Calgary. She is the specialization coordinator of a growing educational technology program that serves over 175 graduate students.

Greenwood, Scott C. (2004) *Words Count: Effective Vocabulary Instruction in Action.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Vocabulary plays a central role in both oral and written communication, and has also been shown to be the strongest predictor of reading comprehension in both first and second language. However, as the author rightly points out, how to teach this important aspect of language and communication effectively has remained problematic. This book presents an array of vocabulary teaching and learning strategies that teachers can use in their classrooms. What is unique about the book is that it presents each of the techniques with concert examples and connects them to oral and written language, curriculum, and literature. The book also includes a number of classroom vignettes, samples of students' work, and extensive appendices. In addition, the book addresses the issue of vocabulary assessment and provides both formal and informal assessment techniques that teachers can use to

measure and keep track of their students' vocabulary knowledge.

The book begins by denouncing the traditional methods of vocabulary instruction that are based on memorization, looking up definitions in dictionaries, and constructing single sentences with words. The author argues that even the strategies that involve the use of context to figure out word meanings, although promising, have "traditionally been misused" (p. 4). The writer associates this problem to the complexity of using context for word learning and believes that students need to be instructed as to how to use context clues effectively.

Next Greenwood discusses the principles underlying sound vocabulary instruction. Using Tomlinson's continuum of student independence, the author describes the ultimate goal of vocabulary instruction as one of moving towards learners' independence. He offers several guidelines for planning a successful vocabulary learning curriculum, some of which include creating "word-aware" classrooms, providing time for reading, creating motivation, modeling good vocabulary learning, and making word learning long-term.

In the next seven chapters, the book provides a wide range of techniques and strategies for teaching vocabulary in the classroom. These strategies, according to the author, not only make the learning of vocabulary enjoyable but also make the learners actively involved in the learning process. Each chapter organizes the strategies around a particular theme.

"Vocabulary and Oral Language," provides a number of vocabulary teaching strategies that are connected to the development of spoken language. The author argues that oral language instruction has been treated as secondary and has received less attention than literacy instruction in most classrooms. Thus, teachers should incorporate activities that promote oral language skills. Some of the strategies suggested are storytelling, conversing, interviewing, debates, and information sharing activities such as speeches and reports. "Teaching Vocabulary in Connection with Literature," presents a number of literature-based vocabulary teaching techniques, such as guessing word meaning from context, different kinds of graphic organizers, word maps and narrative reading strategies. "Teaching Vocabulary in Connection with Curriculum," presents strategies that could be used to refine and consolidate word knowledge learned in curriculum subjects such as semantic feature analysis, word analogies, context puzzles, and vocabulary notebooks.

Greenwood also covers vocabulary teaching strategies that could be used in connection with writing. The author argues that "A strong vocabulary is one of the writer's tools for getting rich thought onto paper" (p. 72). Some of the strategies presented are those related to the use of thesaurus, revisions, and word choice; structure and word-analysis strategies such as those related to affixes, roots, and word etymology; the effective use of dictionaries; and playful use of

vocabulary such as puns, word play, idioms, word games, puzzles and riddles.

The last chapter addresses the issue of vocabulary assessment and considers tools that teachers can use to assess vocabulary in their classrooms, ranging from more informal teacher-made and self-assessment tests to more formal specialized and standardized tests.

The book ends with 40 pages of appendices, which include lists of vocabulary websites, homophones, homographs, synonyms, antonyms, confusing words, proverbs and other vocabulary learning activities, all of which could be used as valuable resources in teaching vocabulary.

Although many of the strategies and techniques presented in the book may not be completely unfamiliar to many teachers, the author has managed successfully to bring them all together in a very user-friendly and easy to read book. The book will be of interest to all schoolteachers who wish to increase their repertoire of vocabulary teaching strategies in their classrooms. Although the writer may seem to have intended the book for teachers teaching L1 elementary age students, the book will be a valuable resource for second and foreign language teachers teaching children as well as adult L2 learners. I also recommend the book to teacher educators and those who teach methodology courses on teaching vocabulary in first and second language classrooms.

My only reservation is that although the book addresses some of the principles underlying effective vocabulary instruction, it would have been very helpful to have some theoretical discussion of what cognitive or social processes are involved in the acquisition of vocabulary. Moreover, although the writer has attempted to organize strategies in connection with language skills, literature, and curriculum, and although some of the techniques presented in each section are closely linked to the area intended, sometimes the link is not very strong and the procedures presented are not area-specific. Hence they could be equally used in other areas as well. Altogether, the book is an excellent practical resource useful for all teachers.

Pages: **202**   Price: **Out of Print**   ISBN: **0-325-00648-2**

Reviewed by Hossein Nassaji, Department of Linguistics, University of Victoria

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Harpur, John, Lawlor, Maria, & Fitzgerald, Michael (2004) *Succeeding in College with Asperger Syndrome: A Student Guide.* London: Jessica Kingsley.

Classification of children with autism has been on the rise for the past few decades. The increased number of individuals in the population has created an awareness of the vastly different characteristics present in

those classified. One of the early researchers to study these differences and was Hans Asperger. An Austrian, medical doctor, Asperger became interested in "autistic psycopathy", specifically, high functioning children with social skills difficulties. He began to publish his findings in 1944 but his work was not as well known as that of Leo Kanner, Johns Hopkins Univerisity, who began publishing his work on Pedricatric Autsim as early as 1933 and is often credited with the identification of the sydrome, since Asperger did not travel and only published his work in German.

The hallmark characteristic of this syndrome is social and communication skills deficits. Individuals with Asperger syndrome typically possess normal language development and cognitive skills. However, they often exhibit difficulties interpreting pragmatic language situations and in the use and understanding of nonverbal body language. Often they do not make eye contact and have difficulty making friends or engaging in conversations. Individuals are prone to fixations on specific topics and have vast information on this subject. They speak of it continually and at inappropriate times further exacerbating their difficulties with maintaining relationships. They may also possess perseverative behaviors such as repetitive hand motions or foot tapping and are significantly distracted by changes in routines.

While many people with Asperger syndrome are not diagnosed as children, those who are, benefit greatly from the establishment of routines and schedules for daily activities in school. Consistent reinforcement of appropriate behaviors is also important. As are support groups to help the students identify their difficulties in dealing with social interactions and communication in order to develop strategies to make those situations more effective.

This text presents a very detailed guide for students to use as a resource while they attend college. The chapters are complete and cover topics that are useful and of interest to all young adults as they transition from the safety of their supportive home and school environment to the unfamiliar independence and responsibilities that are the expectations for a successful college life. Chapters cover, Preparing for College, the College Environment, Academic Life, Student Support Services, Communication, Interacting with the Opposite Sex, Managing Anxiety and Stress and even provide an inductive examination of famous individuals who have made historical contributions and who possessed Asperger like behaviors. The chapters are each about 20-30 pages in length and are admittedly redundant in places.

The second chapter of the book acts as an advance organizer for the text and provides short summaries of what to find in the succeeding chapters. Crucial to the efficient use of the text is the understanding of what the authors refer to as "the Foreknowledge Principle" (p. 35). First presented here, the authors frequently make reference to the importance of prior planning and developing advance knowledge of upcoming situations. They stress the need for the student with AS to do

as much pre-organizing and pre-learning as possible. For example, it is recommended that the student develop a sense of the campus before classes start and that they learn the rules for use of such places as the library and other student services before they need them. In providing these suggestions the authors also regularly point out that all college students benefit from such strategies but that students with AS who often demonstrate weaknesses in organizational skills, become distractible and loose focus on follow through or task completion are most likely to benefit from the "Foreknowledge Principle."

The authors emphasize the importance of taking time for relationships to be successful; to plan out what you will say and how you will say it when this is possible and to think about communication and the effect of your words and comments on others. As problem situations are discussed and suggestions provided, the authors often include grey shaded text that functions as case examples, presented in a, this is a good/ bad way or do/don't conduct yourself in such a way scenario. These cases would be particularly useful for group discussions in order to help students with AS identify problems and how to deal with them in their own life experiences.

On numerous occasions mention is also made of the need for students with AS to identify and learn to deal with stress. While this theme is a thread throughout the text, chapter eight presents a very nicely detailed summary of different types of stress and stress related disorders. The authors clearly describe stress related syndromes and provide useful suggestions for learning to manage stress and anxiety syndromes.

The text is clearly organized for the student user and seems to be written for a student to use on his/her own as needed for reference. The irony here is that a lack of organization is one of the common behavioral characteristics attributed to Asperger syndrome. In the words of the authors "One of the biggest challenges facing students with AS is staying focused, 'staying on task" (p. 96). Further, they note that a student in a given case, "…could clearly identify the beginning and the end of his projects, but had great difficulty completing them" (p. 97). This leaves me to question whether students with AS would remember to use the text when they need to refer to it. Another observation related to the organization of the text, the pages are often uninterrupted paragraphs of continuous text. Yet important information is provided in the form of suggestions and could easily be presented in bullets or numbered statements, thereby decreasing the monotony in the page presentation. Such a structure might also alert the reader to the author's perceived importance of the advice provided.

Students from the United States may be unfamiliar with some of the British spellings, favourite, programme, practise etc and the jargon, jumper means sweater to British speakers of English but is an article of women's clothing to Americans. Another example of these differences is that a tutor in the United States is often a peer employed in a learning center to provide study support to students who need extra help

understanding class materials, but in the text tutor refers to a lecturer or what we think of as a faculty member in the United States. For students who may be distractible and who attend best to regular routines such word choice may detract from the important messages being presented.

A problematic reference is given in chapter six. In dealing with the importance of clear and engaging communication skills the authors include a section entitled "The Game of Pool" (p. 145). Here they state, "One of our strongest recommendations in learning to initiate and maintain conversation is that you learn to play pool"(p.145). It is quite possible that some of the students, with whom the authors have worked, have experienced success in communication situations while engaging in a game of pool. However, such a statement is not supported in field specific literature and should be presented as a suggestion related to the authors opinions and experience not as a factual piece of important information.

Another concern for American Students with AS and their use of this text is the apparent access to services for students with AS on college and university campuses in Great Britain. The authors consistently suggest that the student seek the support of student services and to meet regularly with a counselor and or therapist to work through the difficulties that they encounter. While access to such services would be ideal it is more likely not readily available on typical college campuses. Student Support services are present on all state and federally funded colleges and university campuses and most private institutions, but they probably are not equipped to provide daily or weekly counseling to students. In informal discussion with student support service providers in my area, I found very little awareness of the needs of students with AS and no ability to provide comprehensive therapeutic services.

In summary this text has much to offer in terms of useful information for post secondary students with Aspergers Syndrome but it should shared with caution as sections may become confusing and frustrating for use in the United States because of the differing levels of service available and the issues related to word choice.

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Pages: **272**   Price: **$21.95**   ISBN: **1 84310 166 1**

Reviewed by Caron Mellblom-Nishioka, Ed.D., C.C.C., California State University, Dominguez Hills, Carson California

Jago, Carol (2004) *Classics in the Classroom: Designing Accessible Literature Lessons.* **Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.**

Classroom teachers, ever on the prowl for resources to help them build successful lesson plans and teaching strategies, may learn quickly to warily approach books with appealing titles because often they fail to deliver or only meet a need that is not theirs. Jago's *Classics in the Classroom: Designing Accessible Literature Lessons* not only delivers on its promise but also takes the teacher on a refreshing journey of success that can inspire teaching on several levels.

Jago's experiences as a teacher of students, a mentor of newer teachers, and a researcher equip her to demonstrate both specific techniques and broad but proven principles that can succeed with even resistant students. Students have their own great expectations of literature, as she points out, and that is to not understand it and to declare it boring. Often teachers opt for less challenging selections to make teaching easier. But even with these easier selections the students, who have been trained well, know that if they remain quiet long enough, the teacher will eventually stop asking questions and just explain what something means; the teacher then provides handouts with information that enables them to prepare for tests that skim only surface issues. In Jago's own words, her purpose is to "make a case for the importance of teaching powerful literature and offer methods for teaching novels, plays, and poems that are not 'easy reads.' Simply assigning books is not enough; teachers need to have an instructional plan that makes difficult texts accessible to students" (p. xii).

In the first chapter, the author gives "Seven Guiding Principles for Literature Teachers" and sets the tone for the rest of the book. Her first person style, by the way, is engaging and leads the reader through point-by-point and chapter-by-chapter. When you've finished, though, you don't feel as though you've been merely entertained or that you've skipped through a garden of familiar and common themes. She justifies each point with research and her own classroom experiences, often also linking a teaching purpose with a state standard (with examples reaching eastward from her own California) that remind us that it can be done meaningfully. For every "whine" and "why?" that students (and sometimes teachers) might offer, she provides the "why nots" and suggestions for ways to adapt her example. That adaptation is one of the reasons this book can be a valuable resource, especially for less experienced teachers; as she points out often, what works one year with one group of students in a particular situation may not work so well the next time. Her lesson planning, as she describes it, seems solid, yet it is fluid and subject to revision according to the challenges each year's groups of students present. And so she cautions frequently to take her suggestions not as absolute methods but as basic structures subject to revision.

Each principle represents a challenge, but these experiences she calls "education" and are the reason we who are teachers love what we do. The principles she discusses are:

1. Students must read.
2. Don't confuse reading for pleasure with the study of literature.
3. Don't simple assign difficult books; teach them.
4. Reading literature requires language study and builds vocabulary.
5. Reading literature builds background knowledge.
6. Reading literature educates students' imaginations.
7. Metaphorical thinking is a life skill.

The next four chapters address the teaching of literature through those principles, beginning with "All About Words." Here Jago shows the vocabulary bookmark she gives students to create as they read; she then describes some of the techniques she uses that help students learn those specific terms and that also develop life-long skills for acquiring rather than avoiding new vocabulary. "The key learning" she tries to achieve is that "learning new words is a natural act" (p. 27). By using these student-generated vocabulary lists she helps students "buy into" a work such as Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" as they experience the mood, play around with alternate and less successful word choices, and appreciate the poet's deliberate diction. She also gives advice on choosing which words to teach and giving effective vocabulary instruction.

Although candid and instructive throughout the book on the realities of school systems and the individual integrity of teachers, Jago does not waste time with blaming or get sidetracked with political issues. Instead, she just makes a clear and direct case for what should be and then shows how she goes about it. In "Choosing Which Books to Teach," it is clear that she requires a lot from her students and, she says, generally she gets it. She then takes the reader through some discussion of why students should be reading the classics – and why they should and could be reading up to twice as much as teachers often assign them to read. As an example, she then takes the reader through the decision for teaching Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein,* including topics such as the suitability of Shelley's language, human dilemma, and universal themes.

The chapters on "How Stories Work" and "How Poems Work" provide reviews of essential elements for teaching and methods for connecting those elements with students in ways that can draw them into the literature rather than drive them away. Jago also provides two appendices, "Recommended Classic Texts," broken down by grade levels, and "Classic Bestsellers," to guide teachers in finding appropriate materials to present to students.

The reader is invited to look over Jago's shoulder and hear her thoughts through an example of her lesson design for Homer's *Odyssey.* The

design is detailed and rich with meaningful and useful techniques that can easily be adapted by other teachers. She extends the discussion with insights into not only how to get the attention of students in the classroom but how to help them consciously recognize the life-long value of studying literature.

If there is any criticism of this text, it is in the occasional personal side trips Jago takes, especially a lengthy one at the beginning of chapter 6. However, these excursions turn out to be purposeful. It is through these comments that the reader meets the author, not as an "expert," mechanical educator, but as a teacher who loves and understands the artistry as well as the science of teaching. In chapter 6, she discusses, among other things, "Lesson Study in Japan," to explain the technique of study groups that draws teachers together to help one another become better teachers. She uses that introduction as if she needs a justification for giving over 40 pages of discussion of her lesson design for Homer's *Odyssey*. With this interest in teacher development, including her desire to see more experienced teachers becoming involved in mentoring newer teachers one can hope that her next book will not be about teaching high school students but will instead address an equally important topic – teachers teaching teachers.

Pages: **180**   Price: **$20.00**   ISBN: **0-325-00590-7**

Reviewed by Terry Anne Lawrence, formerly Assistant Professor of Communications, Bethel College, Mishawaka, Ind.. currently Ph.D. candidate in Curriculum and Instruction, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Mich. Areas of interest: how students learn, teacher training and mentoring.

Lattimer, Heather (2003) *Thinking through Genre: Units of Study in Reading and Writing Workshops 4-12.* Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

In *Thinking Through Genre: Units of Study in Reading and Writing Workshops 4-12*, Lattimer provides an exceptionally rich resource for teachers of English and language arts in teaching reading comprehension, text analysis, and writing applications. Using an accessible and conversational writing style, the author reveals how she came to recognize the need to build a different structure into her reading and writing workshop-based classroom, where students previously had individual discretion in the selection of reading materials and writing tasks.

With students reading different material and writing in different formats, there were limits to Lattimer's effectiveness in meeting students' instructional needs. At the same time, she was unwilling to abandon the principles of a student-centered workshop that give authenticity to the learning work of students – time, ownership,

response, and community. Lattimer's decision to include genre-based workshops in her classroom literacy program allowed her to "better manage the focus and depth of instruction in reading and writing" (p. 6) that her students required to expand their knowledge and skill base beyond the comfort of self-selected genres, while retaining the engagement between student-author and text that are essential to learning.

The choice of genre as the organizing framework for the units of study is deliberate. Lattimer details how teaching through genre allows students to explore a variety of text forms that provide coherent and specific cueing systems, to immerse themselves in the traditions of craft and the habits of mind inherent to the genre. According to Lattimer, a genre study requires students to inquire into questions of both process and structure: What makes the genre unique? How do successful readers approach and interact with the text in this genre? What types of language and author craft are used in this genre?

After sharing with the reader her decision to select genre studies for her literacy workshops in Chapter 1, Lattimer uses the next six chapters to introduce and explore a unit of study around each of the selected genre: memoir, feature article, editorial, short story, fairy tale, and response to literature. Lattimer reminds the reader that this list is neither complete nor prescriptive, and entertains a discussion on the criteria to be considered when determining which genre to select for units of study. These explicit and comprehensive explanations of her decision-making processes are one of the strengths of *Thinking Through Genre* and occur throughout the text. Lattimer engages the reader with her 'think-aloud' strategy, and at the same time, offers no easy-to-follow recipes for success.

Lattimer addresses her educator audience as respected professional peers and avoids the easy platitudes and prescriptions too often found in books written for K-12 teachers. Lattimer recognizes that teaching is a demanding craft, and that effective teaching can take as many forms as there are teachers. She clearly favors collaboration and each of the units of study she describes in the book is taught in cooperation with another teacher, in that teacher's classroom. This approach may be attributable to her role as a peer coach and staff developer, yet Lattimer demonstrates how discussion of texts with her teacher colleagues and the joint planning of the units of study lead to new understandings for her as a reader and as a teacher.

Each of the six genre-specific chapters follows a similar format. An excerpt of text written in the targeted genre opens the chapter, with authors ranging from Annie Dillard (memoir) to Tobias Wolff (response to literature). Lattimer follows the opening selection with her own analysis and commentary on the genre from the perspectives of language scholar, citizen, and teacher, including the appropriateness of the selected genre unit for the particular group of students involved in two sections titled "Thinking through the Genre" and "Envisioning the

Unit". With that contextual foundation established, Lattimer begins with a description of the reading workshop component for the genre study.

The reading workshop component within each unit of study includes a strand focusing on reading comprehension strategies and a strand focusing on accountable talk, appropriate to the particular text structure of the genre and the developmental needs of the students. For each genre unit, Lattimer provides a one-page summary graphic of the entire reading workshop plan, outlining the week-by-week goals of the workshop, pairing the reading comprehension study activities with the accountable talk activities. She then continues with selected sample lessons, typically one from each of the five or six weeks included in the reading workshop. These sample lessons are written as narrative, described in enough detail to allow the reader to reside in the classroom with Lattimer and her co-teacher as they select reading materials and plan instruction, teach, respond to students, adjust, struggle, and ultimately lead their students to a deep understanding of the genre under study.

The heart of this book is these sample lessons. Although the sample lessons are short in length (2-4 pages), they are filled with creativity, sensitivity, authenticity, and teaching wisdom. The challenges presented by students in learning to deconstruct text and the innovative teacher moves in response to those challenges will resonate with classroom teachers who will recognize those students as their own, ranging from fifth-and sixth-grade students identified as high-achieving to tenth-grade students who were grouped into a 'significantly below grade level' reading class.

The writing workshop component of the genre under study follows the reading workshop. Lattimer believes the "initial focus on reading is necessary to allow students time to become acquainted with the genre. Before they can even begin to think about writing, they need to feel truly comfortable with the genre as readers…its purpose and its possibilities" (p.15). Nevertheless, she is equally convinced that students will not inhabit the genre until they have the experience as authors in the genre as well. Lattimer's description of the writing workshop component follows a similar structure to the reading workshop with two distinct strands: text structure study and writing process study. The graphic overview followed by detailed sample lessons provides a week-by-week progression through the writing workshop component of the unit.

The capstone of each chapter is the section on "Evaluating Student Progress" which includes samples of student writing. Lattimer also includes suggested texts to use with students that she has found age and theme appropriate and easily available. The professional writing commencing each chapter and the student writing closing it are satisfying brackets to the journey experienced by Lattimer, her co-teachers, and their students through their units of study. As readers, we

are fortunate to be allowed to accompany them on the voyage.

Pages: **290**   Price: **$22.50**   ISBN: **1-57110-352-X**

Reviewed by Jane E. Robb, Director, Teacher Preparation Program, Touro University College of Education

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Mallett, Margaret (2003) *Early Years Non-Fiction: A Guide to Helping Young Researchers Use Information Texts.* **London: RoutledgeFalmer.**

Margaret Mallett does a thorough job of explaining the many aspects of non-fiction for lower elementary research in her book, *Early Years Non-Fiction: A Guide to Helping Young Researchers Use Information Texts*. Connecting to a child's prior knowledge is a strong theme throughout. Her goal is to instruct early year teachers on how to introduce very young children to informational texts. Mallett focuses on three aspects of non-fiction learning to accomplish this: how children's thinking and learning develops; the importance of the range and quality of selected texts; the need to create meaningful contexts for non-fiction reading and writing. The prior knowledge that every young child brings to the learning environment provides the connecting threads for these three components. Mallett's perspective capitalizes on this fact and weaves its implications throughout her work, first by discussing the link between home and school and later by making a more global connection through children that have English as their second language. Each brings her/his own unique experiences to the non-fiction tapestry.

Once the connection to prior learning is made, Mallett suggests introducing a related new experience. Possibilities include but are not limited to speakers, fieldtrips or videos. Helping children organize questions, share information in a group setting and learn search strategies works to broaden the scope of the early researcher. Summarizing, rewriting and reflection time are also seen as important components with assessment as an ongoing activity. Cullinan and Galda (2002) offer support in their textbook, *Literature and the Child*:

> Learning is more than the laying on of discrete areas of information; it requires an active response from students, an interpretation or reconstruction of new information in relation to what they already know. Instead of teaching a body of facts for students to memorize, our goal is to help students learn to think critically (p. 264).

Chapter by chapter, Mallett guides the teacher through the process first by introducing important authors of concept books and wordless picture books, interspersing case studies to reinforce method. Some of the earliest learning case studies seem a bit contrived but those that

come from the classroom offer insight that American teachers will find valuable even though the work is written from a U.K. perspective. Mallet discusses criteria for choosing non-fiction wordless and simple-text books in some detail. She identifies early learning goals specific to a child's experience of non-fiction and discusses role-play as it relates to early writing. The author offers activities for achieving these goals and stresses the important role of teachers in planning the learning environment conducive to a successful program.

Mallet is cognizant of the need to include an electronic component, acknowledging that children today are raised on visual stimulation. She proposes electronic portfolio development as a means of integrating technology with an assessment component. In chapter 10 she discusses in great detail the role of technology in helping young learners become researchers. Like Barton and Booth (2004), Mallet sees computers as a means of encouraging cooperation and teamwork as well as initiating discussion. She is careful to emphasize the importance of evaluating all electronic components from simple word processing to the use of CD ROMs and the Internet but stresses their crucial role in developing visual literacy. She offers a list of CDs to review and a few websites.

Mallet discusses various genres of non-fiction books and successfully connects them to every day activities such as shopping, playing, visiting the doctor or going to school. She offers a limited list of narrative non fiction in each of the following genres: life cycles, journeys, instructions and information stories and divides non narrative fiction into three additional categories; question books, information picture books and fact books. She carefully explains the differences between narrative and non-narrative and elaborates on the uses of each.

Early Years Non-Fiction, successfully instructs early year teachers in the art of teaching the use of informational texts to very young children. Her theme is universal and not only cuts across the curriculum but across the globe as well. Her enthusiasm for the topic is contagious. The appendix and index alone are worth the price of the book. This is a book that belongs in the hands of every preK-6 teacher.

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Pages: **190**   Price: **$124.95 (hardcover) $32.95(paper)**   ISBN: **0415321395(hardcover) 0-415-25337-3(paper)**

Reviewed by Adelaide Phelps, MLIS, Director of the Educational Resources Lab at Oakland University.

Muschla, Gary Robert (2004) *The Writing Teacher's Book of Lists: With Ready-to-Use Activities and Worksheets.* Second Edition. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

For the new teacher needing some practical exercises, *The Writing Teacher's Book of Lists* is a useful how-to manual that provides checklists and sample exercises. Author Gary Muschla is a teacher himself and has put together, in an easy-to-photocopy book format, what appears to be lesson plans and checklists he has collected or written during his career.

Many of the lists are fine tools to help a budding teacher or writer. Some of the best include "Guidelines for Finding Ideas for Writing" and "100 Writing Cues". Both of these lists stimulate imagination. Others that score high for guidance in writing mechanics and publishing include: "Guidelines for Writing a Query Letter", "Manuscript Preparation", "Markets for the Writing of Students", and "Web Sites for Student Writers."

A few of the lists, however, shortchange teachers and writers of valuable information. For example, "Bibliography Format" provides reference citations without any identification as to what bibliographic style they follow, i.e., APA, MLA or Turabian. There is also no mention of web-based or print resources that would help writers and teachers learn to cite correctly and according to academic and publishers' specifications.

The Writing Teacher's Book of Lists' major drawback lies in its lack of organization. As a librarian, I look for excellent organization in deciding whether a book will be a good reference resource. The Book of Lists' appears thrown together, more like a random piling system, rather than an organized filing system. Access to topics and individual lists is difficult and strained. First of all, there is no index. Second, the table of contents starts out organizing lists about grammar and word usage, then trails off into bundles of loosely related "rules", "checklists", "activities", and poorly clumped "special lists". The Special Lists for Teachers and Special Lists for Students contain some of the best material the book offers. However, the lists receive no highlighting through topical organization or indexing. An entire re-organization would improve the collection. For example, regrouping the lists would help so that the "Proofreading Checklist" would link closely with the "Editor's Proofreading Marks", or "Bibliography Format" with "Formats for Citing Electronic Sources."

Muschla's various word lists and activities for nonfiction and fiction writing, i.e., for health, environment, politics, adventure, romance, folklore, mythology, etc. are some of the better lists, because they integrate a worksheet that prepares the student for writing in a particular genre. Muschla states one of his goals is "to provide

meaningful activities that will help students develop an understanding of the writing process." The Word Lists provide a meaningful context. While these word lists and activities are helpful, he would have accomplished his goal even more effectively had he more creatively organized more complete study-practice units. Such units would better integrate his lists. They might take both teachers and writers beyond the point of inspired idea, to familiarity with genres and vocabularies, through the mechanics of well-crafted writing, and finally to learning how to successfully publish their work.

On the whole, Muschla's *The Writing Teacher's Book of Lists* is a practical and useful resource that would be an asset to a budding teacher's or writing student's library

Pages: **341**   Price: **$29.95**   ISBN: **0-7879-7080-8**

Reviewed by Jill L. Woolums, M.L.I.S, a librarian at the Education Psychology Library, University of California, Berkeley. She has taught college level research and writing classes, has authored several nonfiction articles, and possesses a master's degree in English from Mills College.

Thompson, Gail L. (2004) *Through Ebony Eyes: What Teachers Need to Know But Are Afraid to Ask About African American Students.* **San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass/Wiley.**

Although the main title is fairly innocuous, Gail Thompson's provocative subtitle will undoubtedly raise a few eyebrows. *What Teachers Need to Know But Are Afraid to Ask About African American Students* pretty much goes right to the heart of this no-nonsense book that offers guidelines for teachers who want to provide meaningful and successful educational experiences for their African American students.

An associate professor in the School of Educational Studies at the Claremont Graduate University, Thompson addresses such culturally sensitive and controversial issues as should African American students be forced to speak Standard English in class over Ebonics or should teachers permit their African American students to use the "N" word in class?

According to the author, this book is needed for two primary reasons. The most obvious is that the achievement gap between blacks and whites continues to exist. Secondly, a high percentage of teachers are under- prepared to work effectively with students of color. Because of this, when a cultural mismatch between teachers and African American students exists, there are often negative consequences.

"This book is a description of how educators can face challenging

issues that could empower them," (p. 9) writes Thompson. She continues that the book will provide an opportunity for prospective, and current teachers and other educators to examine their own beliefs, attitudes, and relations with African American students.

In reference to the incidents and personal experiences she shares throughout the volume, Thompson concedes that they could be interpreted differently by others. But, she explains, they offer "a candid view through 'ebony eyes' (my own and those of other African Americans who are mentioned in this book) of the bittersweet lessons that teacher training and my own teaching experiences have taught me about race relations in America" (p. 9).

As she tackles some thorny issues many teachers would prefer not to talk about, Thompson hopes to perhaps make everyone's life in the classroom a little less traumatic. A suggested three-part, long-term development plan for educators who wish to continue their professional growth related to African American students should help them deal with racial and culturally sensitive issues.

Pages: **328**   Price: **$24.95**   ISBN: **0-7879-7061-1**

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

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Tovani, Cris (2004) *Do I Really Have to Teach Reading?: Content, Comprehension, Grades 6-12.* Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

Cris Tovani's *Do I Really Have to Teach Reading?* gives the initial impression that its focus is to give teachers who typically don't teach reading the tools to incorporate reading into their instruction. Underlying this purpose is a premise that by engaging students in reading, teachers can bring students into a more participatory role in their own learning.

Instead of just offering a collection of strategies and solutions, Tovani often demonstrates uses of techniques by tracing her own thinking processes as she, the teacher, struggled to address real-life scenarios in her classes. In doing this, she models very doable approaches to teaching where the teacher can share some of the burden of thinking with students. One of the later chapters on group work is especially successful as Tovani illustrates how students can help establish norms for effective group work.

It's probably not a coincidence that many of the chapter titles contain questions ("Why am I Reading This?" "What Do I Do With All These Sticky Notes?" "Did I Miss Anything?"). Teaching students how to question is the common thread throughout each section, and Tovani

consistently shows its effectiveness. She utilizes a variety of techniques that encourage students to become involved with their text. She also stresses the importance of accessible text, either by not selecting unapproachable works in the first place or by using supplemental readings, such as a related newspaper article, to help students find meaning in difficult works.

All in all, Tovani has written a nicely approachable book that practices what she preaches. Supplemental information is provided as side notes within chapters, scenarios are written to prompt questions in the reader's mind and chapters end with a selection of teaching points for emphasis. *Do I Really Have to Teach Reading?* isn't just about teaching students, but about teaching ourselves.

Pages: **138**   Price: **$19.50**   ISBN: **1571103767**

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