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Brief reviews for April 2005

Danforth, Scot & Smith, Terry Jo (2005). *Engaging Troubling Students: A Constructivist Approach*. Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press.

In their recently published text entitled *Engaging Troubling Students: A Constructivist Approach*, Danforth and Smith present a thoughtful text based on current constructivist theory. Initially, the researchers abandon the use of "troubled" student in favor of "troubling" which widens the audience to include future, entry level, and experienced teachers, teachers of emotionally and behaviorally disturbed students, and administrators who find a student's behavior troubling or problematic. This work provides extensive information from the American history of behavior and social problems in public schools to an introduction to constructivist and social constructionist theories of learning. However, the main purpose is to provide a comprehensive work that assists educators dealing with troubling children. Danforth and Smith express the spirit of their book when they write, "The most profound thing a teacher can do is to create a relationship with a student that communicates deep acceptance and love to that student" (p. 9).

Love and acceptance is the common thread throughout work. From creating a congenial classroom (chapter 3) to caring relationships between students and teachers, Danforth and Smith provide insights to support the classroom teacher. The researchers follow popular constructionist theory that stresses constructing meaning through personal involvement and social relationships. Those social relationships are developed through group activities that promote "positive interdependence," group interaction, individual and group accountability, group skills, and group processing (chapter 5).

Classroom teachers may find the section on reflective teaching the most instructive. The authors challenge teachers to reflect upon their own classroom practices. For instance, Danforth and Smith emphasize that teachers "respond to students not simply based on what they do, but based on [that teacher's] own interpretation of what they do. That interpretation is laced with the contributions of [the teacher's] own world, beliefs, hopes, emotions, ambivalence, and conflicts" (p. 130). The researchers suggest innovative practices such as teachers' journals, the "framing and reframing of meanings," and the reconstruction of practical metaphors to transform the teachers' conceptualization of themselves and their teaching practices. Additionally, teachers create and recreate theoretical, cultural, institutional, socioeconomic, and children's frames that provide "order, direction, and possibilities for action" (p. 132). This framing and reframing deepens not only the understanding of the student but deepens personal meaning for the teacher.

The researchers offer an interesting chapter on conflict resolution as a tool for instruction and the social climates necessary for constructive resolution. The teacher redesigns the competitive setting for a more beneficial cooperative setting where constructive methods of conflict resolution such as peer mediation can transform the classroom and provide positive and peaceful changes. Keeping Every Youth Successful (KEYS) offers another option to conflict resolution through an innovative program already introduced at the Greenland School District of St. Louis (MO) County. Briefly, this program, that combines elementary, middle, and high school students, integrates mental health with school professionals in an educational setting. The KEYS program also employs the "services of a therapeutic social worker, a school psychologist, and a consulting psychiatrist" (p. 182). Danforth and

Smith provide more than a description; the implementation of the program and future challenges for the KEYS program are revealed and thoughtfully reconsidered.

Throughout this text, Danforth and Smith support their pedagogies of constructivism and their innovative programs and practices with research findings. The chapter entitled "Working with Families" begins with educational research that supports the belief that "parent involvement is essential to school success" (p. 201). Much of the remainder of the chapter deals with reasons for parental resistance and parents' personal stories that clarify the conflict between the parent and the public school systems. Later, the researchers analyze the complex issues involved in inclusive education. Danforth and Smith identify the fears of both student and teacher with inclusive education; and true to the spirit of the text, they focus upon a sense of compassion in the classroom rather than control. The final chapter addresses the classroom teacher directly and uses a metaphor of life, death, and rebirth as the concept to support, nurture and honor the classroom teacher who deals with the troubling child.

Engaging Troubling Students provides an analysis of social and historical foundations of schooling and treating childhood misbehavior. Academic discussions of behavioral approaches to learning and social constructivism based upon current research provide the foundation for "caring pedagogy" and reflective teaching practices. This alone would provide a valuable resource for every educator. However, the touching personal stories by teachers and parents distinguish this text from other academic discussions, humanize the research findings, and provide the reader with insightful and revealing examples of personal experiences filled with sensitivity, understanding, and compassion.

For instance, special educator Rebecca Cima-Bardosy shares the magic that she shares with her students through a group rain forest project. Later, Reggie Waters, an elementary school teacher, documents his action research to improve his relationship with a confrontational and disruptive student in his classroom. Craig Ahern, a middle-level special education teacher, shows through his teacher's journal how he creates a constructivist classroom. Case studies by the second author and the co-author of chapter 11 describe KEYS and bring the implementation and activities of the program to life. Finally, Smith, Kohl, and Ashton-Warner all provide stirring and powerful personal stories that transformed their practices and may transform the readers and their classrooms.

Danforth and Smith's *Engaging Troubling Students: A Constructivist Approach* is not for everyone. Those educators who wish to transform their classroom into a creative, cooperative setting, who wish to enable their students to construct personal and social meaning in their lives, who wish to develop a meaningful and lasting relationship with their students, and who wish to change not only those troubling students but the teachers' own lives will not find better reading or a more useful resource and practical guide.

Pages: **316** Price: **\$79.96(hardcover); \$39.95(paper)** ISBN: **1412904471(hardcover); 141290448X(paper)**

Reviewed by Randy Baker, a doctoral student at The University of Oklahoma and a secondary language arts teacher at Putnam City North High School in Oklahoma City.

Egan, Kieran. (2005). *An Imaginative Approach to Teaching*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Explaining how to create imaginative engagement in every class not just language arts, music and art, is the stated goal of this book. A professor of education at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, Egan's focus has been on teaching practices that develop a youngster's imagination.

According to Egan imagination is not peripheral to the core of education but, rather, at its center. He explains that no matter what the subject, imagination can be the "main workhorse of effective learning if we yoke it to education's central tasks" (p. xii). Of course, the trick becomes how to actually engage a student's imagination in subjects such as math, science, foreign language, or history and make this engagement a part of the daily routine of every class.

Egan provides a new way of understanding how a youngster's imagination works. He then suggests a series of practical frameworks and projects that will engage a student's imagination and emotion.

Addressing the concern of how his approach will affect test scores, Egan acknowledges that many educators believe developing a student's imagination has little to do with improving his test scores. He responds in the introduction, "My aim here is to show how increased focus on students' imaginations will lead to improvements in all measures of educational achievement, including the most basic

standard tests" (p. xvii).

The book's three main chapters tackle the cognitive tools of a child's imagination. First the author identifies the tools that accompany oral language, then the tools associated with literacy, and finally the grouping related to theoretic thinking. Egan's contention is that the acquisition of cognitive tools drives students' educational progress so, obviously, the more a teacher knows about them, the better. Another piece of important information — knowing at what age they appear.

Each full chapter is followed by what the author calls a "half" chapter, which shows the practical relevance of the cognitive tools already discussed. Explained here are a wide range of "frameworks" from how to prepare for teaching the life cycle of a cool-blooded vertebrate and a unit on trees to an introduction to the tools and methods of differential calculus.

A quick way of determining if this is a book you want to purchase is to turn to one of these half chapters and start reading. If what you find makes sense and is applicable to your teaching situation (and it probably will) buy the book, digest the theory, and use one or two of the frameworks and sample lessons. Once you've done your "homework", you'll be able to devise assignments and lesson plans unique to your own classroom.

Pages: **351** Price: **\$24.95** ISBN: **0-7879-7157-x**

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

Eisler, Riane & Miller, Ron. (Eds.) (2004). *Educating for a Culture of Peace*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Educating for a Culture of Peace is a collection of essays designed to encourage educators to think about topics of peace, cooperation, democracy and the infusion of those ideas into formal and non-formal education. Throughout the essays, the authors present models of education for peace and invite educators to rethink the purpose and task of education.

The underlying assumptions of the book become clear in the first two essays of the book: current education in the United States is for a dominator culture; U.S. education should be for a partnership and peace culture; and "education has an obligation to counter [violent] messages" (p. 24). Co-editor Ron Miller presents the current case of U.S. education in the introduction to the book, arguing that U.S. formal education's focus on dates and facts and not moral responsibility results in students who are "isolated from difficult choices they will need to make, and the complex issues they will need to understand" (p. 4).

Co-editor Riane Eisler presents the background of the movement towards educating for a culture of peace and briefly discusses the move towards more violence in American society that is also seen in the U.S. education system. Eisler suggests classification of cultures through a partnership model or dominator model, argues that culture is transmitted in part through education and that educators can change their educational patterns to educate for partnership. Eisler's suggestion for change is for educators to:

Evaluate which elements of existing education offer the knowledge and skills to live peaceably and which elements reinforce beliefs, behaviors, and institutions that perpetuate violence ...[and] develop new curricula and pedagogies that can accelerate the movement from domination to partnership worldwide (p. 24).

Most of the remaining essays in *Educating for a Culture of Peace* strive to provide examples and points of practice for educators that show the potential for this shift in education.

Essays in part two, "Education as a Human Connection", address education for integrity, partnership teaching, qualities of a caring teacher, and nonviolent communication. Through these essays, readers are introduced to the PassageWays Program, which integrates heart, spirit, and community with strong academics, as well as teacher and parent partnership training schemes where the emphasis is on building "relationships on deep listening and authentic speaking" (p. 70). De Souza Rocha tells the story of one teacher who "looks with loving eyes" (p. 103) at her students and proves the idea that "Who the teacher is as a person, her or his qualities, and how she or he behaves around students usually speaks much louder to people's hearts than what is taught them with words" (p. 109). The final essay in this section of the book returns to Eisler's ideas of the partnership process and focuses on

nonviolent communication, presenting the “story of one school’s experiment in creating a life-enriching learning community,” (p. 117) based on partnership rather than domination and compassion and joyful learning.

Perhaps most striking about this section of the book is that the authors not only present successful stories of educating for a culture of peace, but they also provide suggestions for educators to use to help create a culture of peace in their own settings. Some of these practical suggestions from part two of the book are: include children in rule-setting; model peaceful behavior; help children find their own solutions to problems; foster a sense of democracy in the educational setting.

This strength of connecting theory with practice continues with the first two essays in the third part of the book, “How Schools Would Be Different in a Culture of Peace”. Lisa Goldstein stresses a shift from ideas of multiculturalism that focus on commonalities to emphasizing variety and encouraging children to celebrate diversity. In this essay, she offers suggestions for early childhood teachers, providing guidance for creating a culture of peace in an atmosphere of difference. Similarly, Dierdre Bucciarelli discusses the theory behind disciplinary knowledge and argues for connected thinking where emotions and values are used in the study of the disciplines. Rather than simply presenting the theory and expecting educators to immediately understand how to bring emotions into disciplinary thinking, she presents guidelines for teacher practice and classroom applications.

Part four of *Educating for a Culture of Peace*, “Moving from Dominator to Partnership Culture”, continues making connections with Eisler’s model of a partnership culture, with an essay relating a professor’s personal experience incorporating non-violent communication into her Black Studies classes. Partnership culture in community-based programs is the subject of the second essay in this section. Linda Bynoe calls upon educators to involve parents, teachers, politicians, private industry leaders, professional and social movement organizations and other adults in the teaching process. Bynoe draws on African-American, Mexican-American, and Native American traditions of respecting and valuing the word of elders to teach spirituality and activism in a culture of peace.

The concluding essay of the book presents the situation of A Classroom in Any Town, USA and returns to one of the main tenets of *Educating for a Culture of Peace*, that education should teach children to deal with violence in ways that are not simply reactive. The purpose of education presented by Carl Grant and LaVonneWilliams in this final chapter is one that sums up the ideas behind educating for a culture of peace as a whole:

[Education should] promote the growth and development of students to become healthy, caring, well-rounded, and grounded individuals who accept and advocate social justice and equity for all people (p. 207).

The major criticism I have with this book is the tone of the second full-length essay, “Darwin’s Lost Theory and the Hidden Crisis” by David Loye. In this essay, Loye presents an interesting theory, that behind Darwin’s theory of natural selection is something more, a theory presenting an evolution that speaks to “higher drives of moral sensitivity, love, and the effects of education and otherwise caring for one another” (p. 44). Based on this lost theory of Darwin, Loye suggests revising the way in which evolution is taught in schools and supports the “incredible power of teachers to advance human evolution” (p. 53). The subject matter of this essay is intriguing; however readers looking for objectivity, or at least reasoned academic subjectivity should look elsewhere. Loye is passionate about his view, yet sarcastic and a bit overwhelming in places. I fear that readers who are seeking to gain knowledge about educating for a culture of peace, what that means, what it looks like, and how to re-organize their own educational settings to include that culture of peace will be turned off from the book as a whole by this harsh-sounding essay. This is especially the case because Loye’s essay is the second essay in the book and follows a well-reasoned and academic piece by Riane Eisler.

Overall, I found *Educating for a Culture of Peace* to be an engaging read and one that caused me to view the present state and future of U.S. education from a different perspective. I think a second publication from the editors where even more specifics are given as to the question of HOW to educate for a culture of peace would be another valuable addition. In the words of Raffi, the famous children’s troubadour who contributed an essay, “Music: A Culture of Peace”, to this book, “How we listen to others, how we hear others, how we listen to our own feelings, these are early key lessons in the musical life of peacemaking” (p. 172). Hopefully in educating for a culture of peace we will help to create that life of peacemaking for our children.

Pages: **223** Price: **\$21.00** ISBN: **0-325-00726-8**

Reviewed by Amy Garrett Dikkers, University of Minnesota

Filene, Peter. (2005). *The Joy of Teaching: A Practical Guide for New College Instructors*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

Despite eight years of teaching high school, I found Peter Filene's *Joy of Teaching: A Practical Guide for New College Instructors* to be a great resource for teaching at the college level. The book's subtitle delivers what it promises because it certainly provides practical tips that graduate students and new college instructors can follow to be successful.

A professor at the University of North Carolina, Peter Filene has received numerous awards including the UNC Board of Governors University-wide Award for Teaching Excellence, two Tanner Awards for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching, the 1991 Senior Class Favorite Faculty Award, and two Gordon and Bowman Gray Professorships for Distinguished Undergraduate Teaching. Yet Filene does not tout these accomplishments in his book, he lets the reader determine the value of the suggestions in the book, which seems to be his style whenever he makes suggestions related to pedagogy.

In 133 pages of text, Filene explains how to: write a student-friendly course description and syllabus, organize lectures, promote engaging discussions, use online media more effectively, communicate with students, and grade student work. Filene does not tell the new college instructor what to do but rather, uses examples to demonstrate how one method might be more suitable than another. For instance, he gives six examples of various course descriptions from simple to complicated in subjects ranging from economics to Czech 101 and says, "Somewhere between terseness and elaborateness you will make the choice that suits you" (p. 26).

Teaching to a class of over 100 students is a typical undergraduate scenario. In Chapter 6, Filene explains the difference between a recitation, a conversation, and a seminar. In a seminar, "you are aiming for a more substantive and probing analysis of the day's topic than in a conversation" (p. 59). Then he suggests breaking the larger classes into small groups and gives the logistics of organization. In a Filene-like manner, he states, "I'm not endorsing one of these three alternatives to the exclusion of the others. Each carries a certain intellectual benefit and advantage. The point is that you should decide which one suits your purposes in a given class."

The most valuable section for me was the section in which Filene summarizes William G. Perry's stages of cognitive growth for undergraduate students: dualism, relativism, multiplicity, and commitment. Filene briefly describes each stage then intertwines the importance of understanding students' class, race, and ethnicity for they "make a difference in the pedagogical dialogue" (p. 20). Then he warns, "But what that difference is and means is highly variable and subjective. So we need to beware of stereotyping an individual student in terms of his or her group identity" (p. 20).

The Joy of Teaching will prove helpful to new college instructors. Similar to a few self-help books, this book is worth reading every few years to remind us that there are better or different ways to do things.

Pages: **156** Price: **\$34.95** ISBN: **0-8078-2942-0**

Reviewed by N. Kim Doan, Doctoral Student, University of Virginia

Johnston, Peter H. (2004). *Choice Words: How Our Language Affects Children's Learning*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

If words are power, then according to Peter Johnston's *Choice Words*, teachers' words are a super power. Using a variety of interspersed narratives from various classrooms, narratives that include student-teacher dialogue, Johnston shows how the words that teachers use express a variety of both conscious and subconscious opinions of students. And, as I think everyone agrees, what teachers think about their students has significant implications on the opportunities and achievements of those students. But Johnston does not stop there.

While Johnston includes what he would call both positive and negative interactions, he does not judge the teacher as being bad solely on the basis of the interaction. The teacher may not realize the hidden suggestions his or her words possess; similarly the teacher whose dialogue is "good" may not be expressly trying to suggest something positive to the students. Some teachers are just naturals when

it comes to this. Equally, any teacher can learn to create this atmosphere through his or her dialogue with students. This is exactly what the author is attempting to initiate by writing his text

Breaking the dialogues down to show the meaning, and including a break-down of the consequences of both positive and negative dialogues, allows the reader to train him or herself to behave in this manner. Teachers can use this book as a guide to enhancing the climates in their classrooms, and encourage their students to develop agency. Although the book is written with the intended audience to be language arts and English teachers, any teacher can benefit from understanding the power of his or her words. In a time when teachers are repeatedly scrutinized for their work, here teachers are provided a blameless opportunity to engage in a journey (with travel guide in hand) to enhance their classroom communities and the opportunities and lives of their students.

Pages: **106** Price: **\$11.00** ISBN: **1-57110-389-9**

Reviewed by Erica Renee Aaron, Arizona State University

Michael, Joel A. & Modell, Harold I. (2003). *Active Learning in Secondary and College Science Classrooms: A Working Model for Helping the Learner to Learn*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Active Learning in Secondary and College Science Classrooms provides practical tips for transforming traditional science courses into active learning environments. Although the title of this well-edited and well-organized book includes references to high school teachers, college professors of introductory science courses will find this text the most helpful as it outlines practical suggestions for transforming the lecture hall, laboratory, and "conference room" into an active learning and teaching environment.

The text is informative, yet simple to read and models the type of teaching the authors support — active, engaging, and constructivist. Each chapter begins by assessing the "input state" of the reader (for example, by asking the reader to stop, "Before Proceeding," to answer a question about the topic at hand) and ends by outlining the expected output state. End-of-chapter summaries (in most cases) help create a conceptual hierarchy among chapters by setting the stage for upcoming readings. Anyone who reads this book with a strong foundation in inquiry-based, active learning as it is operationalized in the K-16 science classroom, may be tempted to skip Chapter One. However, novices will find the first chapter an excellent way to ground their understanding of recent advances in cognitive science, how students learn, misconceptions, mental models, meaningful learning, problem solving, and collaborative and cooperative learning. A list of the ten key ideas about learning summarizes this research into a digestible format and serves as a solid foundation for future chapters.

The suggestions for transforming any traditional classroom into a more active-centered classroom are not only practical, but doable; however, Michael and Modell do point out quite clearly that the learner must be willing to work in an active environment to achieve success. The authors acknowledge that students who are driven by the letter grade and are performance-oriented, may be this way because they are most familiar with traditional teaching and learning. The authors attempt to counter the common argument that change isn't necessary if students are doing well on their assessments, by stating that active learning, which does not rely purely on students' recollection of facts and pure recall, is more meaningful and easily applied to other areas of study.

Throughout the book Michael and Modell enumerate the need for secondary and college science teachers to "adopt the helping the learner to learn" mindset. The authors reference their own work in conducting faculty workshops, which introduce other faculty members to this mindset; they also describe their practical experience in the classroom and provide evidence of the success of active learning on student understanding. The authors write, "To some, adopting the mindset implies that we must give up some control of the learning process. However, we never really had control over the student's learning — the student does. We can only control classroom activities, and this control is not lost by becoming a facilitator of the learning process" (p. 150). In addition, the authors make it clear that to transform a classroom into an active learning environment, there is no need to rewrite or throw out original course material; instead, it is possible to restructure course work by making it more student-centered and creating a safe learning environment that will allow the learner to engage with and accept this new way of learning.

In *Active Learning*, Michael and Modell intersperse discussions about their own research, in which they've examined the effectiveness of active learning on college student achievement, with references

to other studies that support the effectiveness of active learning. For example, the authors discuss the work of Heller and colleagues, whose 1992 study of a large introductory physics course at a state university showed that cooperative learning led to superior results for all students compared with solving problems alone. The authors also reference such important works as that by Bransford and colleagues, who edited *How People Learn: Mind, Brain, Experience, and School* (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999).

Michael and Modell cleverly close the book by referencing a series of challenges to creating active learning environments at the college and secondary level. Such challenges, which serve to summarize the main points in the book, include the difficulty in "covering" all of the material in the course, students' resistance to active learning, concerns over negative course evaluations, criticisms from colleagues, and the need to abandon old teaching materials. The authors quickly counter these challenges (and dispel common misconceptions) by arguing that while the common perception of a professor is to "tell" students what they need to know, active learning, which is student-centered, actually allows for deeper, and therefore, greater, coverage of material.

Michael and Modell's mantra also includes the notion that learning is the responsibility of the student; and, therefore, course evaluations should include student self-evaluations. Finally, the authors state that changing teaching from passive to active does not require abandoning all of our old materials. Instead, Michael and Modell explain that the question is not what materials to use, but how to use them. They give examples of how traditional teaching materials easily can be adapted to be more student-centered investigations.

While the principles outlined in this text are not new to science education reform, they do address secondary and college science teaching (with more examples germane to the latter), and can easily be applied to other subject areas. This practical resource—which includes guidelines for developing assessments and becoming more reflective in teaching practice—will carefully guide anyone who is interested in developing an active learning environment in his or her science (and non-science) classroom.

References

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Pages: 171 Price: **\$39.95 (cloth) \$19.95 (paper)** ISBN: **0-8058-3947-X(cloth) 0-8058-3948-8(paper)**

Reviewed by Carol O'Donnell, a Senior Research Associate at The George Washington University in Washington, DC, and Director of the Scaling up Curriculum for Achievement, Learning, and Equity Project (SCALE-uP), which examines the effects of inquiry-based curriculum materials on middle school students' understanding of science. She also holds a part-time faculty position with the Physics Department, teaching laboratory-based astronomy. Her areas of interest include curriculum development and methods for incorporating inquiry-based learning and teaching into introductory college-level science labs.

Pierangelo, Roger (2004). *The Special Educator's Survival Guide*. Second Edition. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Roger Pierangelo and Jossey-Bass recently released the second edition of *The Special Educator's Survival Guide*. The author claims that the guide not only may be used by special educators, but by other educators, specialists and even parents as they all work together to meet the needs of children with disabilities. It is proposed that this book of "practical tools and suggestions" will aid teachers with all aspects of the special education process.

The 316 page handbook is divided into eight major sections: Roles and Responsibilities, The Special Education Process, The Special Educator's Role in the Special Education Process, Working as a Special Education Teacher, What Special Educators need to Know and Do About..., Dealing with Parents of Children with Disabilities, A Law Primer for Special Educators and Appendixes. While well-organized overall, the book has references to outdated research, standardized tests, and terminology. In addition, with the recent federal reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

(IDEA; December, 2004), some of the suggestions and tips are out of compliance with new regulations for special education.

The first section repeatedly refers to “regular” education and “regular” educators. Many in the field of special education have moved to language that refers to “regular” education as general education. Of particular use is the fourth chapter, where the author offers vignettes that provide a valuable view of working special education teachers, their roles and responsibilities.

The special education process from identification, to referral, to assessment and placement is outlined in the second section. Pierangelo suggests that students be formally tested as part of the pre-referral process. It is the opinion of this reviewer that the suggestion is inappropriate and that individualized standardized testing shouldn't be administered without parental permission. Throughout the following chapters in section two, test scores are not appropriately presented or discussed and many of the standardized tests that are discussed or referenced are out of date and should not be used as part of the special education process.

While the third section provides some valuable tips, the author has neglected to discuss issues surrounding accommodations and modifications for standardized testing. With the current emphasis on testing all students, both of these techniques should be addressed. Part four provides some good tips for classroom design, management, and roles of the new special education teacher. In particular, Chapter 19 outlines a variety of diagnoses that teachers may encounter while working with students with special needs. The most helpful tools in this chapter are the lists of references and resources for each disability category or diagnosis.

Part six includes a variety of chapters designed to aid the classroom teacher in helping parents work with their children. The tips and strategies suggested are those that might work with a variety of different disabilities and ages, and subsequently are both thorough and useful. As stated previously, recent changes in federal law have affected the utility of the seventh part of Pierangelo's book entitled “A Law Primer for Special Education.” Although the chapters presented outline valuable information, readers must be cautioned that even though the text was recently published, some of the information is not current, and all decisions should be aligned to current legal guidelines.

The final section, Appendixes, provides some very important references that will be useful to the classroom teacher. These include definitions for basic terminology and organizations that may assist teachers, students, and parents of children with disabilities. Sample reports and programs are provided as well. While these are appropriate items to include, the reports are over 10 years old, thus providing repeated references to out of date tests and information.

Currency is very important in the field of special education. *The Special Educator's Survival Guide* does provide some valuable resources for the beginning teacher; however, portions of the text are outdated and therefore lose their utility. Even with a recent publication, readers must be cautious and responsible for ensuring that their own knowledge of current law and practice is accurate.

Pages: **316** Price: **\$29.95** ISBN: **9-7879-7096-4**

Reviewed by Kristin K. Stang, Ph.D., Assistant Professor in the Department of Special Education, College of Education, at California State University, Fullerton.

Quintero, Elizabeth P. (2004). *Problem-Posing with Multicultural Children's Literature: Developing Critical Early Childhood Curricula*. New York: Peter Lang.

Using results from a qualitative study on engaging teacher candidates in the use of problem- posing and multicultural literature in early childhood education, Elizabeth P. Quintero's *Problem-Posing with Multicultural Children's Literature* presents a thoughtful guide for education faculty and new teachers alike.

Early in the text, Quintero lays a solid foundation of the research and theory supporting both problem- posing as a method and the importance of critical literacy. Throughout the book, she consistently demonstrates the importance of building a bridge between what the child knows of home and the new school environment.

Practicing what she preaches, practically every chapter includes activities following the Listening, Dialogue, Action process of Paulo Freire (1973). The activities are for both the teacher education

classroom and the early childhood environment. This structure should make it easy for use in an educational setting. Additionally, Quintero has organized the latter chapters following the path of young children as they develop: toddlers, preschool, kindergarten, first grade and second grade. This should help starting teachers as they work in their new profession.

The reflections of teacher education students are liberally shared, effectively illustrating their learning processes and moments of discovery as they learn to be educators. Some student Listening, Dialogue, Action plans are also included showing the teacher candidates' development. Use of these student narratives and plans nicely enhances Quintero's ideas and viewpoints.

Used thoughtfully, *Problem-Posing with Multicultural Children's Literature* can be an engaging and interactive work on early childhood curricula.

References

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Pages: 168 Price: \$32.95 ISBN: 0-8204-6738-3

Reviewed by Melissa Cast, University of Nebraska at Omaha

Rathvon, Natalie (2004) *Early Reading Assessment: A Practitioner's Handbook*. New York: Guilford Press.

This book is a powerful resource for reading specialists, grant writers, school and clinical psychologists, school administrators, those making assessment choices in school districts as well as graduate students seeking degrees in reading, psychology, or educational psychology. Understanding the audience for this text is key to appreciating its extreme usefulness.

This text is exactly what it presents itself to be: a thorough and well-designed handbook for practitioners. The author does an excellent job of presenting and reviewing a myriad of reading assessments for students in the primary grades. The evaluation of the tests is evenhanded, presenting both the advantages and potential pitfalls equally, thus allowing (in fact compelling) the reader to make their own decisions in regards to each assessment. The text also implicitly incorporates three important ideas: an inclusive approach to the assessment of reading, inclusion of oral language measures, and an emphasis on formal assessment.

The book is well organized making it easy to navigate. The author had divided the text into two sections. In the first, there is a general overview of testing terms and theoretical frameworks for measurement followed by domain specific approaches to measuring reading related constructs. The second section reviews, in detail, specific assessments. Because this is a reference volume, the easy navigability is an integral part of the book's success. The assessments included cover a wide array of skills, processes, and components of the reading. This approach is demonstrated by the inclusion of the following areas: phonological processing, orthographic processing, rapid naming, oral language, reading comprehension, spelling, and written expression.

While we have found, from firsthand experience, that this is a very useful book, it needs to be noted that there are several concerns with the text. The first is the author's (or perhaps, publisher's) misunderstanding of the appropriate audience for his book. As stated before, as tool for research and evaluation it is excellent, but as a handbook for pre-service and in-service teachers it is inappropriate. The information included in this book can be overwhelming for anyone not used to technical assessment and reading terminologies. Though there is the section of overview, the text does assume a working knowledge of assessment issues from its audience. For example the discussion of reliability included a short but accessible review of Item Response Theory (IRT). After this first introduction we could find no mention of IRT in test reviews or any criteria to assess IRT information independently.

After the misdirection of audience, which can be avoided if understood from the outset, the most serious shortcoming of this book is that there is no organized argument regarding consequential validity. The consequential basis of validity refers to the implications of test scores as a basis for action: namely the actual and potential social consequences of using these scores (http://oerl.sri.com/instruments/alignment/instralign_tq.html). This dimension of validity is central in educational assessment evaluating the broader impact of using a test and a score. It is important to remember, and be reminded, that any assessment chosen will impact curricular choices and, thus,

must be carefully considered.

Beyond that most grave omission, there are other, more minor concerns with this book. Some of the areas covered were done so sparsely, leaving topics like Curriculum Based Measurements sketchily covered. Had this section, for example, included a discussion of domain sampling and ways of establishing quality criteria, it would have been much more helpful. The addition of more assessments covering a wider range would have extended the audience for this text.

Despite these difficulties, the author has succeeded in reviewing the current issues in testing, reflecting on technical qualities, criteria, and methods for establishing reliability and validity.

This book has proven very useful and is currently being used in our courses as a resource for the audience to which it should have been intended, and, in this context, we highly recommend Rathvon's handbook.

Pages: **620** Price: **\$65.00** ISBN: **1-57230-984-9**

Reviewed by Guy Trainin, Ph.D. and Beth Leader-Janssen, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Rogovin, Paula (2004). *Why Can't You Behave?: The Teacher's Guide to Creative Classroom Management, K-3*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Why can't you behave? The teacher's guide to creative classroom management, K-3 is a small, insightful, clearly organized primer in classroom management. In a new and refreshing way it centers on age-old classroom organizational requisites (clear routines, engaging instruction) that oftentimes cause teachers to have problems in busy classrooms.

A quick glance at Rogovin's index reveals little mention of present, widely-accepted management models. For example, Evertson and Emmer's *Classroom management for elementary teachers* (2000) receives only one citation. And yet a careful read of the text shows Rogovin's successful use of many "tried and true" research-based classroom management strategies.

Rogovin's book is not simply a retelling or relisting of those strategies. Rather *Why can't you behave?* is a humanistic look at students, compliance, cooperation and classroom life. Her approach retains and strengthens the nature of dignity and mutual respect needed in all teacher – student interactions. This text addresses serious questions for today's classroom teachers including: how are discipline and curriculum related, and how can we empower children. Her responses are clear, concise, experientially based and pedagogically sound.

My only disagreement is with the choice of title itself since the title doesn't really capture the essence of the book. "What can I, the teacher do to create a classroom that encourages you to behave?" more aptly describes this wonderful addition to our "students in classrooms" knowledge base. In any case every teacher should own a copy.

References

Evertson, C.M., Emmer, E.T. & Worsham, M.E. (2000) *Classroom management for elementary teachers*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Pages: **176** Price: **\$19.00** ISBN: **0-325-00651-2**

Reviewed by Virginia G. Johnson, Ph.D., St. Joseph's University

Sanders, Susan M. (2003) *Teen Dating Violence: The Invisible Peril*. New York: Peter Lang.

In *Teen Dating Violence: The Invisible Peril*, the author makes a bold move to illustrate a phenomenon that is largely ignored and difficult to quantify. Through surveys and interviews at a high school, the author reviews perceptions about teen dating violence from several individuals involved either directly or indirectly, including teens themselves, teachers, counselors, and domestic abuse counselors, as well as teen domestic violence survivors. Sanders also researched various agencies that work with adult domestic violence, as well as a family member of a victim of a fatal account of domestic

violence. Although arguably anecdotal, the research is as sound as it appears it can be at this time. The author is fully aware of the limits of the data collection and research, including the non-random sampling, the privacy issues which affect sampling, the perceptions that may alter answers, and the reluctance of teens to answer. However, the author addresses these caveats and proceeds to provide some analysis in this area, which has been previously lacking.

The book is more of an awareness resource than a tool kit for implementation of preventative or intervention methods. *Teen Dating Violence* is aimed at increasing the discourse among a variety of practitioners and individuals, including family, friends, educators, researchers, law enforcement personnel, legislators, religious groups, and social services workers. The book highlights how each of these groups may be ignorant of the presence and the extent of teen dating violence. The author illustrates several reasons for this, including the fact that teens themselves may be ignorant of violence, primarily due to their lack of dating experience that provides context for appropriate and inappropriate behavior.

Even when teens are aware of violence, they often are reluctant to talk to adults or peers for several reasons, including a general fear of talking to adults, shame, or a psychological reluctance to not have a boyfriend despite the abuse. Even when the indirect groups are cognizant of these issues, the author illustrates how they are ill equipped to deal with them. For example, while the courts may allow a teen to obtain a restraining order against an abusive partner, they are not fully aware of the potential contact that the teens have. Specifically, the courts do not address teen violence and restraining orders in terms of the schools that the teens may attend and the classes they may have together. Another example is when a teen lives with an abusive partner and tries to escape. Often, they are not allowed in shelters because they are minors and the shelters are not licensed to accept minor individuals.

The author's intent is to raise awareness of the issue of teen violence among both teens and those around them. Subsequently, the author intends to illustrate the current inadequacy of all groups in dealing appropriately with teen violence once it has been recognized. The book, albeit redundant at times, is adept at illustrating these points. However, the book is an ironic state of being perhaps overly numeric for practitioners, yet not quantitative enough for researchers. That is, while there are substantial numbers and data based on the high school survey and interviews, the rigor of the research, as the author recognizes, is lacking, making it difficult to draw concrete conclusions. This supports her position that there is not adequate research and awareness of the topic. Sanders hopes this will elicit further research from additional sources. At the very least, the book provides information for thoughtful dialogue.

There are some guidelines at the end of *Teen Dating Violence* including recommendations for dealing with teen dating violence. However, Sanders skips the first stage, there is scant information on how to detect teen dating violence. She does, provide information on roles for parents, peers, educators, church-based personnel, the law enforcement community, the courts, and the research community. The recommendations range from specific and relevant, to anecdotal and abstract. Specifically, the information for peers (p. 139) includes advice such as, don't be judgmental, help him/her find supportive adults, help him/her carry out safety plans, etc. Contrast this with the advice for the research community, which takes a cognitive developmental approach. These recommendations state that

...losses loom larger than gains and that the concepts of 'psychological regret' and 'selective perception' play major roles in decision making...In the context of a dating relationship, for example, the prospect of losing a boyfriend, even if he is abusive, and then either having no boyfriend at all or possibly finding one that is not abusive, may dominate a teen's choice about whether to reject or remain with an abusive partner (pp. 143-144).

While the cognitive descriptions are interesting, they may play a larger role for each group in understanding teens' behaviors and thus should be part of an overall recommendation, not limited to the research community.

This book would be greatly enhanced by a list of resources at the end. The author clearly conducted substantial research across the nation on various agencies that work with adult violence, many of which can be useful for teens. Information about these agencies is scattered throughout the book as evidence, but it would be helpful to include it in a resources section at the end.

Overall, *Teen Dating Violence* achieves its purposes in raising questions about identifying and dealing with teen violence, and makes this a responsibility for all involved.

Pages: 177 Price: \$29.95 ISBN: 0-8204-5762-0

Reviewed by Tawny L. Beal, St. Mary's College of California

Wilhelm, Jeffrey D. (2004) *Reading IS Seeing: Learning to Visualize Scenes, Characters, Ideas, and Text Worlds to Improve Comprehension and Reflective Reading*. New York: Scholastic.

Teachers have known for a long time and research has corroborated that students need to be able to create visual images of what they are reading in order for them to better comprehend the text. Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons that will be debated for years to come, many children today have difficulty visualizing what they are reading. The debate will not help the classroom teacher who must help the children under his care become successful readers but *Reading IS Seeing* by Jeffrey Wilhelm will.

A thirteen year veteran teacher of middle school reading and high school English, Wilhelm successfully presents a wide variety of techniques and strategies he has used to help students become better visualizers and successful readers. In doing so he carefully blends theory, current research, case studies and techniques into an easy to understand text that will encourage readers to implement the strategies in their own instructional situations. Although many of the strategies are beneficial to all readers regardless of ability and they can be adapted for large groups, Wilhelm demonstrates they are most successful when done in small groups or with individuals. He also demonstrates how the strategies can be used with a wide variety of texts including fiction, nonfiction, poetry and picture books. Some of the strategies included are idea tableaux, mirror mapping, illustrated journals, picture maps, character symbol maps and quote books. Samples of student work are included as well as explicit instructions on how to implement the strategies with students and incorporate them into a teacher's overall curriculum goals. The techniques are particularly useful for teaching reading in content areas so they shouldn't be relegated to the language arts classroom.

The overall layout of the book is easy to use and inviting. Boxes containing extras such as additional resources, tips for modeling and points to ponder are interspersed throughout the text where they can be the most helpful. Of particular interest is Wilhelm's bibliography. Not only does he include works cited but he also includes a list of all the children's literature he used in his discussion.

In summary I would definitely recommend this book to any teacher that is looking for effective activities that will motivate his students of all abilities to become more successful readers. Both the student and teacher will enjoy doing these activities.

Pages: 195 Price: \$19.99 ISBN: 0439303095

Reviewed by Judy Walker, University of North Carolina, Charlotte



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