

**THE INTENTIONAL TEACHER: Choosing the Best Strategies for Young Children's Learning.** Ann S. Epstein. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2007. 114 pp. \$20.00. This informative book discusses the significance of intentional teaching for preschoolers and the instructor across specific content areas. "Intentional" means to act with a goal in mind. Teachers must work to extend their students' level of cognitive thinking through the various activities that take place in the preschool classroom. Epstein believes that optimal learning for preschoolers occurs when the child and adult share the responsibility for learning—what may be referred to as "participating in a democratic society."

The teacher seeks to inform her preschoolers through the use of pre-academic practices and early learning of social-emotional goals. The teacher, along with her preschoolers, shares ideas on how to accomplish specific goals. The teacher creates an environment that supports preschoolers' social-emotional development by providing developmentally appropriate materials that are accessible and easy to manipulate. It is also important for the teacher to determine how his/her class is moving toward specific academic and/or social/behavioral goals, and then assess the developmental learning outcomes for the students. The teacher also must encourage family involvement throughout this process.

This easy-to-read book is divided into the following specific content area chapters: 1) Early Language and Literacy Development, 2) Mathematics and Scientific Inquiry, 3) Social Skills and Understanding, 4) Physical Movement, and 5) Visual Arts. In the last chapter, Epstein offers her personal reflections on the intentional

teaching process. She expresses her hope that early childhood educators can use her concepts and strategies as a framework for furthering their preschool children's pre-academic and social learning experiences. *Reviewed by Mark Brown, Daemen College, Amherst, New York.*

**HELP! MY KIDS DON'T ALL SPEAK ENGLISH: How To Set Up a Language Workshop in Your Linguistically Diverse Classroom.** Nancy Akhavan. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2006. 224 pp. \$25.00. Nancy Akhavan wrote this book using, as inspiration, her lengthy experience as a bilingual teacher in the primary grades, as well as her perspectives as a school administrator in settings educating large numbers of children with a wide variety of linguistic diversities. In this very user-friendly text, Akhavan builds a bridge for less-experienced teachers attempting to infuse standards and mandates into classrooms in a way that offers rich, motivating language experiences for the children who most need them.

This book contains three sections. The two chapters in Part One center on preparing for language instruction; Part Two contains five chapters about language learning and language workshops; and the three chapters in Part Three are dedicated to structuring units of study in terms of content and strategy. There are two appendices and a section of children's literature references, as well as a reference list that contains many other sources, drawn upon for this book, that might be helpful to teachers concerned about second language learning.

Language workshop allows the teacher flexibility to scaffold instruction through modeling specific uses of language, posing problems, and

teaching specific thinking strategies. It focuses on the specific needs of each student by providing the guidance and opportunity necessary for acquiring language, learning the structures of discussion and debate, and practicing reasoning through ideas and texts. By its nature, language workshop provides a warm and supportive environment conducive to learning.

*Help! My Kids Don't All Speak English* is essentially a "how to" book that provides, in detail, a method for establishing a language workshop in any classroom, which will result in children being able to:

- Share ideas and decisions, and understand both oral and written English
- Think critically by analyzing, synthesizing, and comparing texts
- Acquire and apply the conventions of English
- Gain language skills through authentic literacy lessons.

The outstanding strength of this work lies in its authentic methods of teaching and its systematic method of establishing a language workshop. This book contains classroom-tested units of study, sample lessons for workshop teaching, ready-to-use graphic organizers, and a rich booklist designed to use and support a language workshop. In classrooms using Language Workshop, all children are likely to benefit, even though the primary focus is on children whose first language is not English. *Reviewed by Carole S. Campbell, Green Valley, Arizona.*

**LITERATURE IS BACK: Using the Best Books for Teaching Readers and Writers Across Genres.** Carol J. Fuhler & Maria P. Walther. New York: Scholastic, 2007. 272 pp.

\$29.99. At first glance, *Literature Is Back* appears to be a straightforward work that offers support for utilizing children's literature in the elementary classroom. It is this—and much more. Although the point is never belabored in the text, savvy readers will immediately recognize the title as being inherently political in that it references an anticipated return to literature-based learning in literacy classrooms—a trend given short shrift in an education era hallmarked by scripted reading curricula and an ever-burgeoning slate of required standardized tests.

The opening section of this book provides an introduction to the nature, scope, and growth of publishing for juvenile audiences and invites readers to consider the significance of children's literature on both life and learning. The authors present a well-grounded rationale for why literature can and should play a central role in effective literacy classrooms. Successive chapters take readers on a genre-by-genre journey through the world of children's books, introducing picture books, traditional literature, modern fantasy, contemporary realistic fiction, nonfiction, and poetry. Each genre-specific chapter is divided into discrete sections. The "Building Background" sections include characteristics, criteria, and subcategories for each genre. The "Linking Literature and Learning" sections provide sample, genre-specific mini-lessons. Helpful reproducibles for inviting reader response and tracking student progress are included throughout the text, as are lists of recommended titles and Web resources.

The authors of this inviting and insightful text believe that well-chosen, high-quality literature has a transformative power: It can change dreary classroom days into positive ones, and engage children in a manner that supports their growth from reluctant readers into avid ones. Moreover, they believe that excellent literature, together with thoughtfully

selected pedagogical strategies, can provide students with the support they need to become accomplished readers, critical thinkers, and successful learners. The authors present their ideas in a lively and persuasive manner.

Although this book could be used as a supplementary text in a children's literature or content area reading graduate course, it will probably find its most receptive home in the hands of practicing teachers. Full of well-grounded research, up-to-date book recommendations, and sound pedagogical strategies, this text is an excellent choice for the thoughtful, literature-loving practitioner. *Reviewed by Patricia A. Crawford, Associate Professor of Early Childhood Education, University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.*

**TEACHING AS AN ACT OF LOVE: Thoughts and Recollections of a Former Teacher, Principal, and Kid.** *Richard Lakin. Self-published via iUniverse, 2007. 231 pp. Paperback, \$19.95.* As educators, it is easy to feel discouraged and oppressed by the bureaucratic demands of our profession. We do not often take the time to acknowledge the immeasurable impact we have on our students or to enjoy the humor a typical school day can bring. Richard Lakin has produced a book to help educators gain perspective on the education field, as well as bring a smile to a harried teacher's face. Anyone who appreciates the *Chicken Soup for the Soul* book series will enjoy *Teaching as an Act of Love: Thoughts and Recollections of a Former Teacher, Principal, and Kid*.

Lakin has over 40 years of experience as an elementary teacher and principal in the Connecticut Independent School District. *Teaching as an Act of Love* is essentially a memoir, including 55 anecdotes and musings from the heart of a true child advocate. He has organized his writings into four basic categories: 1) tales in teaching, 2) the unique position

of being a principal, 3) tributes to exceptional faculty and staff he has encountered over his career, and 4) recommendations on an effective home-school partnership.

The majority of the pieces will resonate with any educator who has ever thought he or she "lost" a student (*Where Is Michael Young?*, p. 43) or worked with a principal so strict even the teachers were frightened of her (*Sheridan and Miss Mildred Walker*, p. 27). As a principal, Lakin values empowering his teachers as a more critical goal than fulfilling bureaucratic mandates, and all teachers can benefit from the practical solutions derived from his experience as an administrator. Lakin's mantra of "every child a miracle" can be felt in every aspect of the book. Every new teacher or principal should have this on his or her bookshelf. *Reviewed by Melissa Dabiri, Adjunct Professor, Azusa Pacific University, Azusa, California.*

**CHEW ON THIS: Everything You Don't Want To Know About Fast Food.** *Eric Schlosser and Charles Wilson. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2007. 320 pp. Paperback, \$8.95.* Fast food seems to be the topic du jour, as evident with the release of the documentary film *Super Size Me*, the publication of *Fast Food Nation*, and now, a version adapted for a younger target audience—*Chew on This: Everything You Don't Want To Know About Fast Food*, written by Eric Schlosser and Charles Wilson. Schlosser's *Fast Food Nation*, the book that made everyone aware of the horrors of the fast food industry and its societal impact, is adapted here for young adolescents. Although this adaptation is a bit watered down, the pro-union, anti-big corporation message is still there.

Although some gruesome and shocking topics are discussed in the book (such as the behind-the-scenes look at a slaughterhouse), Schlosser and Wilson manage to maintain humor along the way and