Reviews

The Claims of Feeling: Readings in Aesthetic Education

Malcolm Ross
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: The Falmer Press, 1989

—Reviewed by Richard Sinatra, St. John's University, Jamaica, New York

Arts-in-education specialists, teachers, and advisors will find this book interesting and serious reading. The book contains twelve chapters grouped into the general headings of history, theoretical issues, professional development, examination, and assessment, all generated at the University of Exeter, England. The issues of principle and practice in both arts education and the general curriculum experienced by British educators are similar to those faced by their American and Canadian counterparts. Editor Malcolm Ross has presented a number of new authors in the field of arts education in order to bring fresh perspectives to age-old problems. Chapters such as "The Arts and Special Needs" by David Ward, "Thirty Thousand Angels: Children's Writing as Art" by Dennis Carter, and "Does Gender Matter? An Evaluation of the Arts Curriculum" by Patricia Picard present interesting dimensions of the application of arts strategies in special education, writing, and literature.

Available from The Falmer Press, Taylor and Francis, Inc., 242 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 19106–1906.

Finding Our Own Way

Judith M. Newman
Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann Educational Books, Inc., 1990

—Reviewed by Janice Tomlinson, Winston-Salem, North Carolina

If the reader is a traveler on the road toward having a learner-directed classroom, she or he will be interested in reading what these Canadian teachers have shared. Judith Newman has collected testimonials from many of her graduate students as they try learner-directed teaching. The author views the learner-directed classroom as one where the students are more responsible for the knowledge gained. The book covers how the teacher learns by teaching and how the teacher can take risks so that school will be more meaningful for the students.

These accounts vary from incorporating reading and writing across the curriculum to teaching learner-directed French classes. Although each personal account is different, there is a common thread in their struggles to unlearn the traditional teacher-directed style and to take the challenge of trying this new approach. They relate accounts of trial and error, backsliding into their traditional ways, and pressure from administrators, parents, and peers who are not knowledgeable about this new teaching method.

The appeal of this collection is that these teachers have not arrived at their destination but are determined that the long journey is worth the effort.

Available from Heinemann Educational Books, Inc., 70 Court St., Portsmouth, NH 03501.

Curriculum Assessment and Reform

Andy Hargreaves
Bristol, Pennsylvania: Open University Press

—Reviewed by Roy R. Pellicano, Brooklyn, New York

Why do schools remain unchanged despite a long history of reform efforts? Many would answer that reform of American schools could never be successful when it is top-down in design, reform by decree or exhortation. Moving away from a centralized administrative control model, many school systems in the United States have elected to institutionalize localized, school-centered, if not school-based, management and shared decision making models.

But Andy Hargreaves reports that a decade of reform efforts in the United Kingdom based upon a "school-centered innovation" model that mirrors the current U.S. effort did not yield innovative or lasting changes. Schools remained virtually unchanged in their curriculum and instruction programs and strategies. Hargreaves' work provides an opportunity to contrast, evaluate, and adapt the British experience with the process and outcome goals of the school-based management strategies in the United States. Specifically, Hargreaves provides insight into the concerns, aspirations, and needs of the classroom teacher when the teacher is responsible for innovation within a school system that maintains external control over the curriculum, in large part through standardized testing. The British experience reinforces the concerns of many American reformers who advocate a variant of school reform that includes changes in the ethos and culture of schools.

In sum, *Curriculum and Assessment Reform* is required reading, and it should be accompanied by a reading of ASCD's 1990 Yearbook *Changing School Culture Through Staff Development*.

Available from Open University Press, 1900 Frost Road, Suite 101, Bristol, PA 19007.

Read to Write: Using Children's Literature as a Springboard for Teaching Writing

John Warren Stewig
Catonah, New York: Richard C. Owen Publishers, Inc., 1990

—Reviewed by Janice Tomlinson, Winston-Salem, North Carolina

As an elementary teacher, do you feel uncomfortable teaching writing? John Stewig gives the reader a basic

course in how to use literature to teach writing. First, he gives a brief description of how the emphasis on composition has changed over the years into the writing process we have today. Next, the reader will find a scope and sequence chart for planning the year.

Stewig continues with chapters about setting, characters, plot, figurative language, and poetry, each chapter containing literature suggestions, discussion about skills, and helpful hints about presenting literature. The aim is not to dissect literature but to let the class enjoy it.

Since elementary students view editing as copying their writing over again, the author explains the different types of editing the teacher should use. He gives various ways to change a composition, from adding descriptive words to using more conversation or dialect. The author concludes his basic course for elementary teachers with an extensive bibliography of books to use with children and professional books on the topic of using literature to teach writing.

Available from Richard C. Owen Publishers, Inc., 135 Catonah Ave., Catonah, New York.

On Literacy and Its Teaching

Gail E. Hawisher and Anna O. Soter
Albany, New York
State University of New York Press, 1990

—Reviewed by Patricia McDaniel Dombart, Butler, Pennsylvania

The editors of *On Literacy and Its Teaching* have compiled a truly intriguing collection of essays which should quickly become required reading for everyone involved in English education. Their intent was to produce an anthology "that addresses professional concerns as well as research and theory, along with their relation to curricula in English." Here they have accomplished this Herculean task.

The essays give a picture of where we are in the teaching of English and a kaleidoscope of how we got here. They deal with such topics as the ever-present debate over content vs. skills, a history of the teaching of English, the effect of the teacher, the impact of the National Writing Project, the role of rhetoric, the lure of computer networking, and even the teaching of English as a second or foreign language.

My favorite chapter vividly details the drama of the 1987 three-week English Coalition Conference on Maryland's Eastern Shore during which 60 English teachers from elementary, secondary, and collegiate levels discovered that the necessity of responding to the intellectual conservatism of Hirsch and Bennett impelled them to speak in a common voice concerning the preferred direction of English instruction. Their call for an "interactive classroom" and an "integrative, learning-centered approach" will strike a responsive chord with most English teachers.

The anthology should definitely be considered as part of the syllabus for anyone engaged in preservice or inservice instruction since it provides both perspective and fuel for discussion. This collection's vivid presentation of key issues make this stimulating reading for any English teacher. It is likely to provoke a desire to respond to the debate or to reflect upon one's own practice.

Available from State University of New York Press, State University Plaza, Albany, NY 12246.

Public Alternative Education: Options and Choice for Today's Schools

Tim Young
New York: Teacher's College Press, 1990

—Reviewed by Joe Nathan, Director, Center for School Reform, University of Minnesota's Humphrey Institute, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Tim Young's new book, *Public Alternative Education*, reminds me of the 1960's song "Blowing in the Wind." The song asks several questions including "How many years can some people exist before they're allowed to be free ... How many deaths will it take till we know that too may people have died? The answer, my friend, is blowing in the wind, the answer is blowing in the wind."

How many explanations of alternative schools ... how many reviews of research showing some youngsters who have done poorly in one kind of school do better in another ... how many examples of the great enthusiasm of alternative-school teachers will it take before most educators accept the value of providing different kinds of public schools from which students, families, and educators can select?

Tim Young's book will help us answer these questions. A public school teacher for several years, Young has worked closely with the Washington State Alternative Learning Association while a professor of education at Central Washington University. In this book he has assembled descriptions of some of the best public alternative schools in the country. He goes beyond "p.r." descriptions to analyze challenges these schools have faced and how they have changed. He lists features of successful alternative shools, including small size, concern for the whole student, supportive environment, and sense of community/mission.

Young thinks alternative schools help improve student performance and, further, that they offer "partial solutions to achieving educational excellence and equity in schools and correcting social injustice in our society."

Available from Teachers' College Press, P.O. Box 2032, Colchester, VT 05449, for $15.95 softcover and $28.95 hardcover.

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