

Living and Learning Mathematics

David J. Whitin, Heidi Mills, and Timothy O'Keefe

Portsmouth, N.H.:

Heinemann Educational Books, Inc., 1990

The title of this book is a perfect description of the tasks set for its readers. Stories about children and their teachers' interpretations of their work allow us to live and learn with the children in a "whole mathematics" classroom. The excitement of learning in this classroom makes us feel that we belong there, and that we, too, can "do it." The secret, as in all holistic educating, is in connecting to the learner's interests—with young children a great deal of math can be connected to such themes as tooth loss and growth, so that they can "use mathematics in an authentic way." When tasks are open-ended and related to the children's lives, learning goes far beyond what educators have traditionally assumed was possible.

One fascinating chapter details how the children in one school use graphs and surveys during their day, even in reflecting on their own behavior; another reminds us of the importance of the parent connection. Another chapter describes how books give rise to mathematical inquiry as well as language work. Throughout, talk is a key element: the children get to explain their thinking, and the teachers get to hear how the children are learning.

This book is so winningly presented, with thoughts about mathematical literacy that are so seldom stated, that the occasional repetition of an idea or an example is forgivable. These authors remind us that mathematics is a tool, not a closed system, and that we too easily underestimate how well children use this tool already. For children, "mathematics is a way of knowing and learning about the world." Their world.

Available from Heinemann Educational Books, Inc., 361 Hanover St., Portsmouth, NH 03801, for \$17.

—Reviewed by Katie Johnson, Seattle, Washington.

Teaching as Decision Making: Instructional Practices for the Successful Teacher

Marvin Pasch, Georgetta Sparks-Langer, Trevor G. Gardner, Alane J. Starko, and Christella D. Moody

White Plains, New York:

Longman Publishing Group, 1991

Preservice teachers, mentors, and supervisors will find in this book everything they need to know about lesson planning, teaching, and managing a classroom. Chock-full of sensible, eclectic advice for the "reflective teacher," that is, the thoughtful decision maker, each chapter contains a brief theoretical overview, preview, objectives, checkup, summary, guided and individual practice, and current references. Above all, this book is user friendly, with a clear, confident, jargon-free writing style.

Available from Longman Publishing Group, 95 Church St., White Plains, NY 10601.

—Reviewed by Christine Roberts, University of Connecticut, Storrs.

How Administrators Can Improve Teaching

Peter Seldin and Associates
San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc.

Higher education colleagues, especially academic administrators who are the essential partners in striving to provide leadership for effective instruction, will find this a useful book. Its theme is that teaching is an undervalued profession; therefore, an initiative calling for refocusing campus climate to foster effective teaching is essential.

The authors propose a refocusing of faculty rewards to recognize the value of both research/publication and effective pedagogy. Colleges should exercise caution not to pit teaching against research/scholarship. They should strive to tailor faculty development programming to the culture of the institution; "hold to the bedrock belief that faculty members merit, rather than need, help"

(p. 17); and encourage use of the teaching portfolio process to recognize a faculty member's "instructional bag." Further, they should work from an operational understanding of adult development; use student ratings in systematic analysis of teaching; motivate research faculty to take teaching improvement seriously; and recognize that department chairs are key in creating a climate in which teaching is valued.

The authors hope the institutional climate will foster equal reward for excellent teaching and quality research/publications—a mediocre teacher with flashy scholarly accomplishments should not be rewarded more than an excellent teacher.

Available from Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers, 350 Sansome St., San Francisco, CA 94104.

—Reviewed by Jerrold D. Hopfengardner, University of Dayton, Dayton, Ohio.

Friday Night Lights—A Town, a Team, and a Dream

H. G. Bissinger

Reading, Massachusetts:

Addison Wesley, 1990

Friday Night Lights is a sobering account of a city and a school district with distorted values, misplaced educational priorities, subtle and not-so-subtle forms of racism, and the pressures that a football coach and his players feel when most of the pride in their West Texas community comes through the success of their team. It is a classic example of the exploitation of 18-year-old football players who are catered to, given favors by members of the pep group, allowed to break rules, and excused from their school work—kids who live to play football. *Friday Night Lights* depicts athletics in high school at its worst.

Bissinger details the lives of several individuals—players, coaches, community leaders, townspeople—to illustrate the overblown importance of football at Odessa's Permian High School. He characterizes a city where the county library contains a 235-page history of the local high school football program

To Advance Learning: A Handbook on Developing K-12 Postsecondary Partnerships

Manuel N. Gomez, Joan Bissell, Leslie Danziger, and Robin Casselman
Lanham, Maryland:
University Press of America, Inc., 1990

Administrative leaders must ... be consistently alert to the fragility of the essential partnership elements of open communication, coequal participation, and empowerment (p. 124).

This book discusses the policy, curriculum, and administrator-teacher implications of symbiotic school-college partnerships. The establishing and nurturing of such partnerships should be a vital component of the 1990s' restruc-

turing agenda for K-12 and postsecondary education.

The authors describe the most successful Project STEP (Student-Teacher Educational Partnership)—a coalition of California K-12 districts and postsecondary institutions. This "cookbook" illustrates the anatomy of a successful cooperative effort, and will prove to be a vital resource for leaders considering intersegmental partnerships.

Nine chapters chronicle the evolution of this networking effort: pre-operational planning, organizing, operating, fiscal and human resource concerns, program evaluation, and sustaining leadership and momentum. Operational checklists accompany each chapter, and the appendices contain a project chronology. The authors also provide a practical analysis of two dynamics central to the project: that participants come from the divergent cultures of K-12

schools and institutions of higher education and that universities have traditionally failed to recognize elementary and secondary colleagues as equal partners. They argue convincingly that we must find ways to empower K-12 teachers to exercise leadership in the project.

It's too bad that the authors didn't discuss the possible contributions that business and industrial communities might bring to these partnerships, with their rich resources of leadership, facilities, and "products." Nevertheless, this book is a rich resource and should be priority reading for educational leaders hoping to contribute to the reform initiatives of the '90s!

Available from University Press of America, Inc., 4720 Boston Way, Lanham, MD 20706, for \$18 (paper).

—Reviewed by Jerrold D. Hopfengardner,
University of Dayton, Dayton, Ohio.

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