

Recensions / Book Reviews

D. Jean Clandinin, Janice Huber, Marilyn Huber, M. Shaun Murphy, Anne Murray Orr, Marni Pearce, and Pam Steeves. (2006). *Composing Diverse Identities: Narrative Inquires into the Interwoven Lives of Children and Teachers*. New York: Routledge. 196 pages. ISBN : 0-415-36218-0 (hardback); 0-415-39747-2 (paperback).

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Co-authored by D. Jean Clandinin, Janice Huber, Marilyn Huber, M. Shaun Murphy, Anne Murray Orr, Marni Pearce, and Pam Steeves (with an Afterword by Stefinee Pinnegar), *Composing Diverse Identities: Narrative Inquiries into the Interwoven Lives of Children and Teachers* extends the boundaries of what is known about curriculum, teaching/learning, and narrative inquiry as a research methodology. Drawing on the contributions of Dewey and Schwab and continuing in the pioneering tradition of Connelly and Clandinin, the work captures complex intersections where children's stories nested against the backdrop of the narratives lived and told by their families meet institutional narratives lived and told by teachers and administrators. In the volume, lives in motion are slowed down and moments are closely attended to. Through this approach, readers come to know school as experienced by Lia, James, Julie, and Aaron, among other students. For example, Lia routinely arrives late because her Eastern cultural background privileges male children and she must deliver her brothers to their classrooms first; James struggles to fit in but his verbal acumen causes him to stand out; Julie wrestles with routines yet seemingly articulates elder wisdom as a First Nations Canadian; and Aaron's Métis cultural practices collide with the story his urban school context demands that he live and tell. With enormous sensitivity to persons and keen insight into culture, the

authors introduce readers to wonders and puzzles that create tensions and entailments for these students and many more as they navigate the intricacies of their educational lives lived at Ravine Elementary School and City Heights School in Edmonton. Along the way, such commonplace matters as attendance policies, snack routines, and character education are called into question in ways that provoke re-thinking of their original purposes.

Methodologically, readers are introduced to fictionalization, “an act of using what you know of something – your life, place, events – to create a story around this knowledge that shifts the original story of experience” (p. 66). Such fictionalized accounts can fruitfully be used as a research tool to explore possible plotlines to live by. At the same time, children, parents, and educators – as part of being human – also can employ imagined wonderings to bridge gaps between the stories individuals tell and the stories others expect of them. In certain situations, fictionalization can mask realities that contribute to troubling phenomena such as the student dropout rate. In other instances, fictionalization may be a form of “arrogant perception,” resulting in a “failure to identify with the person that one views arrogantly” (Lugones, 1987, p. 4). Thus, under the guise of benevolence, students may be pointed in directions that others believe are in their best interests, but with which they and/or their families may not agree. Hence, Clandinin et al. emphasize that:

In attending to the stories of...children, we became aware that fictions may be created by and for children for *different purposes* and we began to realize the complexities of how fictions are intertwined with stories to live by. (p. 78, emphasis added)

In addition to fictionalized accounts, the authors also productively use word images to chronicle a version of each of the educators’ lived and told stories. These word images stand in juxtaposition to the field and research texts that distinguish the student accounts. They give the teachers’ and administrators’ experiences a distinctive flavour without overpowering the children’s stories. Furthermore, a common narrative thread ties these images together: the educators’ personal tales of coming to know diversity. For example, readers become acquainted with

another student, Amit, through “stitched-together second-hand stories” (p. 96) told by Jeanette, Amit’s principal, who attempts to walk with her “in a good way” (Young, 2003). Readers soon learn how chagrined Jeanette is to discover that Amit will be returned to India to live with her grandparents while her parents await the birth of a male child in Canada. Amit’s possible placement in a special learning strategies classroom, peopled by mostly male students, seemingly triggered the family decision. Not only will Amit end her formal education, she most certainly will be married at 13-years of age, according to East Indian tradition. As layers of Jeanette’s coming-to-know-diversity story become unraveled, readers learn of her personal experiences as a child and her experiences as a mother attempting to understand school life through her son’s eyes. All this contributes to the “multiple colliding stories” (p. 109) that Jeanette encounters as the situation with Amit escalates. Yet, despite her best attempts, Jeanette as a school principal is unable to interrupt the family story that has a stronghold on the child’s future. But, in the midst, readers will find themselves encountering an unanticipated turn of events: Jeanette engaging in a profoundly relational act that may on more than one occasion assist Amit in claiming her voice.

Taken together, *Composing Diverse Identities* is a crowning achievement where relational inquiry and collaboratively written texts are concerned. Not only does the volume portray a team of researchers conducting a sustained inquiry in the throes of the doings and goings on of several characters (principals, teachers, children, parents) situated in two school settings, it involves the mindful negotiation of texts – field texts and research texts – with participants and fellow researchers alike. This was but one way that the complicated, interwoven texture of lives was instantiated. Another way was through co-composition. The authors’ collaborative signature suggested that these researchers lived as deeply alongside one another as they did alongside their research participants. At the same time as Clandinin et al. managed to overcome the isolation and competitiveness that marks life in higher education, they were able to keep lived tensions and contradictions in the forefront and hold the dominant research plotline of arrogant perception at bay. Through this volume, readers are awakened to new possibilities of how

research can be enacted and fresh ways that education can be lived. Thanks to this book, readers are afforded a penetrating look at what is – with an eye to what could be – in Canadian schools.

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Rita M. Kissen, (Ed). (2002). *Getting Ready for Benjamin: Preparing Teachers for Sexual Diversity in the Classroom*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002. 266 pages. ISBN 0-7425-1677-6.

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Getting Ready for Benjamin is a timely text for teacher educators, preservice and practicing teachers, and school administrators who want to make schools more inclusive spaces that visibly and meaningfully address sex-and-gender differences. It overtly attends to many complex issues, omissions, exclusions, hopes, desires, and possibilities that texture life in schools in the realm of these differences. This book provides a forum to engage the familial and the pedagogical in the edgy intersection where sex-and-gender differences are further complicated by culture, power, and other differences that characterize people. As editor, Rita M. Kissen has clear desires, desires that connect the personal and the pedagogical and take the reader to the heart of family and schooling: She wants schools and classrooms to be inclusive, welcoming spaces for her grandson Benjamin (who will enter first grade in 2005) and his two moms, one of whom is her daughter. And, she wants schools and classrooms to be inclusive, welcoming spaces for Benjamin’s LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) and questioning classmates as they grow up.

Still, in the face of history and tradition, these purposes remain difficult to achieve. Schools, as sociocultural sites that prepare the next generation of citizens, continue to be a collective replicator of a heteronormative status quo that keeps families like Benjamin's invisible and disenfranchised. Kissen challenges teacher-education programs to play an integral role in changing this status quo. She states, "The guiding vision behind this book is that lgbt issues *are* inextricably interwoven into the basic concerns of preservice [teacher and administrator] education" (p. 4, emphasis added). This position infers that when we fail to build awareness of sex-and-gender differences, we advance the implicit or hidden curriculum that also influences the educational process. Thus, for Kissen, the book is about making LGBT persons and issues more visible in teacher education. Moreover, it is about contributors to the book sharing how they enact a politics of visibility against the grain of heterosexism, which is a systemic barrier pervasive in curriculum and instruction that, by nature and design, helps normalize homophobia.

In Part I of this book, *Surveying the Landscape*, the contributors depict the current state of LGBT awareness in teacher education. For example, in his chapter, Arthur Lipkin takes up the challenges of covering LGBT topics in teacher education in the face of the resistance in teacher-education programs to doing so. Sometimes the resistance is caught up in political fears; sometimes it is caught up in a lack of pedagogical preparedness to address such topics. Lipkin stresses the importance of engaging sex-and-gender topics in the context of preparing teachers for the exigencies of a diverse classroom. Other essays in Part I also take up the theme of resistance. In an essay on countering invisibility and creating allies in teacher-education programs, Diana Straut and Mara Sapon-Shevin identify four pervasive barriers to inclusion for academics and students in these programs: assumptions (everyone in this class is heterosexual), invisibility of the hegemonic norm (heteronormativity is taken for granted), counterhegemonic practices (attempts to include LGBT issues are usually perceived as dangerous instead of casual or normal), and curricular gaps (it is hard to find suitable resources). In examining practice and social interactions in physical education, Michael Gard argues that sexual diversity is central to physical education as an

educational and cultural practice, and as a site where traditional norms of masculinity need to be challenged. He highlights the practical and curricular challenges that face physical education as a key sociocultural location where homophobic suspicion and violence are pervasive. Deborah P. Berrill and Wayne Martino explore the key issues of sexuality, masculinity, and normalization in the preparation of male teachers. They examine how heterosexism and homophobia regulate teacher identities and behaviors. They investigate the critical concern of male teachers who feel they become sexually suspect when they appear to be too nurturing. They also examine the critical concern of gay male teachers who often anxiously hide in their work because gay sexuality is associated with deviance and, even more insidiously, pedophilia. The remaining essays in this section speak to the need to improve the inclusive educational preparation of early childhood and elementary preservice teachers; absences in anti-homophobia education; and the problems of juxtaposing LGBT issues with such topics as teen pregnancy, drug abuse, sexual abuse, STDs, and HIV/AIDS.

In Part II, *"Add LGBT and Stir:" Multiculturalism and Sexual Diversity*, contributors survey the place of LGBT issues in multicultural education. In an essay focused on sexual diversity and inclusion, Paula Kluth and Kevin P. Colleary speak to the complexity of differences shaping student diversity today. They explore notions of dignity, respect, advocacy, and privacy as integral components of inclusive schooling. In his essay on expanding contemporary understanding of multiculturalism to include a focus on LGBT persons and issues, Will Letts calls for a thicker multiculturalism that not only focuses on equity and LGBT student identities and differences, but also focuses on countering heteronormativity and deconstructing homosexual/heterosexual, male/female, and other binaries. He suggests an important part of engaging this more encompassing multiculturalism is to examine the ways that LGBT persons and issues are both included and excluded in educational discourse. Other essays in this section explore examples of LGBT transformative projects in teacher education, and discuss challenges and strategies in relation to teaching for LGBT diversity.

In Part III, *Telling Our Stories*, contributors describe their struggles as they accept responsibility to integrate LGBT awareness into teacher

education and teaching practice. In an essay on teacher educators and the multicultural closet, James R. King and Roger Brindley investigate the failure of multicultural education to include a focus on sex-and-gender differences. In particular, they examine how teachers interact with LGBT students and with students who come from an LGBT home life. They also make a specific and important argument that has ramifications for teachers' codes of professional conduct: "Including one's personal version of religious valuing as part of teaching is simply not professional" (p. 207). This argument speaks to the need for teachers to understand *professional* as engaging in a respectful, ethical public practice that accepts and accommodates every student. Other narrative essays in this section focus on what the *preparation* in teacher preparation programs might mean from inclusive perspectives; how LGBT teachers mediate their sex-and-gender identities amid societal and institutionalized homophobia in teacher-education programs; how teachers' self-understandings are woven into processes of making meaning and sense of the academic subjects they teach; how preservice teachers manage their sexual identities; how teacher educators' work to have preservice teachers engage in anti-homophobia education still runs up against the reality of resistant schools; how a lesbian principal draws on her own multiple identities to advance a diversity curriculum in her school; and how teacher educators can assist students in teacher-education programs to become social justice educators.

As an edited book on addressing sex-and-gender differences in teacher-education programs, *Getting Ready for Benjamin* is a fine resource. Although contributors remind educators of the many exclusions around sex-and-gender differences in teacher education and teaching practice, they also keep hope and possibility at the forefront of their deliberations. Perhaps with the help of books like *Getting Ready for Benjamin*, it will continue to get better for LGBT students, parents, and teachers. Maybe one day *being there for every student*, including LGBT and questioning students, will be pervasive not provocative, usual not unusual, ordinary not odd.

Guofang Li. (2005). *Culturally Contested Pedagogy: Battles of Literacy and Schooling between Mainstream Teachers and Asian Immigrant Parents*. Albany: State University of New York Press. 254 pages. ISBN 0-7914-6549-2 (hardcover : alk. paper)

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“When in Rome, do as the Romans do.” This saying is one of the first English sentences I learned in China about twenty years ago at the beginning of my secondary school. How should we understand this saying in the current Canadian context, with its rapid demographic changes? Should immigrants to Canada do as mainstream Canadians do? To answer these questions, Li’s research, *Culturally Contested Pedagogy: Battles of Literacy and Schooling between Mainstream Teachers and Asian Immigrant Parents*, is a fascinating, timely investigation into why communication and mutual accommodation between educators and parents are necessary, and how educators and parents can establish an effective partnership. Taking an ethnographic approach, well-grounded in theory, Li’s study addresses the home-school divide for Chinese immigrant children, an issue, as Li (2001) notes, rarely discussed in the qualitative research literature. I read this book as a literacy researcher and Chinese immigrant parent living in Canada

Li’s book fulfills her first intent by documenting voices of eight focal students and their teachers and parents. The children in Li’s book are from middle-class, immigrant families. These parents have financial capital to make up for what they find unsatisfactory in Canadian public schools: hiring tutors after class to teach their children English, Chinese, math, or other subjects. The mainstream teachers are the minority in the community where the school is located (Richmond, British Columbia). They have a strong sense of responsibility to assist their students, most of whom are of Chinese ethnic background, in literacy learning; however, they do not have a clear idea of the students’ home literacy practice or their parents’ beliefs about literacy teaching.

Li spent one-year in classrooms observing and interviewing teachers and parents. She concluded that the white, middle-class teachers

believed that progressive, student-centered pedagogy effectively helps Chinese immigrant children learn. In contrast, she observed that the parents believed that their children needed teacher-centered, skill-focused pedagogy to achieve academic success. In addition, Li found a lack of effective communication between educators and parents, which created an opposition between them. An example is the dispute about the homework that teachers assigned. Li found that some parents did not read with their children the English books assigned as homework, or that some students spent much time after-school on homework assigned by tutors that their parents hired. The parents did not think it was fair of the teachers to rely on them to teach their children English because some parents did not speak fluent English. They hired tutors for their children because their children's school did not adequately teach knowledge and skills. Li documents the battle and its consequences, but does not take either side of the battle.

The consequences of the battle are reflected in the eight focal children's struggles with literacy learning and identity development. In addition, Li acutely points out that these academically challenged children suffered from psychological and academic neglect created by the stereotype of the "model-minority" myth: because all Chinese students enjoy success at school, they do not need psychological or academic assistance. This stereotype blurs differences among Chinese students (See also Li, 2001).

Li examines the issue of Chinese immigrant children's literacy experiences not only from a socio-cultural but also an acculturative perspective. Her investigation includes an examination of larger contexts, such as schools and society, which have a significant impact on children's development. Instead of blaming any individuals for children's academic difficulties, Li advocates for informed parent/educator cooperation, the second intent of her study.

To fulfil this intent, Li suggests a pedagogy of cultural reciprocity that brings educators and parents together as partners. She provides educators with numerous suggestions how to establish this pedagogy. These include educators making adjustments in their ideologies and policies to respond to parents' beliefs, and subsequently creating an empowering environment for the Chinese students in school; teachers

modifying their progressive pedagogy to include more direct instruction; teachers creating methods to communicate with parents; and teachers using children's home language and culture to facilitate their learning at school.

Reading Li's book through the eyes of an immigrant parent, I believe that parents can play a much larger role than she suggests. Although Li provides educators with numerous suggestions, her suggestions for parents are inadequate. I believe, for instance, that, just like educators, parents can also use Chinese language and culture as a resource at home to assist their children in building their learning of English and Chinese upon each other. For example, they can have children retell in Chinese what they read in English, and encourage conversations with children around the readings. Both school and home are places to facilitate children's development of additive bilingualism and bi-literacy (Cummins, 1981; Hamers & Blanc, 2000). In addition to creating a linguistic link between home and school, parents may also connect their home activities with children's schooling practice. Links between home and school activities are crucial influences on children's performances at school (Heath, 1983). Immigrant parents' role in the construction of a pedagogy of cultural reciprocity is an issue that deserves intensive investigation, an area that Li has just touched on in her book.

Li's book documents a wonderful qualitative study of bridging the home-school divide in the case of middle-class Chinese immigrant children in Canada. Unfortunately, it seems to be mis-titled. Because the study does not include Asian children or families beyond Chinese ethnic background, the phrase *Asian Immigrant Parents* in the title is misleading. It should read *Chinese Immigrant Parents*.

In spite of its shortcomings, Li's book informs on many levels. It reminds educators, schools, parents, and researchers that they need to establish reciprocal partnerships, and carry out informed negotiation of meaning both in school and at home. Well-intended efforts to help immigrant children learn should be based on their needs that are framed by the socio-cultural, socio-political, and linguistic context. To answer the question I proposed at the beginning of this review, I maintain that it is not wise to require immigrant children to do as mainstream Canadian children do. In Li's words, "Achieving a plural consciousness and

cultivating a pedagogy of cultural reciprocity . . . requires us to abandon the binary oppositions that prevail in the dominant educational canon” (p. 231).

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Fred L. Johnson and Alan L. Edmunds. (2006). *From Chaos to Control: Understanding and Responding to the Behaviors of Students with Exceptionalities*. London, ON: The Althouse Press. 227 pages. ISBN: 0-920354-62-9

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The classroom can be a challenging environment for students with emotional and behavioural difficulties and disorders and for their teachers. There is a need for practical resources that can help educators connect promising research findings, and the practical applications of these findings, when identifying and addressing the challenging behaviours of their students. The authors of *From Chaos to Control* set out to provide educators with “insights into the application of some practical classroom management techniques that teachers can use to turn what may be a chaotic classroom environment into one they can control”

(p. viii). The subject of this book, understanding and responding to the behaviours of exceptional students, is indeed timely and of importance.

The first five chapters outline different categories of exceptionality. In these chapters the authors outline: why students may engage in disruptive behaviours; describe how and why the behaviour patterns of students with exceptionalities differ from those of students without exceptionalities; and examine ways in which teachers can establish supportive, positive learning environments that not only encourage student learning but diminish disruptive behaviours. In the remaining chapters, chapters 6 through 12, the authors outline "how assessments of behaviour should be conducted and how behavioural interventions are to be designed planned, and implemented" (p. ix).

In this book, the authors emphasized the individuality of students and the differing approaches educators may use to address these behaviours. However, a number of concerns arose for me when I reviewed its content more closely. First, the authors provide limited source citations for the information they were presenting, leaving the reader to wonder if this information was based on research evidence, the authors' opinions, or undocumented teacher interviews. When the authors did provide source citations, they either extensively cited one source (e.g., Barkley, 2000), or relied on references that were 10 or more years old.

Second, the authors incorrectly identified and described in their opening chapters at least two areas of exceptionality. For example, the authors referred to word-finding problems as *dystonia*, citing an article by LaBlance and Rutherford (1991) as a source. When I reviewed this reference, I found that dystonia was actually defined as "a progressive neuromuscular disorder of unknown pathophysiology...characterized by sustained, involuntary twisting movements, which may affect muscle groups of varying size in the face, neck, trunk, and /or limbs" (Fahn, 1988, as cited in LaBlance & Rutherford 1991, p. 141). When speaking of word-finding difficulties, the term the book's authors were looking for is *dysnomia* (Paul, 2001). Similarly, the authors described *dystaxia* as "a language deficit that causes students to use short, choppy sentences or, in some cases, to skip words, making it difficult to comprehend what they say" (p. 16), providing no source citation for this explanation.

Dystaxia is not a term recognized or used to describe any speech or language disorder by either the American Speech-Language and Hearing Association (ASHA) or the Canadian Association for Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists (CASLPA). Perhaps the authors were instead referring to *dyspraxia*, a motor speech disorder that affects articulation and verbal expression (Paul, 2001).

Finally, the authors frequently made broad statements for which they provided only limited explanations. For example, in chapter 6, the authors stated, "Although caution should be taken in placing too much emphasis on an IQ score, the subtest scores can provide invaluable indicators of a child's ability to perform different cognitive task[s]" (pp. 79-80). Readers are left to infer why one should not place too much emphasis on IQ. In chapter 11, the authors state, "Research suggests that at certain ages children will have inadequate skills of self-control" (p. 184). The authors give a vague reference to "research evidence," but provide no examples of sources or explanations of studies that would back up this statement.

This book set out to integrate "excellent teaching concepts and proven behavioural interventions into a comprehensive approach that will lead to an understanding of, and an ability to respond to, the continuum of disruptive behaviours that all students with exceptionalities exhibit" (p. vii). Limited and dated source citations, incorrect identification and descriptions of different categories of exceptionality, and limited explanations of provided statements resulted in the authors falling short of meeting these objectives. Overall, I would not recommend this book to educators hoping to find a well-documented resource to better understand and respond to the behaviours of their exceptional students.

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Robert Fisher. (2003). *Teaching Thinking* (2nd edition). New York & London. Continuum. 286 pages. ISBN: 0-8264-6804-7 (hard cover); 0-8264-6805-5 (paperback)

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Essentially, *Teaching Thinking* is a book rooted in a belief that teaching students to become independent thinkers and learners for life is an educational necessity. The author embraces philosophical discussion “through a community of enquiry approach” (p. 4) used by facilitators to develop thinking and learning capacities with students. As part of a “world-wide ‘philosophy for children’ movement” (p. 1), *Teaching Thinking* supports “the theory and practice of philosophy with children, illustrated with work from children and teachers in schools in the UK” (p. 2). Progress in the community of enquiry, discussed in chapter three, means that students learn to maximize their metacognitive thinking capacities with and among others.

Teaching Thinking begins with an in-depth introduction for each chapter. Most noteworthy are the numerous “how,” “what,” and “why” questions asked and explicitly answered throughout this book. There is an array of expertise used in conjunction with the author’s own writings and research, ending each chapter with numerous notes and references. The author includes over a page of Internet websites that readers may access to learn more about this topic, and five focused appendices that are both specific and provide a quick reference for readers. Questions and topics for philosophical enquiry, discourse vocabulary, a reference of discourse skills, assessing progress for philosophical enquiry, and evaluating philosophy for children are all appendices described in detail. The bibliography includes an extensive list of the author’s own work.

Chapter 1, “Why Philosophy? Thinking about Thinking,” is a discussion on the necessity of developing thinking and learning

capacities with students, and the role of philosophical discussion in this process. The justifications for teaching thinking are numerous, and equally numerous are the benefits for students both individually and socially. For example, individuals can benefit from philosophical enquiry by improving their “self-esteem” (p. 55) and “intellectual confidence” (p. 55), and develop their ability to “participate in reasoned discussion” (p. 55).

Equally important to understand why teaching thinking is important is to understand the manifestations of faulty thinking over time. The intellectual cost of not developing thinking capacities with students seems too great a cost to ignore both socially and for individuals. In a balanced discussion, the author gives an early focus to how philosophical enquiry helps students develop thinking capacities toward a metacognitive level of thinking, and why philosophical enquiry is a vital activity for students of all ages.

Chapter 2, “Philosophy for Children: Teaching Children to Think” offers readers an in-depth description of the ‘Philosophy for Children Programme’ by Matthew Lipman. An American pioneer programme developed over 20 years ago, Matthew Lipman’s programme is widely used in countries around the world. The author connects Matthew Lipman’s Programme within his book as a programme which aims “to provide a context for moral and social education through a specific teaching strategy called ‘community of inquiry (or enquiry)’ (p. 2). Through a critique of Matthew Lipman’s Programme, the author invites readers to critique how educators support the improvement of thinking with students.

In Chapter 3, “Community of Enquiry: Creating Contexts for Moral Education”, the author tailors the discussion to provide an understanding of the essence of the community of enquiry. Extending the discussion in chapter 6, I appreciated the author’s direct approach to explicitly unfold his perspective (through the use of headings) on how a community of enquiry can be achieved, and how moral and social values may be taught within this context. At the end of this chapter, a useful table identifies the “early stage of growth in community” (p. 91), and a “mature stage of growth in community” offering educators an opportunity to reflect on their own strategies used when developing a

community of enquiry environment with students. Taken seriously, improving student thinking in this context requires that the facilitator ensure that students eventually own the process. The facilitator must understand that growth in the community of enquiry means that students move from an external focus of discourse “about the discourse of others” (p. 90) to an internal focus of discourse for personal understanding. This movement is described as “second-order to first-order discourse” (p. 90) where student engagement in the process is a necessity. Furthermore, overcoming a potential challenge of creating a foundation of caring among any group of students as part of the community of enquiry can lead students to prosper from the benefits of philosophical discussion.

In Chapter 4, “Stories for Thinking: Using Stories to Develop Thinking and Literacy” Fisher provides pedagogical reasons for using story to develop thinking, giving many examples of stories to use for philosophical enquiry, with each example discussed individually. He presents numerous practical suggestions for leading a discussion to ensure forward movement of the discussion. Emphasizing intellectual rigour for discussions, Robert Fisher maximizes the usefulness of story in this chapter.

Chapter 5, “Socratic Teaching: Facilitating Philosophical Discussion” continues with guiding educators to understand the development of thinking toward a metacognitive level. Outlining a Socratic method of teaching, Robert Fisher expresses that “effective thinkers know more about themselves as thinkers and learners” (p. 141). Reflecting this metacognitive level of thinking, students develop the tools to engage themselves as full participants within a democratic society. The author maximizes the usefulness of the Socratic method of teaching in this chapter.

In Chapter 6, “Philosophy in the Classroom: Reviewing and Assessing Progress,” Fisher discusses the logistics for participating in the community of enquiry. There is no room for the assumption that students know how to engage in this process. Essentially, following student-driven expectations for philosophical discussion reinforces responsibility for the process. This chapter is rich with ideas that contribute to the success of the community of enquiry and ideas that aim

to maximize student engagement in the process. The evaluation of the philosophical discussion is a significant part of the process outlined at the end of this chapter.

In the final Chapter 7, "Philosophy Across the Curriculum: Improving the Quality of Thinking and Learning," Robert Fisher presents variability in the applications of philosophical enquiry across the curriculum. Continuing the discussion to any area of the curriculum, I see this book applicable to education in the Canadian context because essentially improving student thinking is a universal endeavour although approaches to supporting the development of student thinking may be somewhat varied.

Extending the benefits of philosophical enquiry for individuals means that students develop the "intellectual tools" to "play their full part in a pluralistic and democratic society" (p. 55). On the other hand, the reader learns from chapter 3 that growth in a community of enquiry means that students move from "second-order to first-order discourse" (p. 90). This means that every stage of the community of enquiry provides students with opportunities for personal growth and development and opportunities to discover and/or better understand their own uniqueness, while simultaneously learning to appreciate the uniqueness of others, through their interactions with peers. Evidently, then, the role of the facilitator is critical for supporting the personal benefits of philosophical enquiry as well as nurturing the social development among groups of students.

Teaching Thinking provides clarity for readers who aim to teach thinking to students giving valuable suggestions to parents, administrators, and all individuals dedicated to improving student thinking. Incorporating conversation and insights from students and teachers gives added value to each chapter. Readers can expect ample suggestions for leading a philosophical discussion, and a very direct approach to facilitating philosophical discussions with students. Whether individuals are experienced in facilitating philosophical discussions, or looking to learn about a direct approach to getting started, Robert Fisher's *Teaching Thinking* provides focus, guidance, and opportunity to reflect on information and current practices for teaching thinking to students of all ages.

Mary Kay Moskal and Camille Blackowicz. (2006). *Partnering for fluency*. New York: The Guilford Press. 142 pages. ISBN: 1-59385-265-7 (cloth); 1-59385-264-9 (paperback).

Timothy Rasinski, Camille Blackowicz, and Kristin Lems. (2006). *Fluency Instruction: Research-based Best Practices*. New York: The Guilford Press. 302 pages. ISBN: 1-59385-254-1 (cloth); 1-5385-254-3 (paperback).

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Every few years the process of reading undergoes a major redefinition to reflect the latest thinking about research. This redefinition sets the stage for additional review of how to define, assess, and develop various reading subskills, and it establishes directions for future research. The current surge of interest in reading fluency reflects recent redefinition of the reading process and new perceptions of the critical role of fluency in that process. What is the role of fluency in current views of reading and how important is it? What indicates fluent reading? How can it be developed? The two books under review here address these important questions in the light of recent thinking about reading and the role of fluency in that process.

Fluent oral reading is easily recognized, so fluid, expressive, and rapid it appears effortless. Disfluent readers on the other hand read slowly and laboriously, stumbling and repeating as they struggle to decode unknown words, maintain the speech-like quality of the writing, and grasp at least the gist of the meaning. Despite this obvious distinction, consensus on a formal definition of fluency has not been achieved. Consensus is important. Researchers need measures that are broadly accepted as valid and reliable. Without a clear definition of fluency acceptable tools cannot be built that measure the necessary qualities, and in the end educators will not get the information they need. Defining fluency is critical and it hasn't been done.

That is why the more theoretical Rasinski, Blachowicz, and Lems book is so valuable. It presents the thinking of prominent researchers and educators, each elaborating some dimension of how fluency may be perceived, assessed, or developed. The foundation for thinking about fluency is in Samuels' (pp 7-20) excellent article reviewing and updating his early automaticity theory of reading (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974). As Samuels notes, automaticity theory attempts to explain how people such as athletes and musicians become highly skilled at difficult tasks. Early automaticity theory applied to reading hypothesized that readers have a finite capacity available for cognitive tasks, and that automaticity in decoding and word recognition frees up attention for use in dealing with the ideas coming from and to the text. As Samuels points out recent cognitive research in general agrees with this theory, but it suggests comprehension processes be included in the model. Rather than being a fairly linear process, newer research shows that information may be gathered from both bottom-up and top-down sources and simultaneously analyzed into meaning. Fluency is therefore dependent not only on automatic decoding and word recognition skills as previously thought but also on the simultaneous automaticity of top-down knowledge based on lexical, syntactic, and semantic information that is then managed in a complex interactive process. This is the interactive view of reading and it explains why most definitions of fluency now include comprehension. Samuels notes, "the essence of fluency is...the ability to decode and comprehend text at the same time" (p 9). The other authors in both books use definitions of fluency that involve the performance attributes of decoding accuracy and rate. Some of these authors add some evaluation of quality of reading in terms of proper expression or prosody, and a few of them include some indication of more advanced comprehension. It is clear that even within the carefully chosen articles in Rasinski, Blachowicz, and Lems there is not complete agreement.

Without agreement as to what fluency is, it is not surprising that widely accepted assessment tools are scarce and that research has been limited as a result. Researchers want numeric precision; fluent reading has a qualitative aspect. That is why many popular fluency assessment measures may lack validity. They do not consider all that is known about

the construct. The simplest are based on rate and accuracy alone and are clearly described with their variations in both books. Curriculum Based Measure (CBM), and its variations, asks students to read for one minute from a passage of grade level classroom material while rate and accuracy scores are taken. Repeated assessments or comparison with expected standard rate/accuracy charts indicate progress. Note there is no penalty for sharpie students who neglect comprehension as they race to read the most words in the shortest time. To improve this validity concern, prosody can be added by using a rubric or checklist of qualities (samples in both texts), but then reliability may be lost in the qualitative judgment scoring prosody requires. Comprehension can also be included by asking for a passage summary or by questioning. Now the assessment begins to look a lot like that old standby, the informal reading inventory. Are educators and researchers getting there with fluency assessment or are they circling? As some of the authors in these two books suggest, the future of the fluency research field depends on the development of acceptable measurement.

Despite their mismatch with recent definitions, fluency assessment based on rate and accuracy correlates highly with more comprehensive standardized assessments of reading. To my mild disappointment, both of these books appear to support the use of quick fluency assessments that do not include comprehension. There are readers who comprehend poorly despite apparently fluent reading and high rate/accuracy scores. Assessment based on rate and accuracy may be handy on average for teachers, but researchers need something better.

I also have concerns about requiring all students to read from grade level text, as it is uncomfortable for struggling readers. But of more concern is that this text level will force some students into disfluent reading. Doesn't this go against the principles of automaticity theory where correct practice develops skill while errors practised even once make them harder to correct (think of your golf swing)? Why not ask students to read from finely graded passages and see how high they can read before they lose fluency? This would have the added advantage of avoiding the use of those relatively new charts of rate/accuracy norms (see Moskal & Blachowicz, p. 29), a technique fraught with concerns

related to text type, student interest in that text, and a lack of Canadian norms.

Whatever the difficulties with assessment the authors in these books agree about how to help students get the kind of practice that develops fluent reading. To achieve fluency, readers need repeated opportunities to read aloud the same words and similar patterns of words in connected text so that stimuli are mapped consistently onto the same responses throughout practice. Instruction must provide motivation and opportunities for this practice. Until recently two approaches had been recommended – repeated oral reading, and extensive silent reading, but, as both books explain, that recommendation has changed. The influential American National Reading Panel report (NRP, 2000) found evidence that oral repeated reading practice, where the same passage is repeated until fluency is achieved, combined with modeling and support for fluency meta-awareness definitely improves skill. Struggling readers may need additional instruction in other missing subskills and good readers may not need fluency instruction at all. The panel was unable to find enough experimental evidence (plenty of correlational evidence) to support a recommendation for the use of extensive silent reading. There are other excellent reasons why students might be encouraged to read extensively, but it appears that repeated oral reading is what is needed for developing fluency.

Our two books both offer excellent descriptions of the most common repeated reading techniques. This is not the old round robin oral reading but repeated rehearsal of a single passage until oral fluency is achieved. Critical to this instruction is the difficulty of the text relative to a student's ability. Recommendations in these books vary as to exactly what that level is, and again it is good to have the opportunity to see that discussion of the range of views. Moskal and Blachowicz suggest if expert support is available teachers may use passages where students achieve 85 per cent word recognition. That number would seem low to most authors in Rasinski, Blachowicz, and Lems. If too many of the words require non-automatic processing, both comprehension and reading fluency growth will be impeded. Motivation may suffer as well. Such techniques as Readers Theatre can also unintentionally force readers into text above the level from which they will develop fluency. In

the past, lists of words were sometimes used for fluency practice rather than continuous text, but that method is rare when comprehension is viewed as part of the process. The use of computers to model, record, evaluate, and even partner students (read to my computer?) is reported in these books, but generally results have not been as strong as with other methods.

Fluency is an area of growing interest at present and so it should be, for reading fluently is the bridge between decoding and comprehension. Though written for different audience levels, both of these books contain theoretical and practical information, offering the best ideas recommended for understanding this important concept, for assessing it, and for implementing a rich fluency development program based on repeated oral reading. The theoretical information in the Moskal and Blachowicz text is intentionally limited, perhaps too limited for real understanding. When I understand concepts I can think of my own ways to teach, so even for the purpose of developing an instruction program I might prefer the more theoretical Rasinski, Blachowicz, and Lems. Such books as this that pull together diverse thinking about fluency help to clarify what it is. When that concept is clear, tools can be developed to assess fluency with precision, and reading fluency research can move ahead.

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