

Parallel Lines

Parallel lines connect the world of my dreams to reality

They glow; they writhe and make the world seem as false as the one in my head.

A radish in my world is the heart of a rat that hopped out of its chest and did a tap dance and jumped right back in...

A dream is just a dream

But when my dream is of a train that falls off a cliff and begins to soar

It's an insane prophecy

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So don't bother me with frivolous matters of politics

I will only think of brainless politicians shrieking at each other over teacups

They censure dreams

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And don't bother me with celebrities

I'll think of even dumber creatures

Bathing half nude in the sand

They encourage a dream that will never be in this world

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This poem by Mary Felice Chavez was the winning entry in the CATE Creative Writing Contest, Grades 9-10. The author is in Grade 9 at Central Catholic High School in Modesto. Her teacher is David Maynard.

Reflective Teaching, Reflective Learning, Edited by Thomas M. McCann, Larry R. Johannessen, Elizabeth Kahn, Peter Smagorinsky, Michael W. Smith, Heinemann (2005)

With a preface by master educator George Hillock, Jr. and written by twenty-one of his former graduate students in the Master of Arts in Teaching program at the University of Chicago, *Reflective Teaching, Reflective Learning* strikes a good balance between engaging, thought-provoking reflections on the craft of teaching English and specific activities that teachers can immediately integrate into their lessons plans. It lives up to its subtitle: "How to Develop Critically Engaged Readers, Writers and Speakers" by offering practical ideas for teaching English that are both pedagogically complex and teacher-friendly. Hillock's belief that learning should be a process of discovery and inquiry is the foundation of the book.

You will not have to wade through pages of opaque prose to get to the excellent activities that are the heart of the book. The writing is clear and unpretentious.

The first of the book's five sections, Introduction to Inquiry begins with a chapter about Melissa, a third-year public high school English teacher, navigating the maze of overcrowded classes, disengaged students, standardized testing pressures and overwhelmed administrators familiar to teachers. Her perseverance in the face of setbacks, her discovery of Hillock's method of teaching narrative writing and her success using his strategies show how inquiry leads both teachers and students to learning. This chapter offers examples of successful activities, instructions on how to implement them and samples of student responses.

The chapter, The Role of Play and Small-Group Work, will be affirming for those teachers who believe that "ritualized rowdiness" and a playful environment can stimulate rigorous learning. It offers an excellent unit, with detailed instructions and sample materials, on parody

Other chapters of the book include activities and ideas for writing instruction, literature instruction, engaging students in discussions, developing students' ability to be mindful of their own process of learning and an ambitious final chapter with activities and resources designed to help minimize school violence. Each chapter ends with a list of references and includes samples of materials and handouts.

Reflective Teaching, Reflective Learning is a fundamentally practical book and a useful resource for an English Department.