



Book Corner

Patti McWhorter teaches English and serves as English Department Chair at Cedar Shoals High School in Athens, Georgia.

After more than twenty-five years of "Book Corner" columns, I continue to find it exciting to write about books of all kinds. From professional books to children's literature, the incredible variety of material available to us in this profession continues to amaze me. With some very capable contributors, I have put together an eclectic collection of titles that I hope you will find excite you and the readers you guide in your classrooms.

Smagorinsky, Peter. *Teaching English Through Principled Practice*. Pearson Education, Inc., 2002. ISBN 0-13-025840-7.

One of the really wonderful things about teaching is the opportunity to change the way we do things in our classrooms from year to year, and

even from day to day. I find that working with pre-service and beginning teachers makes me think carefully about the curricular decisions I make everyday. Because of my work with the University of Georgia's Network of English Teachers and Students (UGA-NETS), I have been exposed to many powerful and pragmatic books about teaching and learning in the middle and high school language arts classroom. Peter Smagorinsky's *Teaching English Through Principled Practice* is one of the best currently in use by the UGA-NETS program.

Smagorinsky encourages teachers to avoid thinking about teaching as a collection of methods; rather, he challenges them to focus "...on the *why* of teaching: why teaching tools work in particular ways in particular settings." (2) Approaching planning and teaching in this way helps practitioners to avoid disjointed, random activities that only serve to keep students busy. As importantly, the instructional decision-making process is one in which the teacher understands the students, their strengths and weaknesses, their interests, and the teaching context and local community.

The guidelines for building strong instructional units are pragmatic and clearly outlined. He explains introductory activities, unit goals, assessment options, and other important components that teachers should consider in unit planning. In addition, he also offers guidelines for setting up a classroom and discusses other major

considerations such as discussion approaches, multimedia composing, multicultural education, character education, and standard setting – all within the context of principled practice. Any classroom teacher, from the least experienced to the most experienced, can benefit from this text.

Reviews: PreK-Grade 5

Shields, Carol Diggory. *The Bugliest Bug*. Candlewick Press, 2002. Unpaged. \$15.99. ISBN 0-7636-0784-3. (Ages PreK–5)

Dilly, the dragonfly, saves the day! From whirling whirligigs to clacking click beetles, flipping tumblebugs, and curtsying ladybugs, Shields creates a vivid image of the world of bugs. With rhyming verse, the story unfolds as Dilly, a “plain bug,” reveals herself as the heroine as she saves all her friends from contest judges who are really spiders disguised as bugs. Dilly inspires and rallies all the bugs to fight off their enemies together. (Jeannie O. Woodall/Statham Elementary/Statham, Georgia)

Hampton, Wilborn. *Kennedy Assassinated! The World Mourns: A Reporter's Story*. Candlewick Press, 2001. 96 pp. \$8.99. ISBN 0-7636-1564-1. (Grades 5-9).

Hampton has done a remarkable job recapturing a day in America's history when John F. Kennedy, the nation's 35th president was assassinated. The photography of actual events and newspaper clippings are absolutely captivating. Hampton gives a detailed up-to-the-minute synopsis of the events surrounding JFK's assassination from the phone call at UPI to the funeral procession. This book is a great asset for a public, school, or home library and is also a great resource on a study of past presidents

or a study on presidents who have been assassinated. (Barbara Ingram/Morgan Co. Primary/Madison, Georgia)

Janeczko, Paul. (Editor). *Stone Bench in an Empty Park*. Photographs by Henri Silberman. Orchard Books, 2000. Unpaged. \$15.95. ISBN 0-531-30259-8. (Grades 3 – 5)

This lovely anthology of haiku and striking black-and-white photographs take the reader on a delightful journey through the city. In all four seasons, day and night, rain or shine, Janeczko and Silberman show us that city life is vibrant--full of natural wonder and rhythmic scenes. With works by classical and modern masters of haiku (Issa, Buson, Cor van den Heuvel, Nikki Grimes, Myra Cohn Livingston, Jane Yolen, among others), this genre study is well crafted. The playfulness and poignancy of words are juxtaposed beautifully with evocative photographs, making *Stone Bench in an Empty Park* a fabulous combination of romp and stroll, action and stillness. Because this selection of poems and photographs reveals the natural beauty of life in the city, it is a new and different perspective on traditional haiku collections, which almost always describe pastoral scenes and images. Intermediate elementary students will see and hear the awesome and the ordinary in the photographs and voices in this book--a refreshing look at the city, and the poetry, all around us. (Jane McNeely/Barrow Elementary/Athens, Georgia)

Rosenberg, Liz. (Illustrated by Joanna Yardley). *Eli's Night Light*. Orchard Books, 2001. 32 pp. \$15.95. (Ages 3-6). When his night light burns out before he falls asleep, a resourceful boy finds other alternatives to his night light. Rather than call his Mom and Dad, Eli wonders what else can be his night light tonight? When Eli

