

Chalkboard features textbooks, resource guides, and curriculum materials of interest to educators at the elementary and secondary levels. Recent journal articles and issues that focus on multicultural topics are also highlighted, along with news items related to the development of multicultural curricula.

Please send any news items, curriculum materials, teacher's guides, or ideas to Lyn Miller-Lachmann, 6 Birch Hill Rd., Ballston Lake, NY 12019. If you would like the items returned, please include a stamped self-addressed envelope.

Casteel, Don. *The Platicamos FSI Language Program Spanish: Basic Course Level One*. Seattle: Multilingualbooks.com [1309 NE Ravenna Blvd., Seattle, WA 98105; phone: (206) 328-7922; e-mail: info@multilingualbooks.com; web site: www.multilingualbooks.com], 2004. Fifth edition. 199 pp. + 8 CDs. ISBN 1-5821-4182-7, \$99.99.

Based on the renowned Foreign Service Institute course in Cuernavaca, Mexico, this book/CD set is geared to adults planning to visit and do business in Spanish-speaking countries. The focus is on the Spanish spoken in Latin America rather than Spain, as Latin America is home to the vast majority of Spanish speakers.

The program is designed to take the beginner from basic greetings through present and present perfect verb conjugations and the vocabulary of daily life. Interspersed with the language lessons are simple readings (poems, song lyrics, and stories about a family from the United States living in Latin America) and cultural information. Black-and-white drawings liven up the text. The eight CDs, with over seven hours of high quality audio, offer listening experiences with 18 different voices to help Spanish-language learners adjust their ear to a variety of tones and cadences. Both book and CDs offer a pronunciation guide, dialogues, and drills.

Those who complete this volume can progress through seven additional volumes to attain fluency. First published in 1992, the eight-level program is now in its fifth edition.

Means, Tom. *Instant Spanish Vocabulary Builder*. New York: Hippocrene Books [171 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10016; phone: (212) 685-4371; web site: www.hippocrenebooks.com], 2004. 216 pp. Includes CD. ISBN 0-7818-0981-9, \$14.95 (pb).

This inexpensive paperback uses cognates and similarly structured words in English and Spanish to help the Spanish-language learner to acquire a useful vocabulary quickly. Chapters are arranged alphabetically; each chapter focuses on a similar construction, from “-al” (abnormal/anormal) to “-ty/-dad” (diversity/diversidad). The constructions limit the vocabulary to a few parts of speech, notably adjectives and nouns, so the user will need to supplement with a guide to Spanish verbs (and learn their conjugations as well). In addition,

many of the words are less commonly used in conversation or are technical terms, making this guide most useful for high school or adult learners of Spanish at the intermediate level or above. Exercises include matching a term with its more commonly used synonym (for instance, “territorio” with “zona”) and a paragraph in Spanish to reinforce comprehension. The CD allows users to hear the words spoken. In some cases the similarly constructed words are false cognates (parent/pariente) or have a slightly different construction (magnificent/magnifico rather than magnificente); these are noted in the list. In all, 4,000 words are included. Means is also the author of *Instant French Vocabulary Builder* and *Instant Italian Vocabulary Builder*.

Powell, Robert G. and Caseau, Dana. *Classroom Communication and Diversity: Enhancing Instructional Practice*. Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates [10 Industrial Dr., Mahwah, NJ 07430-2662; phone: (201) 258-2200 / (800) 926-6579 (orders); web site: www.erlbaum.com], 2004. 238 pp. ISBN 0-8058-4025-7, \$59.95 (cl); 0-8058-4026-5, \$29.95 (pb).

This textbook for preservice and inservice teachers explores communication strategies and issues for teachers facing an ever-wider range of students in their classrooms. After an overview of the communication process and learning styles, chapters address gender differences and the variety of special needs and disabilities that a teacher might encounter. Following these are chapters on building relationships) including the proper use of humor); creating a community of learners through cooperative learning, service learning, and peer-mediated learning; behavioral management; instructional strategies; and using technology.

Powell and Caseau pull together disparate themes and scholarly works to provide an overview for teachers in regular classrooms who will likely encounter students with a myriad of special needs. Within each chapter are “Reflections” questions that challenge teachers to reflect on their own biases having to do with gender, ethnicity, language, and ability/disability. Indexed by both author and subject.

Seale, Doris and Slapin, Beverly, eds. *A Broken Flute: The Native Experience in Books for Children*. Walnut Creek, Calif.: AltaMira Press [1630 N. Main St., #367, Walnut Creek, CA 94596; phone (925) 938-7243/(800) 462-6420] 2004. 480 pp. ISBN 0-7591-0778-5. Contact publisher for pricing.

This annotated bibliography complements Seale and Slapin's classic *Through Indian Eyes* (1992, updated in 1998), which offered guidelines for evaluating children's books about American Indians as well as essays on well-known books, with good and bad examples. Their latest volume evaluates hundreds of books for children and teenagers pub-

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lished from the early 1900s through 2003. It is as close to comprehensive as a bibliography on a given subject can get, and more brutally honest than anything else out there save its distinguished predecessors. Seale, Slapin, and their more than a dozen reviewers and commentators—noted storytellers, poets, fiction writers, scholars, teachers, and student and community activists—take on Newbery and Caldecott medalists and reading-list perennials (*Walk Two Moons*, *The Sign of the Beaver*, *The Matchlock Gun*) for their simplistic, stereotype-filled, condescending, and outright false portrayals of American Indians. Plagiarized works are also noted. The reviews are acerbic and entertaining to read. Far longer than those in most journals and bibliographies, the reviews show why a given book succeeds or fails, with quotations from the text followed by extensive analysis. Along with the failures (most the product of cultural outsiders with little awareness of how their books insult Indian people) are the gems—many published by independent presses. While better-known Indian authors figure prominently (such as the prolific Joseph Bruchac and rising star Cynthia Leitich Smith), we also read about dozens of lesser known (but no less important) authors such as Thomas King (Cherokee), whose sharply satirical *A Coyote Columbus Story* could not find a U.S. publisher and has been almost universally bypassed in favor of Jane Yolen's inferior *Encounter* on the same subject.

The bulk of *A Broken Flute* consists of reviews arranged alphabetically. However, preceding this are bibliographic essays on a variety of subjects—the Thanksgiving myth (a version of which appears in this issue of *Multicultural Review*), photo-essays, the Indian boarding schools, buffalo, Coyote, Raven, and dreamcatchers, among others. There are also topical bibliographies on such subjects and genres as the California missions, “Ishi,” the Navajo Long Walk, Indian arts and crafts books, poetry books, and collections of writing by Indian youth. Equally valuable are the reflections of the reviewers and their children, in the form of essays and poems, about the negative images perpetrated by mainstream society and its educational system as well as their own efforts to make their voices heard. Here we see concerned parents and grandparents and strong Indian children who have grown up with the good examples that ultimately stand out in this book.

Sitomer, Alan and Cirelli, Michael. *Hip-Hop Poetry and the Classics for the Classroom*. Beverly Hills, Calif.: Milk Mug Publishing [9190 West Olympic Blvd., Beverly Hills, CA 90212; phone: (310) 278-1153], 2004. 160 pp. ISBN 0-9721882-2-3, \$24.95 (pb).

The authors, who are teachers and participants in poetry slams, offer an updated version of an English teacher's quest for relevance by incorporating popular music into the teaching of the classics. Sitomer and Cirelli succeed in parts while falling into some dangerous traps, making this book a viable choice only for teachers willing to use it selectively.

The authors treat hip-hop with the respect it deserves, revealing its formal and thematic complexity. Rarely are the

hip-hop poems noticeably inferior to their classic predecessors; in several cases, they are superior. Nor do the authors juxtapose “dead white males” to African-American hip-hop artists in all cases. Classic poems by Sojourner Truth, Langston Hughes, and Paul Laurence Dunbar figure prominently, and one of the hip-hop artists, Eminem, is white. Elsewhere, however, the book's authors seem unaware when it comes to racial issues and how some of the poems may be interpreted in all-white, all-black, and racially diverse classrooms. For instance, there are hundreds of choices better than Vachel Lindsay's “The Congo,” and even though the authors address the poem's racist language in a writing exercise, teachers will need to use their judgment in presenting it to their classes (or depending on the class, not present it at all).

Sitomer and Cirelli use the poems to explore a number of concepts—imagery, irony, metaphor, onomatopoeia, personification, the form of the sonnet, and so on—and the activities and exercises span a range of skill levels, from English language learners and reluctant readers to students in Advanced Placement English. Writing activities figure prominently, and much of the back matter encourages students to produce their own poems and to take part in the currently popular poetry slams. The book concludes with a glossary and the California Language Arts Content Standards.


Stull, Elizabeth Crosby. *Global Discovery Activities for the Elementary Grades*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass [989 Market St., San Francisco, CA 94103-1741; web site: www.josseybass.com], 2004. 453 pp. ISBN 0-7879-6924-9, \$29.95 (pb).

Dividing the world by continent or region (Africa; Asia; Australia and New Zealand; Caribbean and Other Islands; Europe, East; Europe, West; Latin America; North America, Canada; North America, Native American Cultures; and North America, United States), Stull provides a collection of activities and reproducible worksheets for each. The activities are similar for each chapter: an exploration of folk tales; celebrations; arts and crafts; games; songs, dances, rhythms; food; and recommended children's books. Throughout, she remains attuned to state standards, with lists of activities to reinforce lessons in language arts, social studies, math, and science.

The reproducible activities are appropriate for a range of ages but will be most appreciated by teachers at the younger end because of their simplicity (including the step-by-step instructions, clever design, and cartoonish illustrations) and lack of other materials with this level of coverage.

The section on Africa includes material on African-American history and culture. The same is true for the chapters on Asia, the Caribbean, and Latin America. There is some overlap in chapters, as Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic are covered in the chapter on the Caribbean but share a language, some festivals and recipes, and other cultural characteristics with the countries of Latin America. The lists of recommended children's books in the chapters and the appendix include many by cultural insiders, but others (particularly those by outsiders) have been criti-

cized for inaccuracies and stereotypes. This is especially true of the Native American list, but a worksheet "Do an Author Study: Latin America" contains not a single author of Latin American heritage, and the readings cited in the Africa chapter and appendix are mostly works by African Americans about the American experience. In addition to the supplemental reading list, the appendix contains a list of web sites, including ones for state standards.

Teaching for Change is a free catalog featuring hundred of books, curriculum guides, posters, and other materials from mainstream and alternative publishers on cultural diversity, inclusion, peace, equity, and social justice. Among the new products featured in the 2004 catalog are children's and adult books on the historic *Brown v. Board of Education* decision and the civil rights movement in general as well as books on topics related to the war in Iraq. The catalog is divided by subject, with sections on art and music; children's books; gender and sexuality; language arts; math, science, and the environment; professional development; and social studies. To obtain the catalog, contact Teaching for Change, P. O. Box 73038, Washington, DC 20056-3038; phone: (800) 763-9131; web site: www.teachingforchange.org 

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