

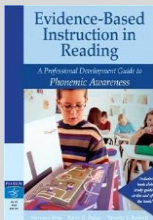


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Wisniewski, R., Fawcett, G., Padak, N., & Rasinski, V. (2012). *Evidence-Based Instruction in Reading: A Professional Development Guide to Culturally Responsive Instruction*, Boston, MA: Pearson.

Book Review

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Evidence-Based Instruction in Reading: A Professional Development Guide to Culturally Responsive Instruction, written by Robin Wisniewski, Gay Fawcett, Nancy Padak, and Timothy

Rasinski, provides teachers information on culturally responsive instruction. This book is one of a five books in a series. Each book in the series lends to one major component of literacy instruction

identified by the National Reading Panel (2000) such as, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. This series was written to be used by professional development facilitators ie administrators, literacy coaches, reading specialists or classroom teachers.

Beginning with the Japanese proverb, "Better than a thousand days of diligent study is one day spent with a great teacher," the book breaks down the reading process as involving a person's psychological, physical, linguistic, cognitive, emotional, and social world. Organized into five chapters, this book offers strategies to provide culturally responsive instruction in the area of reading. Each chapter of the book focuses on various topics related to culturally responsive

instruction but presents research based information and ends with reflection questions, discussion guidance, and application. As the readers reflect, they are asked to analyze, clarify, and extend the information from each chapter. The discussion section provides opportunity for participants to share their analysis and extension of the chapter. The application section is a job-embedded implementation of the strategies discussed within the chapter. The book takes the reader on a journey through culturally responsive education by defining it, identifying what those students look like, and strategies to assist them.

In chapter 1, culturally responsive instruction (CRI) is defined as using knowledge of student cultures and modalities to select and apply strategies and resources for instruction, while engaging in self-reflection. CRI is then broken down into four pieces and explained in detail. This chapter poses the questions: What does research say? and How can one be culturally responsive?

Chapter 2, Assessing Reading Instruction for Cultural Responsiveness, addresses the "Big Ideas" of assessment and backward design. Teachers will find this chapter especially useful if they embrace the idea of backward design. Backward design could be considered as planning for the child, not the predetermined objectives. This chapter also discusses assessing student cultures along with reading skills. In this book, the reader will

begin to see a connection with student as an individual person, not just a student that needs to learn to read. This chapter offers strategies to assess children's reading fluency, comprehension, learning modalities, and a plan for change.

Chapter 3, *Instructional Strategies for Culturally Responsive Teaching*, presents information found by a number of researchers in regard to effective literacy instruction for diverse students. Excellent, research based practices are provided to assist with giving a child (CRI). Specifically, strategies are provided for vocabulary development, comprehension, and participation. Each strategy includes modalities to enhance cultural responsiveness.

Chapter 4 closely analyzes three specific topics: students with native language other than English, culturally diverse students with special needs and in special education, and new literacies for the 21st century's diverse students. The authors bring into perspective who these students actually are, diversity within these groups, and obvious achievement gaps in learning. The authors identify these culturally diverse students to offer specific strategies for each group.

Chapter 5 provides resources teachers can use from the internet and available print resources. Some websites provide graphic novels, audiobooks, and interactive activities. The best part is most of it is free!

The book also includes four useful appendices: (A) Book Club Ideas, (B) Cultural Interview, (C) The Essential Primary Grade Sight Word List, and (D) Graphic Organizer Templates. Appendix A presents additional questions and activities related to each chapter that could be used in a book study. Appendix B offers useful questions

teachers could use to get to know their students. Appendix C lists the essential primary grade sight words list, which is 400 essential words from the high-frequency word lists created by Dolch (1955), Fry (1980), and Cunningham and Allington (1999). Appendix D is graphic organizer templates a teacher might use in reading instruction.

One of the drawbacks of this book is there were only five chapters. The information could have been broken down into smaller sections. This book was recently published (2012), but used some rather old sources that were from 1985 but included recent sources as well. Despite the use of older sources, the book is relevant and applicable to reading instruction.

This book is informative and useful for classroom teachers of most grade levels. It is relevant because almost all teachers have students in their classroom that have a need for culturally responsive instruction. Each chapter of this book provides worksheets and graphic organizers to be utilized by the teacher in planning for culturally responsive instruction. This book was formatted in a user friendly manner and offered many spaces to take notes. Each chapter included a reflection, discussion, and application section for professional development purposes making it excellent for professional development. I would recommend this book to be used for book studies and job embedded learning.

About the Author

Jayne L. Smith is graduate student in Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Louisiana at Monroe. She is interested in professional development, special education, and literacy.