

*In F o*  
*Vol. 2, No. 2*  
*October 1999*  
*Pp. 41-46*

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Awakening Genius in the classroom* by Thomas Armstrong, Publish by Association fro Supervision and Curriculum Development, Alexandria, VA, 1998 (80 pages).

Thomas Armstrong's introductory sentence "Every student is a genius" brings the reader up short by the hastens to explain that he uses the word genius in a way that closely links it to a words such as *creativity, vitality, potential, motivation* and *the joy of learning* rather than its normal association with elite performances on I. Q. test or extraordinary feats in music, arts, and literature. The author is concerned that educators have lost touch with the sheer joy of what it means to learn something new; and have become so caught up in the world of standards, curriculum, assessment, and discipline that the joy and romance of learning have become fleeting shadows in the classroom. He believes that genius is a wonderful way to communicate about the very deepest drives which spark the learning process in every child, and suggests that the teacher discovers and honors each student's different kind of knowing , both will be reconnected to the pot of "gold" which will enable them to develop qualities such as *curiosity, sensitivity, inventiveness, imagination* and *humor*. The author cites research in various fields which supports this boarder concept of genius and emphasizes that these qualities are as real as concepts such as problem-solving ability, social, skills, and learning styles which are usually held in higher regard and are more heavily researched by mainstream educators.

Armstrong gives as his theoretical base the areas of neurological, biological and phenomenological research which can be investigated both inside and outside of classroom. He points out that research into these characteristics should be phenomenological or experiential by nature because quantitative methods such as checklists or tests can never capture the spirit or essence of these qualities.

Readers who cope withe inattention, antagonism and disruption in the classroom may be cynical about he statement that there is genius in each child. However, the author points out that while genius may have been present in infancy it might have been sent underground through factors such as emotional dysfunction, poverty, fast-paced life-style and rigid ideologies in the home. The

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role of the school is vital for it may either shut down or nourish a foundering genius. Armstrong asks that testing and grading, labeling and tracking, textbook and worksheet learning found in schools be re-evaluated since these are often geared for the "average" "unspecial" students. This section brings to mind the plight of some children, such as syslexics, who cannot experience success in our schools because they do not learn in traditional ways. A thought-provoking book to read on this topic is: *A Little Edge of Darkness. A Boy's Triumph over Dyslexia* written by Tanya and Alexander Faludy and published in 1996 by Cromwell Press, Melksham, Wiltshire, Great Britain. Here the plight of child who was indeed a genius by had a different learning style and needs is graphically told.

In the third part of the book, Armstrong offers thoughtful insights and suggest many activities and fresources which the teacher can use to awaken genius in themselves and in their students and permeate their teaching with a new sense of excitement and possibility. The classroom can in fact sapkle and sizzle with joy.

*Awakening Genius in the Classroom* inspires belief in the potential of each student and the author's last sentence sums up the task of the teacher. "If you. . .create a classroom environment where the genius can be identified, nurtured, and made available to others, there's no telling how far the impact of your teaching may go, perhaps, to paraphrase the historian Hendry Adams, even as far as eternity." (page 69)

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*Public health at the Crossroads: Achievement and Prospect*, by Robert Beaglehorn and Ruth Bonita. Publish by Cambridge University Press, 1997 (243 pp.).

Robert Beaglehorn and Ruth Bonita are on the faculty of medicine and health science at the University of Auckland, New Zealand.

This 241-page book gives a panoramic worldview of the history and accomplishments of public health during the last 50 years. The book "is refreshing, truly multidisciplinary, based on relevant data, and international in its applications." (A. J. McMichael p.x.)

The goals of public health are focused on disease prevention, health promotion, health education, health policy, environmental concerns, and community empowerment. A paradox of public health is that preventive measures that bring large benefits to the population, give little benefits to the participating individual; whereas, actions focused on sick or high risk individuals bring great benefit to the individual served but little benefit to the community as a whole. Healing a sick child brings the healer honor and recognition, but the one who keeps 100 or 1000 children from being sick at all, goes unrecognized and unrewarded, except for the personal joy of being of service.

The gain in the lowering of infant-child and maternal death rates, and the lengthening of the expected life span have been largely achieved by public health interventions. The medical model of one-to-one care has accounted for only about 4% of the change for the better in these health indices. Yet, political and social pressures support illness care much more liberally than public health efforts.

Some of the major public health challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are alleviation of poverty; population control to match world resources; coping with pandemics such as AIDS, Malaria, and Tuberculosis; refugees and wars; resource exhaustion; and political will to address the most preventable health risk--tobacco.

This short, easy to read essay on health, packed with backup statistics, will open your eyes to global health problems and what a determined group or individual can accomplish in addressing the most pressing problems in health. Central in this book is the integration of philosophy, history, and methods into workable solutions. Reading this book will alter your whole perspective on public health.

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***The Euro (2nd Edition)*, edited by Paul Temperton.** Published by John Wiley and Sons, England, 1998 (391 pp.).

Paul Temperton from Independent Economic Research Company (TIER), represents several authors from the European bond Commission of EFFAS (the European Federation of Financial Analysts' Societies). This book reflects some of the key issues surrounding the Euro -- issues that have not been answered in the first edition, like who will participate in the Euro, is the Euro a good idea -- questions about its practicalities, and implications for financial markets and consumers at large.

In the first four chapters, ***The Euro*** presents the background on why the Euro will ultimately constitute the answer to the question of whether the European single currency "Euro" is after all a good and practical idea for overcoming the so-called "eurosclerosis" or problems of productivity and slow economic growth in the European economy during the 70s and 80s. Paul notes some of the efforts that the European Community has undertaken in the last fifteen years efforts to correct these problems through a single European market for freer movement of goods, labor, service, and capital; as well as the plan for European Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) that was launched in the late 1980s. And it was not until the year 1995 that the plan for single currency once again started to be taken seriously after United Kingdom and Italy withdrew from the Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) early 1993. The plan was contained in two important regulations of the European Council No. 1103/97 of 17 June 1997 pertaining to the legal certainty on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1999; one Ecu, the currency basket of the European Community would become one Euro, and one Euro would be irrevocably fixed to the following eleven European national currencies value: German DM (DEM) 1.96267, Belgian franc (BEF) 40.4810, Luxembourg franc (LUF) 40.4810, Dutch guilder (NLG) 2.21142, Italian lira (ITL) 1,943.05, Spanish peseta (ESP) 166.969, Portuguese escudo (PTE) 201.183, Finnish franc (FRF) 6.58252, Irish punt (IEP) 0.790322, Austrian schilling (ATS) 13.8104, and Finland mark a (FIM) 5.96750; and on the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2002 the above mentioned national currencies would cease to exist and only the Euro would remain. However, the Euro cash (notes and coin) would not be available until some time in the first half of the year 2002.

An analysis of whether Euro is a good and practical idea has also been presented by some of the authors by listing some of the problems that will presumably hinder the existence of the Economic and monetary Union (EMU) after June 2002. Paul Mortimer from the Parivas group has posed the question of whether or not the EMU might break up along the way within the stipulated period (1 January 1999 \_ 30 June 2002). Even though at a small probability rate, he postulated that some of the forces that could cause that break up consist of

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speculative, economic, and political pressures on the Euro. He further commented that the legal status of the national currencies of the eleven participating countries has strong implications for break up scenarios, and that the possible use of one interest rate by the reference EURIBOR (Euro Inter-Bank Official Rate) is only workable with further structural changes in fiscal policy, the labor market and political institutions. The author has even commended Chancellor Kohl for saying, "the logical accompaniment of EMU is a European political union," which implies that monetary union without a central government cannot work. Monetary union requires a central government to decide fiscal policy; to receive seigniorage and determine its distribution between regional governments and central banks; to make the European central banks democratically accountable and to protect depositions in the even of a systematic banking crisis.

On the issue of implications the Euro will create for general financial markets and consumers at large, some of the authors have intimated that the consolidation of the eleven European countries in EMU seems to produce a stronger impact in terms of total size of bond and money market derivative transactions. For instance, they have projected that the consolidation will rank European countries second with a total US\$6.3 trillion after the U. S. with US\$8.3 trillion in bond transactions, as well as in the swaps market in the amount of US\$6 trillion or nearly the same size as that the U. S. In the equity side, there seems to be a high level of confidence that the consolidation in Euro will substantially change the behavior of investors, corporations, and government that will ultimately effect a better level of liquidity and size of transactions in the equity market. In spite of the above positive points, it is anticipated that the Euro will also tend to have some shortcoming, which to mention among others are the higher quotation EURIBOR from that of other on-going reference rates due at the imposition of reserve requirements by the European central banks, and application of some accounting policies, and probable disadvantageous application of dual pricing due to the absence of Euro cash within the stipulated period of time, which all of them are perceived to be overcome by the longer term benefits of having Euro as a single uniting currency.

The book seems to suggest that the initiative of instituting this single currency euro within the stipulated period of time (1 January 1999 \_ 30 June 2002) will help the European and Monetary Union (EMU) start achieving the objective of alleviating international trade in general and improve European economy in particular. Will euro make it with only 11 European countries? Why have United Kingdom and the rest of Europe not supported this single currency? Is British pound considered higher in value than or not, as it is to learn whether the prophecy will be fulfilled. It is therefore recommended that anyone with the interest in finding out the fulfillment of the prophecy read the book.

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