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Lost in Transition

By Ruth Curran Neild

MANY, IF NOT MOST, parents hold their breath as their child approaches a transition in schooling, whether that be the transition from “home child” to “school child” in kindergarten or first grade, or the start of middle school, or the occasion when a young adult leaves home for college. Transitions in schooling are moments of both promise and peril. They provide opportunities for personal growth and, as a result, are to be desired—but they also hold the potential for setbacks and even falling off-track.

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on the cover:
Lily Composition #3, Anne Froehling,
Steinhart Plaza, Bronze, 1993

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photo: Mark Willie

Lost in Transition

By Ruth Curran Neild

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Ninth grade—the first year of high school for most students in the United States—is one of those critical transition years. Particularly for students in large neighborhood high schools in central cities, the freshman year brings together the “seeds of dropout” that were sown during the elementary years with a school organization that places strong social and academic demands on students while providing relatively few supports for them. As a result, ninth graders in large cities across the country fail to be promoted at stunningly high rates. In Philadelphia, the largest proportion of high school dropouts have not earned enough credits to move beyond ninth grade, even though most of them have been enrolled in high school for two or three years.

During the 2001–2002 school year, I spent time with ninth graders and their teachers in two low-income neighborhood high schools in Philadelphia¹. When I

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began this work, I knew the statistics about academic difficulty that ninth graders encounter, but I lacked a good grasp of what transpired in ninth grade to make it so challenging for students. I was particularly interested in how the social organization of schooling affected the

ninth graders’ experience. Though there are many other important factors that impact the in-school and out-of-school experiences of ninth graders—for example, entering ninth grade seems to serve as a social marker in the community, a status that confers greater freedom regardless of whether one is transitioning to a new school—I argue that urban schools face particular challenges in organizing themselves to help ninth graders.

Neighborhood schools in large cities approach the start of the school year with a great deal of uncertainty about who will be teaching at the school, which students will attend, and which courses those students will need. This uncertainty has several sources, according to Riehl, Pallas, and Natriello, who wrote an important article on the course scheduling process in urban schools². First, as a result of widespread course failure, urban high schools have a harder time “batch processing” students. For example, they cannot assume that the vast majority of ninth graders will pass their Algebra 1 class so that they can be scheduled together into the next level of math. Further, data on which classes students will need sometimes do not become available until the last minute. Some students who do not pass a course during the

¹ The state takeover of the School District of Philadelphia occurred in December 2001; during the year I spent at the schools, the district had an interim superintendent, and the Board of Education was replaced by a School Reform Council (SRC), with three members appointed by the Governor and two members appointed by the Mayor.

² Riehl, Carolyn, Aaron Pallas, and Gary Natriello. 1999. “Rites and Wrongs: Institutional Explanations for the Course-scheduling Process in Urban High Schools.” *American Journal of Education* 107 (February): 116–154.

school year will re-take the course in summer school, but schools may not have this information until shortly before school begins, further deepening the chaos in the roster room.

A second source of uncertainty is student mobility from school to school, which left the faculty at the schools I studied guessing how many freshmen would arrive unannounced on their doorstep on the first day of school.

In addition, Philadelphia's neighborhood high schools—especially those serving the highest proportions of low-income students—had to contend with uncertainty about the qualifications of the teachers they had “ordered” (i.e., a math teacher; a special education teacher) and whether their “orders” would even arrive in time for the start of school. During the 2001–2002 school year, the high schools I studied did not select their own teachers; rather, teachers already employed in the district could request to transfer into the school, and after these transfers were processed, new teachers could choose among the schools and positions that were left over. The shortage of math, science, special education, and foreign language teachers meant that the high schools could not count on getting a properly certified teacher in these subjects. Indeed, they realized, they might not get any teachers at all to fill their vacancies.

One of the consequences of all of this uncertainty was that course schedules were being made up until the moment school began—and typically beyond. For teachers, that meant not knowing which courses they would be teaching until just before school began and not being able to prepare for them over the summer. At a faculty meeting two days before school began, I observed teachers as they received their course rosters. I heard comments such as “Oh, I’m teaching World History this year!” and “Excuse me, Mr. Principal, what is this Life Skills class I’m rostered to teach?” But schedules were not set in stone even at that late date. On the day after the faculty meeting, a new math teacher, who was still earning his certification, was informed that instead of teaching an upper-level math class, he would be teaching Algebra 1 to a group of freshmen. He went to inspect his classroom and look over his textbook situation the day before school began.

From one perspective, assigning an uncertified teacher without demonstrated content knowledge to the lowest-level math class makes sense. As with most college-educated adults, there would be a higher probability that a randomly selected teacher—which, from the school’s perspective, is essentially what this teacher was—would have a grasp of Algebra 1 than of differential calculus.

From another perspective, the assignment of this new, uncertified teacher to the ninth grade was a disastrous choice by the school. Urban ninth graders represent particular challenges to teach because they are asked increasingly to master rigorous content in order to be promoted and graduate, but they enter high school with gaps in their basic academic skills. In mathematics, for example, most can perform basic operations with whole numbers, but many have trouble tackling problems that involve fractions, decimals, and percents. At the same time, a few students

have not mastered basic arithmetic such as adding single-digit numbers or performing long division. The challenge for the ninth-grade teacher is to backfill on these essential basic skills while pushing students ahead into the more advanced math of high school. Ninth-grade teachers need to be able to work with students at a range of skill levels, including, for some, rebuilding basic math knowledge using strategies and problems that are appropriate for adolescents rather than elementary-age children. Teaching is hard work; teaching ninth graders well is extremely hard work.

As it turned out, the uncertified math teacher who came to teach the freshmen had a shaky knowledge of basic algebra and no idea of what to do to backfill on his students’ skills. The students were block-rostered into first-semester Algebra, a noble attempt by the school to encourage more sustained, in-depth learning, but by the time this teacher even had some strategies for classroom management, the course was two-thirds over. The opportunity for students to learn Algebra 1 had slipped away, without even learning about something as fundamental as taking the square root—a common topic in pre-algebra in more affluent schools.

In both of the schools I studied, teaching ninth graders was left mostly to faculty who were new to the building, who were not certified to teach, or who were

Ninth-grade teachers need to be able to work with students at a range of skill levels, including, for some, rebuilding basic math knowledge using strategies and problems that are appropriate for adolescents rather than elementary-age children.

being “punished” by the principal for getting out of line. Fifty years ago, the sociologist Howard Becker noted that career mobility for teachers was horizontal; that is, many teachers climbed the career ladder not by completely changing

the kind of work they did (for example, by becoming an administrator), but by performing the same kind of work with a more desirable “clientele.”³ Becker’s analysis of the between-school transfers of teachers in Chicago is complemented by more recent studies that examine how teachers within subject-matter departments angle for “better assignments” involving more academically advanced students.⁴ My subsequent quantitative analyses of the distribution of teacher qualifications (specifically, being uncertified and being new to the school) across the grades in Philadelphia showed that the pattern of ninth graders getting the least experienced and least qualified teachers is repeated in the majority of high schools in the city.

Why should it matter whether ninth graders are taught by teachers who are new to the school building, especially if those teachers are certified and have some previous experience? Typically, when researchers and policymakers characterize teacher quality, they use individual properties of teachers—subject matter knowledge or certification, for example—as a proxy for the quality of instruction that is made available to students. But teachers’ ability to work productively with their students is also influenced by the extent to which they are able to access the mate-

³ Becker, Howard. 1952. “The Career of the Chicago School Teacher.” *American Journal of Sociology* 57 (March): 470–77.

⁴ Finley, Merilee. 1984. “Teachers and Tracking in a Comprehensive High School.” *Sociology of Education* 57 (October): 233–243.; Kurz, Demie. 1987. “Skimming and Dumping at Penrose High: Career Mobility and the Perpetuation of Inequality.” In *Social Interaction*, C. Clark and H. Robboy. New York: St. Martin’s Press.

rial and human resources of the school for their students; in other words, teachers' status and social networks *within the context of their schools* impact what they are able to offer their students.

In urban schools where resources are scarce, teachers who are new to the building have less claim upon—and less opportunity to discover or even hoard—resources like literature anthologies, overhead projectors, or lab equipment. Likewise, they are still learning which programs exist in the school (e.g., support for parenting teens), the processes for acquiring support for students (e.g., referral to tutoring or special education), and which programs are worth recommending. An instructional coach at one of the schools mentioned that new teachers assigned to ninth-grade English had arrived to find that the only available set of class books was *Hamlet*—generally not considered appropriate for ninth graders.

Further, the disproportionate annual assignment of uncertified teachers and those new to the building to teach ninth grade classes means that collaborative work around helping ninth graders to succeed is less likely to develop. The annual churn of ninth-grade teachers limits the extent to which knowledge of pedagogical strategies for freshmen can cumulate. And, since these teachers who are new to the building (and also often new to teaching) are trying to adjust to a new workplace environment and manage their own classrooms, it is less likely that team efforts to work with ninth graders will develop in any given year.

What can high schools do to attract more experienced and capable teachers to the ninth grade? At the very least, school leaders need to make the case that the health of the high school depends in large measure on the success of students in ninth grade. If ninth graders are indeed a priority, then their teachers need to be well-supplied with resources—including plentiful curriculum materials that increase the probability of students making “catch up” academic gains, as well as time to meet to review progress and strategize about how to get faltering students back on track—that enable them to be successful with freshmen.

How to staff the ninth grade is a decision that probably needs to be made by the individual schools after taking into consideration the attitudes and skills of the faculty. One model, promoted by Talent Development High Schools, places ninth graders in a separate academy with teachers whose sole focus is ninth grade. Another model is based on the idea that ninth graders are “everyone’s problem,” with the implication that all faculty need to be involved somewhat in teaching freshmen. Whichever model the faculty chooses, one thing is clear: ninth grade has the potential to powerfully redirect educational trajectories and perhaps even the course of students’ lives. ●

Ruth Curran Neild is an assistant professor in the Policy, Management and Evaluation division at Penn GSE. Her research focuses on the education of urban adolescents, the transition to high school, high school dropout, and urban teacher recruitment and retention.

Research Notes

Penn GSE faculty and researchers explore the issues at the forefront of American education today—urban education, equity and diversity, educational opportunity, and the management of complex organizations. They engage in high-impact research, innovation, and training in public education as well as in literacy, psychology, social policy, and higher and adult education. The following pages present a sampling of recent studies and findings from Penn GSE faculty and researchers.

State Education Policy in the NCLB Era

In an examination of the key features of current state education policy, Margaret Goertz describes the social, economic, and political contexts of education policy at the state level and surveys major issues in state policy in five areas: curriculum and instruction, accountability, teachers, governance, and finance.

Writing in *State Education Policy in the New Millennium*, she concludes that state policymakers face many challenges, reflecting continuing tensions between reform values such as equity and excellence. As states grapple with these challenges in an era of standards-based reform, greater choice, and a stronger federal role, education bids fair to remain central to state policy for the foreseeable future.

This article appears in *The State of the States*, fourth edition, edited by Carl E. Van Horn, Congressional Quarterly Press, 2005. ●

Doing the Math

How do low-income African-American mothers see their role in their children’s mathematics learning? Based on interviews and observations focusing on ten mothers, a recent article co-authored by Janine Remillard and Kara Jackson offers a framework that expands typical characterizations of parental involvement. This framework privileges practices that are both traditionally visible and invisible to the school and highlights how parents act as “intellectual resources.”

Writing in *Rethinking Parent Involvement: African American Mothers Construct Their Roles in the Mathematics Education of Their Children*, the authors provide evidence that commonly used understandings of parental involvement may overlook ways that low-income parents deliberately involve themselves in their children’s education. The authors also identify challenges that these parents face in relation to their children’s mathematics education, some of which arise from the stereotypes held by practitioners about the families they serve in low-income urban schools. This article appears in *The School Community Journal*, 15(1), <http://www.adi.org/publications.html>. ●

Hypermasculinity & Black Youth

Of all young people living in American cities, Black male teenagers are twice as likely to be killed or injured. To cope with the dangers they face and to earn respect, many of those young men adopt a hyper-masculine persona. Moreover, given the larger social context, these young men may be convinced that they are precisely the aggressors their society assumes them to be.

But this stance may in fact serve largely to mask the extreme vulnerability they feel—a vulnerability marked by depression, rejection sensitivity, and fear. Writing in *They Wear the Mask: Hypervulnerability and Hypermasculine Aggression among African American Males in an Urban Remedial Disciplinary School*, Elaine Cassidy and Howard Stevenson describe their study of 179 African-American students enrolled in a remedial disciplinary urban school who were participating in an anti-aggression intervention program.

Results suggested that depression and rejection sensitivity significantly correlated with anger and aggression-related responses and might well exacerbate aggression among these youth. The authors write, “It seems that many young African American males in urban contexts may feel depressed, sensitive to rejection, and scared; yet, they might hide these feelings under a mask of aggression that keeps these emotions from view.”

They go on to suggest possible intervention efforts that provide opportunities to express their emotions and to discuss their sources. Specific methods proposed include providing artifacts (music, videos, news stories) that reflect the experience of these young people and creating “safe” places for them to discuss the logic of their emotions and adaptive strategies. This article appears in *The Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment and Trauma*, 11(4), www.haworthpress.com/web/JAMT.

Neighborhoods & Racial Socialization

For African-American youth, how does the cultural diversity of their neighborhood and their sense of personal safety influence their experience of racial socialization? In a study of 161 inner city African-American teenagers enrolled in a summer job preparation program, researchers investigated the range of factors—community relationships, neighborhood racial composition, experiences of racism—that go toward forming racial socialization. Their findings reveal that in high culturally diverse neighborhoods boys are more likely than girls to receive coping with antagonism and cultural pride communications when they’ve had a personal experience with racism. Conversely, girls from low culturally diverse neighborhoods report receiving more cultural pride messages from family if they had a personal experience with racism.

Influence of Perceived Neighborhood Diversity and Racism Experience on the Racial Socialization of Black Youth, by Howard C. Stevenson, J. Derek McNeil, Teresa Herrero-Taylor, and Gwendolyn Y. Davis, appears in *The Journal of Black Psychology*, 31 (3). ●

Does College Pay?

How do the benefits of higher education vary across gender, racial/ethnic, and socioeconomic lines, and how are they reflected in enrollment rates?

To explore that question, Laura Perna drew on data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study, an ongoing survey that, in 1988, began tracking the educational and occupational progress of a group of students. Perna’s sample was limited to students who were high school graduates in 1992 and who participated in follow-ups in 1994 and 2000.

This study confirmed previous findings: the benefits of earning a bachelor’s degree are both economic (higher average incomes, greater likelihood of health insurance coverage, lower likelihood of receiving public assistance, etc.) and non-economic (lower rates of smoking, more frequent attendance at plays and concerts, and greater civic involvement). The economic payoff was greater for women than for men—although, at each level of educational attainment, women still averaged lower salaries than their male counterparts.

With few exceptions, college also provided more benefit to African Americans than to their white counterparts. Unlike the women studied, however, African Americans did not show a higher rate of enrollment. Perna speculates that the relative paucity of resources available to African Americans—family wealth, federal and state student aid—may go a long way to explaining this disparity.

The Benefits of Higher Education: Sex, Racial/Ethnic, and Socioeconomic Group Differences appears in *The Review of Higher Education* 29(1), http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/review_of_higher_education/v029/29_1perna.pdf. ●

Evaluating the Evaluation

With the proliferation of systemic education reforms nationwide has come a concomitant rise in evaluation efforts. And, just as reformers face significant challenges, evaluators grapple with their own set of difficulties—from defining the intervention, to capturing the alignment between system components, to measuring impact. To delineate the contours of systemic evaluation and illustrate some of its challenges, *Systemic Education Evaluation: Evaluating the Impact of Systemwide Reform in Education*, by Jonathan A. Supovitz and Brooke Snyder Taylor, examines a CPRE evaluation of systemic reform in the Duval County Public Schools in Florida. After analyzing data on reform coherence, implementation, and effects on student achievement, the authors conclude that evaluations of systemwide reform must address the entire system, consider the extent of alignment within the system, and identify reasonable counterfactuals outside the system to measure impacts. This article appears in the June 2005 issue of the *American Journal of Evaluation*. To request a copy, visit <http://aje.sagepub.com/>. ●

Parents and College Enrollment

It is generally believed that parental involvement has a beneficial effect on academic success, and college preparation programs have accordingly included elements of parental support in their plans. Questions remain, however, about the effectiveness of that involvement: What qualifies as parental involvement? Are different forms of involvement equally influential? And are there differences in effectiveness for various racial/ethnic groups?

Laura Perna and Marvin A. Titus address these questions in *The Relationship between Parental Involvement as Social Capital and College Enrollment: An Examination of Racial/Ethnic Differences*. Looking at parental involvement as a type of social capital that students can use as a resource when they determine their academic futures, they examine the ways that students convert that capital into college enrollment.

In their study, Perna and Titus found that the odds of college enrollment related to several factors. The more that parents discussed education-related topics with students and with their schools, the more likely their children were to enroll in college, but the enrollment odds declined the more parents contacted schools about behavioral issues. The college plans of friends also had a direct influence on students' enrollment, as did the enrollment history of their high schools—the more a student's classmates enrolled in four-year colleges, the greater the likelihood that he or she would as well.

The authors also discovered important differences across racial/ethnic groups. For example, African Americans were more effective in translating parent-school contact into college enrollment than other groups, but were less effective at translating parent-student contact about academics. Generally, African-American and Hispanic students had access to less social capital than other groups, and attended schools with fewer resources that support college enrollment. Based on these findings, Perna and Titus suggest that college preparation programs tailor the types of parental involvement they include, and advise that using a cohort model could help students take advantage of the social capital available in larger networks.

This article appears in *Journal of Higher Education* 76 (5), 2005, http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_higher_education/v076/76.5perna.pdf. ●

Why Are We Here?

Like the rest of us, institutions struggle with that great existential poser—why are we here? In *The Endless Good Argument: The Adaptation of Mission at Two Liberal Arts Colleges*, Matthew Hartley and Lawrence Schall take the example of two liberal arts colleges to examine how institutional mission—including a clear understanding of priorities and the will to implement them—is constructed and how it can survive over time.

This article takes a historical look at two colleges—Swarthmore and Olivet. At their founding, both served a local student body. Today, Swarthmore is a highly selective, nationally known school with a billion dollar endowment while Olivet is a nonselective, largely regional institution that has, until recently, struggled for survival.

Their differences notwithstanding, both institutions have faced core challenges of identity at various moments. The authors identify three particularly galvanizing moments for each school. In the first, defining moment of their founding, both schools charted a distinctive path: Swarthmore as a college dedicated to Quaker education and Olivet as a beacon of social justice. (It was the first college by charter to admit women and people of color.)

During the era of curricular reform in the early 20th century, both schools set out to transform themselves: with strong leadership and a receptive culture, Swarthmore succeeded in developing a lasting national reputation as one of the nation's intellectually elite colleges. Under equally inspiring leadership, Olivet saw a remarkable flow-

ing in the 1930s but its core culture could not sustain the initiative. Again in the 1990s, both schools faced transformative challenges: in a decision that split the community, Swarthmore ended its football program, and Olivet, facing a systemic crisis, hired a visionary new president who revitalized the school by reclaiming the social progressivism of its founding.

These two narratives support the premise that “institutional purpose does not simply exist—it must be constructed.” Moreover, both stories reveal how core values shift over time. “The whole constellation of values is not replaced,” the authors write, “but certain values within that set gain ascendancy during particular time periods. We contend that despite the ongoing debates about the relative emphasis of various ideals, indeed, because of the fact these communities care so deeply about these issues that they are willing to engage in real debate, members of these institutions have been able to forge a shared sense of purpose.”

This article appears in *Planning for Higher Education* 33(4), June-August 2005, <http://www1.scup.org/PHE/FMPro?-db=phe.fp5&-Lay=Home&-Format=Home.htm&-FindAny>.

Help for Maltreated Children

In 2000, nearly 900,000 American children were victims of abuse and neglect. A closer look at the data reveals that the youngest children—kids from birth to age seven—from low-income families are particularly vulnerable.

Resilient Peer Treatment (RPT) aims to improve the social competence of withdrawn, maltreated preschool children by creating routine positive play experiences with peers with high social functioning. Researchers were interested in finding out whether integrating RPT into Head Start classrooms might improve the social competence of the withdrawn children with a history of abuse.

Their study, described in a recent paper by John Fantuzzo, Patricia Manz, Marc Atkins, and Raymond Meyers, looked at 82 socially withdrawn African-American Head Start children selected from 40 different classrooms. Children who had been maltreated and those who had not were randomly assigned to RPT and attention-control groups.

Findings from the study suggest that children in the RPT group, whether they'd suffered maltreatment or not, were less isolated and participated in more collaborative play than those in the control group.

This paper, *Peer-Mediated Treatment of Socially Withdrawn Maltreated Preschool Children: Cultivating Natural Community Resources*, appears in *The Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology* 34(2). For a copy, e-mail John Fantuzzo at johnf@gse.upenn.edu. ●

English in East Asia

Responding to the changes brought about by increased globalization, the governments of South Korea, Japan, and Taiwan have all instituted elementary school English language learning curricula that stress oral communication skills.

In *Comparative Perspectives Towards Communicative Activities among Elementary School Teachers in South Korea, Japan and Taiwan*, Yuko Goto Butler examines issues surrounding the idea of “teaching for communicative purposes” by studying the responses of teachers from Seoul, Tokyo, and Taipei to videotaped activities from classrooms in all three countries. Their comments show that even when similar methods for teaching oral communication are used, the teachers have differing goals and motives in mind, which means that their students actually participate in different learning activities.

Butler found that there is no clear definition of communicative competence in these curricula, and that more attention needs to be paid to both how activities are situated in specific local contexts and whether those activities are appropriate to the developmental level of students.

This article appeared in *Language Teaching Research* 9:4 (October 2005), <http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/arn/ltr>. ●

Civic Identity in a Globalizing Culture

Globalization has engendered serious reconsideration of the definition of citizenship, especially in locations already enmeshed in political instability. In *Empty Citizenship: Protesting Politics in the Era of Globalization*, Ritty Lukose looks at the example of Kerala, India, where education has become a contested political area in which notions of citizenship collide.

Kerala has invested considerable resources in reforming its education system—reform that includes the privatization of educational institutions. In response to the perceived commercialization of what many see as a public good, political protests have shut down local colleges for months at a time, making the empty college, according to Lukose, a charged political space.

At the heart of this conflict, she asserts, are competing conceptions of “public.” Lukose outlines the distinctions between the “civic public,” which rests on ideas of efficiency and freedom of movement and consumption, and the “political public,” which involves participation in partisan activities that can often disrupt the order and stability idealized in the civic public model.

The disjunction between a view of citizenship as active nation-building and a belief that citizenship entails the right to enjoy the benefits of a well-mannered society plays out in the institutions of higher education in Kerala. With colleges becoming spaces of public debate, Lukose claims, student-citizens move from being the object of the educational process to being agents of development. At the same time, the characteristics of that political activity among students reveal a social configuration of politics as inherently masculine and youth-oriented, further complicating the negotiation of social and civic identity taking place in Kerala's empty colleges. This article appears in *Cultural Anthropology* 20:4, 2005. ●

Ritty Lukose on Youth Culture

Challenging a common perception that globalization is a clear-cut force of homogenization around the world, in *Consuming Globalization: Youth and Gender in Kerala, India*, Ritty Lukose draws attention to the complex conditions under which the youth of Kerala engage new spaces of consumption. While young people are often seen as a “consuming class” who serve as a reliable indicator of the level of globalization in a given location, Lukose points to the ways in which patterns of consumption in Kerala are mediated by long-standing colonialist and nationalist concerns, especially with respect to the place of women. This article appears in *Journal of Social History*, Summer 2005. ●

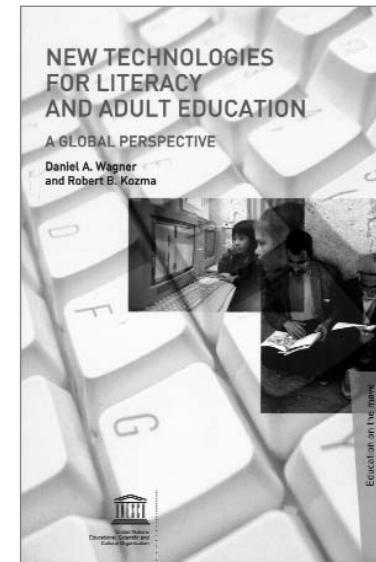
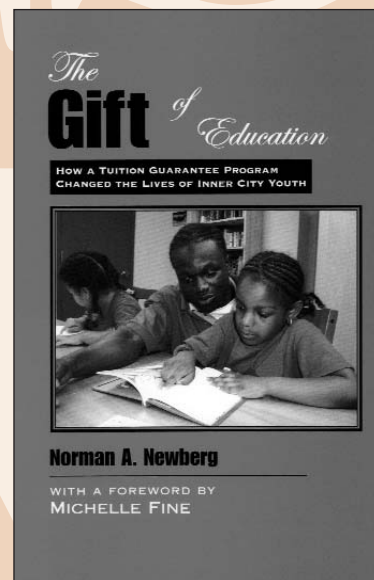


Yuko Goto Butler
Nihon-no shogakko eigo-o kanngaeu: Ajia-no shitenkarano Kennsho-to shogenn [English language education in Japanese elementary schools: Analyses and suggestions based on East Asian perspectives]
 Tokyo: Sanseido Press, 2005.

The teaching of English as a foreign language has been introduced into East Asia largely by trial and error. Based on source materials from Japan, Korea, and Taiwan and Butler's findings from a series of studies conducted in those countries, this book seeks to identify what has empirically been found to be effective in that process and what merits further investigation in order to constructively implement English instruction in East Asian elementary schools.

Norman A. Newberg
The Gift of Education: How a Tuition Guarantee Program Changed the Lives of Inner-City Youth
 Albany: The State University of New York Press, 2005.

At the 1987 sixth-grade graduation at Belmont Elementary, in one of Philadelphia's poorest neighborhoods, two philanthropists promised each student a chance-of-a-lifetime gift—a fully paid college education. This book follows 12 of those students—six who reached postsecondary school and six who didn't make it out of high school. Their stories illustrate how children, properly challenged, can succeed; how philanthropy alone isn't enough; and how government has failed inner-city communities.



Daniel A. Wagner and Robert B. Kozma
New Technologies for Literacy and Adult Education: A Global Perspective
 Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 2006.

For the estimated 850 million illiterate people worldwide, new information and communication technologies hold great promise. Published during the United Nations Literacy Decade, this book explores how technology can support basic literacy skills crucial for economic and social development. After analyzing the different approaches for using ICT to support adult literacy and basic education, the authors consider the implications for policymakers in the expanding role for new technologies in literacy development.

Stanton Wortham
Learning Identity: The Joint Emergence of Social Identification and Academic Learning
 New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Combining theoretical and empirical analysis, this book describes how social identification and academic learning can become deeply interdependent. Based on observations in one classroom, Wortham traces the identity development of two students. He shows how the students developed unexpected identities in part because curricular themes provided categories used to identify them and also how the class, in turn, learned about curricular themes in part because the two students were identified in ways that illuminated those themes.

