



On My Shelf: Rae Jeane Williams

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Date: April 2009

Series Number: IPMS003-X012-2009

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April 2009

As an advisor to novice teachers, I realize each day how valuable the books on my shelf are—they are my resources, collected over time and teaching experience. Four stand out as musts for beginning teachers—all blend theory with practice.

I feel a special connection with *Teaching to Change the World* by **Jeannie Oakes** and **Martin Lipton**. When they were writing the first edition in 1999, my students and I read their work--chapter by chapter. Each week my students became part of the authors' revising process; I assigned a chapter a week for my students to critique. Not only did they gain valuable knowledge about the schooling, but also they witnessed scholars at work and the research/writing process that created that work. Oakes and Lipton are committed to social justice which includes a consideration of the values and politics of education and who benefits from them. They bring together contemporary and historical roots of educational history that provide students with a foundation upon which to build their understanding of education and how it has affected their lives. Experiences of first year UCLA teachers spread throughout the text take readers inside classrooms and gives it authenticity.

I first met **Carol Jago** when she and I were fellows in the first UCLA Writing Project in 1977; she was a first year teacher. After 32 years of teaching, she has published over 10 books, all of them capturing in vivid prose practical ideas that challenge even reluctant

readers to engage in reading and writing about literature. Teacher, mentor, researcher, Carol fills her books with resources for lesson plans, recommended texts, and teaching strategies. Her books range from *Classics in the Classroom* to *Papers, Papers, Papers: An English Teacher's Survival Guide*. Her most recent work is *Come to Class*, a collection of five writing units: Writing to Explain, Writing to Persuade, Writing about Literature, Narrative Writing, and Reflective Writing. Each unit contains an opening essay, seven lessons and texts, templates and rubrics.

Ten years ago Megan Franke asked me to teach curriculum decision making in TEP. After several year of teaching courses, I was invited to become a faculty advisor. From then on I had the privilege of hearing Megan talk about her work in schools teaching mathematics to elementary students. Like the authors of the previous two books, Thomas Carpenter, Megan Loef Franke, and Linda Levi in *Thinking Mathematically: Integrating Arithmetic and Algebra in Elementary School* believe in the potential all students bring to the classroom. We educators need to learn how to capitalize on that potential by scaffolding student learning. Through classroom dialogues, teacher commentaries, end of the chapter challenges and a CD, they invite us into classrooms where teachers and children learn together in building a foundation for algebraic thinking. Teachers listen to students thinking mathematically to guide, stimulate, and redirect that thinking to respond to the individual needs and abilities of the students. Building upon their informal knowledge and intuitive understandings, the book explores how children learn and think about mathematics. The authors model the importance of

listening to learners by the way they listen to and value classroom teachers who struggle to discover the best ways to teach mathematical thinking.

Jane Hancock has listened to students and teachers for all of her professional life—fifty years teaching in secondary schools and thirty years in professional development with the UCLA Writing Project. And she has answered many of their questions with *Short Answers to Big Questions About Literacy*. I met Jane in 1981 when she became a fellow in the UCLA Writing Project. Her classroom became my laboratory, as she helped me translate research into practice for busy classroom teachers. Summative assessment in writing became writing portfolios where students collected, selected and reflected on their work over time. Metacognition became After Thoughts, which students wrote at the completion of each piece of work where they analyzed their strengths and weaknesses. Project Based Learning became a medieval castle with students assuming the role of characters in Tennyson’s Idyls of the King. In the voice of their character, they interacted with parents and guests while they feasted on meat pasties, which they had made. Turn to any page of this slim volume to learn from Jane’s vast experience. “How do I get my students to develop and organize their multi-paragraph topics?” “How can content teachers be encouraged to use writing in their classrooms?” “What is the most effective way to teach conventions?” Like all the authors in this column, Jane trusts and believes in students and their abilities. With deep content knowledge, high expectations, a supportive learning environment, interactive teaching structures, teachers can nurture and help develop student potential.

As learners and educators, we value the work of these educators who guide us to appreciate the best in our students and challenge us to discover ways to assist them in even becoming better.