

This latter approach to research, with its dual emphasis on improving action and increasing understanding, is of particular significance to educators, for it offers a way of bridging the divide between theory and practice, researchers and teachers, that has for too long bedevilled the field of education. However, this collection of papers is not addressed only to those involved in formal education, but to all who seek a more coherent and integrated theoretical framework as a means of making sense of and addressing the problems of our rapidly changing world. For those who are prepared to make their own connections between the disciplines represented, this volume provides an excellent tool for thinking with.

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Duffy, D.K. & Wright Jones, J. (1995). *Teaching within the rhythms of the semester*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 238 pp., hardcover.

*Teaching Within the Rhythms of the Semester* represents teaching as a composition of pragmatic and artistic components. Donna Killian Duffy and Janet Wright Jones present teachers with a score of strategies designed to enhance teaching and learning in postsecondary settings. More than one hundred specific suggestions for successful teaching are arranged by Duffy and Wright Jones, as they draw from relevant educational theory and insights gained in their "Activating Learning in the Classroom (ALC)" action research project. The authors provide sound advice for teachers to start a semester, sustain interest in the interim, and carry-through for a favorable finale. Although *Teaching Within the Rhythms of the Semester* takes its place among many other practical guides for educators, it does possess a particularly unique musical quality. Duffy and Wright Jones suggest that teachers attend to the individual elements of rhythm occurring within a semester and in the interest of successful teaching, alter accents, meters, and tempos.

The first several chapters in the book accent the importance of the pre-semester preparations in which teachers engage. According to the authors, getting a semester off to a good start is a worthwhile enterprise and has much to do with teachers anticipating successful outcomes and planning.

Duffy and Wright Jones address a variety of topics in separate chapters which include: Exploring Teaching Styles, Creating Magic in the Classroom, Stalking the Superior Syllabus, and Establishing Community.

An important part of instructional planning involves a teacher's self-assessment of personal qualities and Duffy and Wright Jones emphasize that practitioners seek to develop "a personal vision of teaching" (p. 38). To emphasize this important notion, the authors include a description by Stephen Brookfield (1990):

Until you begin to trust your inner voice, until you accept the possibility that your instincts, intuitions, and insights often possess as much validity as those of experts in the field, and until you recognize that in the contexts in which you work *you* are the expert, there is a real danger that a profoundly debilitating sense of inadequacy may settle on you. (p. 38)

I applaud Duffy and Wright Jones for including this wisdom in their book! The authors have presented the more practical elements of teaching with a flair for the aesthetic. For me, *a teacher as technician* may simply execute individual items from a list and call it instruction, but *a teacher as artist* – drawing from his or her insight and intuition – might invoke just the right measures of teaching strategies and assessment methods to suit a particular purpose of pedagogy. This book is very strong in its presentation of utilitarian teaching procedures and approaches, while leaving the reader a great deal of latitude to apply these details in a creative manner. The content of the chapters however, like predictable rhythms during semesters, do have their own low ebbs from time to time.

In the fourth chapter, Duffy and Wright Jones assert the need to sustain interest in the interim of the term when students lose interest and for teachers when "the motivation to teach has reached its lowest point" (p. 162). The authors suggest that teachers change the meter of the term in order to "encounter the challenge of the doldrums" (p. 163). Meter, not unlike the occurrence of the doldrums, has to do with the regular recurrence of a systematic arrangement of basic patterns. Duffy and Wright Jones suggest to alter meters within the middle part of the term to maintain motivation levels for students and teachers alike. The authors suggest that teachers draw from Wlodkowski's time continuum model of motivation (p. 163), alter the application of Kolb's model of learning (p. 192), and vary instructional strategies in order to lessen the listlessness of students. Duffy and Wright Jones vaguely comment about varying instructional strategies, only to leave the reader wondering how to approach it. The reader is left hanging after the importance of varying instructional strategies has been made clear by the authors.

Duffy and Wright Jones suggest that another part of changing the term is to have the teacher make frequent reference to a well-designed course syllabus. Perhaps developing a well-designed syllabus has been successful for Duffy and Wright Jones, thus offering a partial explanation for the unnecessarily long introduction to syllabi in a previous chapter. Further, more information may have been provided by the authors in this chapter on how well designed course outlines help beat the doldrums.

Although Duffy and Wright Jones addressed the occurrence of ebbing energy within a semester for both students and teachers, they did not mention how the larger rhythms of teaching careers may mimic the occurrence of doldrums during individual semesters. Other researchers, such as Burden (1982), Christensen, Burke, Fessler and Hagstrom (1983), Katz (1985), Ryan et al., (1980), and Watts (1980) have outlined various stages of teachers' professional development, which comprise larger rhythms over time. For teachers, the identifiable cycles of energy occurring during a given semester could be influenced by these larger rhythms, rather than tracing events occurring in isolated years.

The last chapter of the book is devoted to "The Final Weeks: Achieving Closure." Unarguably, the sadness accompanying the end of a term comes swiftly to teachers and students. Duffy and Wright Jones recommend that teachers recognize the presence of stress among teachers and students when the "community of a particular class is about to dissolve" (p. 205). Here, Duffy and Wright Jones refer to the work of Whitman, Spendlove, and Clark (1986) and urge teachers to moderate, rather than eliminate stress. Altering the rate of speed, or tempo, with which stress arrives after a period of high productivity would assist students and teachers alike toward the goal of achieving a favorable finale.

*Teaching Within the Rhythms of the Semester* is much more than just another how-to handbook to provide teachers with step by step suggestions to enhance teaching and learning. Duffy and Wright Jones have artfully woven the theme of rhythm, along with its related parts, throughout their book. The rhythms of a semester may be interrupted by teachers who trust their intuitions and insights to alter accents, meters, and tempos. The book may cause some dissonance with the reader however, because modulation of pragmatic and artistic/creative concerns has never been an easy undertaking.

I highly recommend *Teaching Within the Rhythms of the Semester* to teachers at all levels of education. The book may serve as a reminder to current practitioners of the complexities inherent in their chosen occupation and offer variation to their practices. Beginning teachers may

also benefit from reading the educational experiences of Duffy and Wright Jones, and teachers at all levels would find value in the text to develop teaching practices that blend pragmatic and artistic components within the larger rhythms of their careers.

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