
STUFF AND NEW STUFF

Insightful books for teachers... and books about friendship for children

Living Like a Child: Learn, Live, and Teach Creatively

Written by Enrique C. Feldman. Redleaf Press, 2011. (\$19.95)

In an unusual riff on early education models, musician and teacher Enrique Feldman offers an invitation to explore learning goals through creativity. Feldman's holistic, art-based program encourages teachers *with* children to practice Life Learning Techniques that support artistic, play-based practices to enhance learning.

Feldman's work includes suggestions for incorporating deliberate music, breathing, visualization, movement, and dramatic delivery activities in early childhood classrooms. Each technique engages and reinforces diverse learning styles and encourages both adults and children in unique creative discoveries.

Consider, for example, the ways in which children (and adults) could respond to the prompt: "Pretend you're an eagle that is flying in the sky. What do you see?" Does the answer change when you take a calming breath, visualize, and move like the eagle? What happens if you add music, recall memories, and give yourself permission to become the eagle?

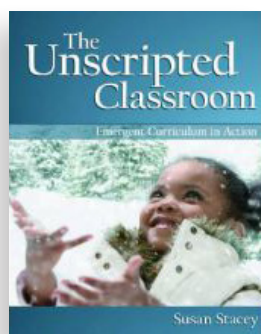
Feldman encourages teachers to step out of the didactic, pressure-to-master current in early childhood education. When educators unleash and explore their own creativity, they become more effective masters, inspiring confidence, trust, and success in the children in their classrooms.



The Unscripted Classroom

Written by Susan Stacey. Redleaf Press, 2001. (\$29.95)

Seasoned early childhood educator Susan Stacey offers a new tool for helping teachers encourage and respond to children's budding interests. *The Unscripted Classroom* invites teachers to reexamine



their classroom approaches (themes, units, learning outcomes, or planning through an age/grade/skill lens) and consider an approach that incorporates children's real interests, their prior knowledge, their diverse cultural backgrounds, and familial expectations. The book seeks

to establish a shared understanding and vocabulary: *project approach, inquiry, developmentally appropriate, assessment, collaboration, and authentic.*

With personal anecdotes and instructive teacher stories, especially *Naomi's Journal*, Stacey revisits the hallmarks of emergent curriculum—

- watching and listening to children,
- reflecting on and conversing about how children engage in an activity,
- thoughtfully responding to children to inspire new ideas, questions, observations, and understanding.—while acknowledging the challenges and offering tools that make classrooms, and individual children, successful.

Stacey brings special focus to the teacher's reflections and conversations with other adults—an often overlooked aspect of professional development. Through stories and examples, she helps teachers explore and improve their skills in scaffolding children's knowledge, adapting the physical environment, documenting children's work for assessment

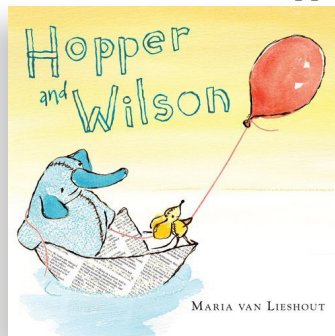
and reflection, and developing new tools for spurring children's creativity and inquiry.

An appendix of observation and planning templates and a rich bibliography of cited works and suggested reading rounds out this essential publication.

Hopper and Wilson

Written and illustrated by Maria van Lieshout.
Philomel Books, 2011. (\$16.99)

Good friends encourage, challenge, protect, and champion each other. In this exceptional children's book, such friendship frames a simple adventure. As friends will, Hopper (a stuffed elephant)



and Wilson (a stuffed mouse) look out at the big blue sea and wonder what's at the end of the world. Fantasies about lemonade and a staircase to the moon propel the friends to their tiny paper boat held afloat by a red

balloon. A squall—with hard rain, crashing waves, and howling winds—capsizes the boat, tossing Hopper into the water. After a painful separation, the friends are reunited and celebrate the end of the world—their home.

In a story that's tender without being sappy, children will identify with the two friends who face adversity and embrace the strength they find in each other. The text is as straightforward and uncomplicated as Hopper and Wilson's friendship. And as a classroom bonus, *Hopper and Wilson* is graphically rich—the illustrations are large and evocative—perfect for sharing with a group of children.

Squish Rabbit

Written and illustrated by Katherine Battersby.
Viking, 2011. (\$12.99)

Squish is just a *little* rabbit—who can have some very big problems. He's hard to see and easy to ignore. When he tries to find a friend, he sews his own stuffed animal—and finds that a pretend friend "can only do so much." A temper tantrum, a rolling apple, an endangered squirrel, and a bellowed

"Stop" help Squish find a real friend who makes him feel much bigger.

Author and illustrator Battersby uses bold graphic lines and fabric collages to tell an endearing story through art with a big personality. The text is spare and simple enough to hold the interest of the youngest readers and rich enough for older children to use to extend play, social interactions, and artistic discovery. ■

