

## **Book Review**

**Title:** *Creativity and Collaborative Learning: The Practical Guide to Empowering Students, Teachers, and Families*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition

**Editor:** Jacqueline S. Thousand, Richard A. Villa, & Ann I. Nevin

**Publisher:** Brookes, 2002

ISBN: 1-55766-578-8

**Cost:** \$49.95 USD

**Reviewer:** Katherine T. Ratliffe

The authors –investigate strategies in creative problem solving and collaborative learning to create and support inclusive school communities. Theoretical discussions lead to strategies to include diverse children in classrooms and social communities in schools.

The book is divided into three parts. The first addresses inclusion through exploration of common issues such as involving families in education, fostering school friendships, multiculturalism, and universal access to the general education curriculum. Theory, research, and best practices of these concepts are discussed and grounded with concrete examples. Specific techniques are suggested to improve practice such as MAPS (Making Action Plans) or the Osborn-Parnes Creative Problem Solving process, tools that can assist individuals, their families and friends to connect with each other and discover possibilities available to them. These strategies are presented with specific instructions and templates.

The second section of the book examines creativity and collaborative learning more in depth, describing problem-solving methods, cooperative group learning, facilitating creative thinking, peer tutoring, and partner learning. Ideas to address student disruptions and troubling behaviors are suggested through examples and case scenarios.

The last section provides specific strategies and adds lesson plans for implementing the above methods in the classroom. Lesson plans include academic objectives, skill performance, and evaluation.

It has been said that inclusion is nothing more than good teaching for all students. This book is written to aid all students. It primarily targets teachers, but family members will benefit from reading it by becoming better advocates for their children through understanding, evaluating, and making informed suggestions for their children's education. The flow and organization of the book are slightly confusing because so many ideas are presented in different ways, however, it provides a valuable compilation of theory and strategies, and is written in an accessible style. Its value is in the application of general education theory to support the education of a diverse population of students, and in the specific strategies described to apply that theory.