

Book Review

Arnow, Jan. (1995). *Teaching Peace*. New York, NY: The Berkley Publishing Group, \$12.00 (paperback), 239 pp. (ISBN 0-399-52155-0)

Reviewed by Dale L. Kohlsmith

Teaching Peace, by Jan Arnow, is an excellent resource for teachers interested in reforming schools. This book discusses two primary problems facing our public schools today: violence (in its various forms) and discrimination. Of particular importance to technology teachers is the discussion of gender discrimination in the areas of mathematics, science and technology. The book is not about teaching peace as much as it is a manual on identifying discrimination in culture and schooling. *Teaching Peace* provides several suggestions for addressing discrimination and resources for the motivated teacher.

Many schools are plagued by violence and forms of discrimination. Patterns of discrimination in classrooms can be selective, such as gender biases made manifest in mathematics, science and technology practices. *Teaching Peace* recognizes this issue and proposes solutions. The book identifies several sources that can help interested teachers reform their practices. For example, Arnow points out that boys and girls approach learning from different perspectives: "Girls prefer to use conversational style that builds group accord. . . [while] boys learn through argument, individual activity and independent work. . . which is in direct opposition to the learning style of girls." Furthermore, "the mathematics, science and technology classes support the learning style of boys and leaves out a large percentage of the learning styles of the learning community." The solution is first of all becoming aware of the differing styles of learning and then incorporating them into the classroom. *Teaching Peace* provides several sources for doing just that under the headings of "For your Information" and "Equity in Technology" which list both books with ISBN numbers for ordering and information files through ERIC. Additionally Arnow lists several organizations which offer education in gender fair training under the heading of "Programs that Work."

This book is written for two audiences, parents and teachers. From the parents' perspective, it is an informative eye opener, with most plans of action urging parents to push teachers to act. For the teachers, it is a clearly laid out plan on how to recognize discrimination and violence in schools and classrooms. Arnow provides several plans of action for raising self-esteem, reducing peer pressure, interpreting media images, breaking down stereotypes, developing

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critical thinking and producing practical solutions. For instance in the area of interpreting media images, which falls into the category of visual communication technologies, Arnow provides multiple examples under the headings of "What You Can Do." One example is "giving your (students) journals and asking them to jot down a note about every reference to aggression in the media that they encounter during a week's time, real or fictitious. . . Not only will this give you a platform from which to begin a serious dialogue about aggression and violence, but you will also have a clearer concept of the sheer quantity of aggressive messages to which your (students) are exposed on a daily basis."

Multi-cultural issues apply to all teachers, but those in the mathematics, science and technological content areas need to be all the more gender-sensitive. Conscious efforts to include females and eliminate discrimination in these content areas are essential to reform. Over twenty percent of this book is focused directly on the issue of gender inequality in the areas of mathematics and science. Gender discrimination is not only found in classroom instructional methods, but also in the support materials teachers use: the text books, the films, and other media sources. As unwitting participants in gender discrimination, teachers must be aware of the messages that they are sending in content and of their students' need for appropriate role models. This book not only points out some solutions but also has several sections titled "How Do You Rate?" which present probing questions that will help instructors evaluate the materials they presently use for instruction. Examples include: "Are all teaching materials free of stereotypes, presenting accurate, multidimensional pictures of cultural groups?" and "Can each of your students see in her classroom a picture or some other visual image of someone with whom she can identify?"

Teaching Peace is not preachy, and it tackles some tough issues which ought to be dealt with. It is easy reading, with many charts and questionnaires to support the text. It identifies problems, and then provides suggestions to bring about solutions. More importantly, *Teaching Peace* provides resources for obtaining additional information on specific problems; many by traditional means as well as e-mail or World Wide Web sites. This book is an excellent resource for any teacher interested in helping to bring their technology classroom or laboratory in line with reality. Multi-cultural and gender issues in the mathematics, sciences and technologies are of paramount concern. The more knowledgeable we are about the issue, the better we can improve the teaching environment of technology education.