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Powers' "Parent engagement in early learning" (Book Review)

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Not only does Kurlansky describe the history of paper making but also discusses the significance that paper has had in both Eastern and Western civilizations. He argues that paper became central to our culture as we transitioned from nomadic to agrarian societies due to economics. Kurlansky also gives a history in writing and how civilizations have viewed and accepted the written word over the centuries. In addition, he also presents how written communication has shaped political and religious thought through the centuries.

This book would be of interest to scholars of paper and book making. Although, this book is a history book, there are many different fields of study that would find this book to be interesting or beneficial such as science, art, technology, sociology, language, and religion. Both scholars and general interest readers would find this book appealing.

Reviewer

Robert Burgess, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Powers, J. (2106). *Parent engagement in early learning*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press. 173 pp. \$29.95. ISBN 9781605544380

Julie Powers, a University of Hawai'i associate professor of early education, presents a book that would normally be used as a textbook, but is also practical in addressing a major concern for most Early Childhood Education (ECE) teachers working with parents in an ECE setting. Her purpose for this work is to develop an understanding of how to lay the foundation for a collaborative relationship with parents and explain the skills that are needed to facilitate this.

Powers intentionally targets preservice and current ECE teachers, providing processes and practical skills to assist in creating a collaborative relationship. This second edition, beyond the detailed content, provides quizzes for self-evaluation, section-specific discussion questions, and many scenarios to allow the reader to understand both the teacher and parent perspectives. The need for and process of creating collaboration is interwoven through the entire book.

The chapters detail how to create a rapport with parents, communication needs, policies, finding common values, child development issues, and inclusion of the facilities director. These sections all fit within the broad scope of creating partnerships between ECE teachers and parents. The scenarios are believable and the presentation of all points of view assist the reader in developing a better method of understanding when dealing with parents.

Though focused on the ECE field, many of the strategies and skills would be applicable to most educators. A majority of the current books in the ECE field deal with child development, assessment, and other classroom issues. This work focuses on the relationship that can be developed between teachers and parents, as well as, provides a practical guide to navigating an often difficult part of education.

Reviewer

Jennifer A. Rich, Hope International University

Watkins, W. J., Jr. (2013). *Patent trolls: Predatory litigation and the smothering of innovation*. Oakland, CA: The Independent Institute. 96 pp. \$17.95. ISBN 9781598131703

A 2011 *This American Life* radio program asks the question, “Why would a company rent an office in a tiny town in East Texas, put a nameplate on the door, and leave it completely empty for a year?” (*This American Life: When Patents Attack!* <http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/441/when-patents-attack>). The program goes on to answer the question and introduces the concept of the patent troll, “a derogatory term in Silicon Valley for companies that amass huge troves of patents and make money by threatening lawsuits” (*This American Life*).

William J. Watkins, Jr.’s book *Patent Trolls* lays out some of the basic concepts that relate to this issue. The author asserts that these “patent trolls” are stifling innovation and costing the economy billions of dollars annually while failing to foster and incentivize the scientific progress that the patent system was intended to do. The text of the entire work, however, is only sixty pages in length, plus a six page forward, eight pages of notes and a bibliography of three and a half pages. Such a book can only scratch the surface of a topic that encompasses two highly technical fields such as law and patent policy.

Patent Trolls does a good job of introducing the reader to the specific issues involved and then directs the reader’s attention to a particular Federal District Court in the rural Eastern District of Texas that has become a magnet for patent infringement suits brought by various “patent troll” companies. He concludes with a chapter devoted to proposed measures to remedy the worst abuses. His proposals for reform include shortening the time for software patent protection, civil litigation reforms that would allow patent cases to be steered away from that particular Federal District Court in eastern Texas (a venue that he asserts unfairly tips the balances of justice in favor of these “patent troll” plaintiffs), and movement of cases away from lay juries and into specialized courts, plus requirements that plaintiffs be “actively in