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Resistant Students: Reach Me Before You Teach Me

By Mary Skvorak



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Resistant Learners: Reach Me Before You Teach Me focuses on those students whose behavior limits their learning and challenges their teachers while perhaps interrupting the learning cycle of their peers. Each chapter explains the theoretical and research background for each topic. Most importantly, each chapter satisfies the intentional design of the book – to offer situational examples and dialog that clearly shows how building trusting relationships can happen and how making positive personal connections with students might actually look. Practicing teachers, pre-service teachers, teacher educators, professional development staff and school administrators who represent the field of education as caring professionals will benefit from this book.



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Resistant Students: Reach Me Before You Teach Me By Mary Skvorak Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #1263898 in Books
- Brand: Brand: RL Education
- Published on: 2012-11-05
- Released on: 2012-11-05
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.98" h x .47" w x 5.89" l, .45 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 140 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

In a day when adult sentencing of minors and zero tolerance in kindergarten are commonplace, this book is a breath of fresh air. Skvorak demonstrates that successful encounters with children, resistant or not, are more about what is happening inside the adult than the child. Through her work, we are reminded that if we want to do more than move negative emotions from one person to the other or move unwelcome behavior from one place to the other, we have to respond rather than react. The most appropriate responses are born out of trusting relationships. This is often written about, but Skvorak goes beyond making an argument for relationship building, describing the deliberate and purposeful manner in which good relationships with the most difficult children are built and maintained. (Shawn Hardnett, Chief of School Excellence, Friendship Public Charter School, Washington, DC)

Reach Me Before You Teach Me, rings with wisdom and authenticity. Her examples of dialogue between teacher and student reflect deep understanding of the relationships that are possible when we rest our own agendas and begin to listen to what our students need from us as people before they can learn from us as teachers. She also grounds her suggestions in solid educational theory, finding the perfect pitch between research and practice. Her work is timeless, and will be useful to the new and long-standing teacher alike. (Nancy S. Niemi, Associate Professor of Education and Chairperson, Education Department, University of New Haven)

This book is a great tool for educators. Mary Skvorak offers teachers practical ideas to shape positive behavioral outcomes by engaging students in ways that change their negative self-beliefs. It invites teachers to examine and perhaps modify their own teaching behaviors to improve the learning and behavior of the most challenging students. (Craig Hill, Ed.D., Interim Dean & Certification Officer, School of Education, Nazareth College of Rochester, NY)

Skvorak presents an articulate discussion to assist educators in distinguishing their own emotional responses from challenging behaviors demonstrated by resistant students. One of the most underaddressed areas of education is classroom management and working with students who demonstrate challenging behaviors, an issue that all classroom teachers will confront sometime in their career. In this book, Skvorak presents foundational concepts to assist educators in developing reflective practices to deal with resistant students and break the cycle of emotional reactions to defiance and aggression. Additionally, self-assessments presented in the book emphasize a positive/strengths approach (e.g., exploring talents and multiple intelligences) in working with resistant students as opposed to viewing students through a deficit lens. The book is well structured and presents a quality discussion with easy steps toward implementation in practice. Summing Up: Recommended. (*CHOICE*)

About the Author

Mary Skvorak's teaching career spans five decades and includes elementary, middle, high school and college classes. Recently retired as Director of the Undergraduate Inclusive Education Program at Nazareth College of Rochester, Mary enjoys gardening, classical music, reading and puzzles of all kinds.

Users Review

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