

THE INTENTIONAL TEACHER: Choosing the Best Strategies for Young Children's Learning

by Dr. Ann S. Epstein

Reviewed by Joyce Mesrobian, M.Ed.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has recently published *The Intentional Teacher*, a landmark book that discusses the role of the early education teacher in planning and executing supportive and successful learning activities in the classroom. Its author, Dr. Ann Epstein, director of early childhood at the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, clearly defines and demonstrates the teaching strategies of the intentional teacher in the learning areas of language and literacy, mathematics and scientific inquiry, social skills development, physical movement, and the visual arts.

The intentional teacher is an educator who acts with knowledge and purpose in planning, selecting, implementing, and accomplishing the best teaching strategies to help young children acquire the thinking and learning skills and understandings they need to succeed. In creating a purposeful and playful classroom, the intentional teacher creates a learning environment that is safe and welcoming, that encourages young children to meet their basic physical and emotional needs, supports their language and communication skills, welcomes their initiative and cooperation in a wide variety of diverse materials, and activities, and acknowledges their interests and accomplishments.

In a thoughtful and lucid manner, Dr. Epstein urges teachers to consider how and when to use different types of approaches (child-guided, adult-guided, or a combination of both) in order to achieve key goals in young children's learning and development. She offers numerous examples of this shared responsibility by the teacher and children to achieve the optimal, supportive and purposeful learning environment in the classroom.

The Intentional Teacher should be required resource book for all early childhood teachers who plan to provide best practices in their classroom. According to Sue Bredekamp, author of NAEYC's *Developmentally-Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs*, "This is one of the best early childhood books that I have ever read."

THE INTENTIONAL TEACHER, published by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, Washington, DC, 2007, pb, 143 pages, www.naeyc.org