Effective Practices
in Early Childhood Education

Fourth Edition

Effective Practices in Early Childhood Education

Building a Foundation

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Early Childhood Education Specialist and Independent Consultant

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Dedication

To Joe Bredekamp, for a lifetime of love, friendship, wonderful memories, and tolerance of craziness.

About the Author

Dr. Sue Bredekamp is an Early Childhood Education Specialist from Washington, DC. She serves as a consultant on curriculum, pedagogy, developmentally appropriate practice, and professional development for organizations such as the National Association for the Education of Young Children, Head Start, the Council for Professional Recognition, state departments of education, and universities. Her seminal work on NAEYC's best-selling publications on *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs* has had a major impact on the education of young children and teacher preparation for more than 30 years. As NAEYC's Director of Accreditation and Professional Development, she developed and administered their national accreditation system for early childhood centers and schools, and wrote standards for curriculum and assessment, and teacher education.

Dr. Bredekamp is a frequent keynote speaker and author of numerous books and articles on professional practice. She has been a visiting lecturer at Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia; Monash University in Melbourne; New Zealand Tertiary College; University of Alaska; and University of Hawaii. Dr. Bredekamp holds a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction and an M.A. in Early Childhood Education from the University of Maryland. In 2014, the McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership at National Louis University recognized Dr. Bredekamp with its Visionary Leadership Award.

Dr. Bredekamp serves as Chair-Emerita of the Board of HighScope Educational Research Foundation. She served on the National Research Council's (NRC) Committee on Early Childhood Mathematics which produced a landmark report, *Mathematics in Early Childhood: Paths toward Excellence and Equity*. She co-authored *Learning to Read and Write: Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Young Children* and was the content developer and on-air faculty for *HeadsUp! Reading*, a live satellite television course on early literacy disseminated to more than 10,000 early educators. For more than 45 years, Dr. Bredekamp has worked for and with young children toward the goal of improving the quality and effectiveness of early childhood education programs.

About the Contributors

Dr. Kathleen (Kate) Gallagher is the Director of Research and Evaluation at the Buffett Early Childhood Institute at the University of Nebraska. Dr. Gallagher is an educational psychologist and early childhood professional, with more than 30 years of experience teaching, home visiting, and leading early childhood programs, including early intervention and inclusive preschool programs. Her research, evaluation, and teaching focus on practices, programs, and policies that support the development and well-being of young children 0–8 years and their families, particularly in the contexts of poverty, disability, and cultural diversity. Her recent work is focused on how organizations can implement policies and practices to support the well-being of early childhood professionals. Kate holds a doctorate in educational psychology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, a master's in education from Marquette University, and a bachelor's degree in early childhood education and special education from Cardinal Stritch University. Kate has presented two TED talks on the transformative power of early childhood education, and has published extensively on children's early language and literacy, social-emotional development, and early intervention.

Dr. Gail Joseph is an associate professor of Educational Psychology and Early Childhood and Family Studies at the University of Washington. She teaches courses, advises students, provides service, and conducts research on early learning and equity, child care quality, teacher preparation, early childhood mental health, and school readiness. She is the Founding Executive Director of Cultivate Learning at the University of Washington and was the Director of the Head Start Center for Inclusion and Co-Director of the National Center for Quality Teaching and Learning funded by the Office of Head Start. At Cultivate Learning she oversees the quality ratings system for all licensed child care and pre-K programs in the state, and is the creator of numerous professional learning resources such as *Circle Time Magazine* and the *Meaningful Makeover* series. Additionally, she is the Founding Director of the EarlyEdU Alliance. The EarlyEdU Alliance is improving the quality of programs for more than 30,000 children nationwide by making relevant, affordable bachelor's degrees accessible to the early childhood workforce. Using the latest research on optimizing child outcomes and adult learning, the technology-powered pedagogy of EarlyEdU creates degrees that make a significant contribution to individuals and the field. To serve as an innovation lab, Dr. Joseph led the development of the University of Washington's first online B.A. completion degree in early childhood education which was just ranked #1 in the nation. Dr. Joseph is the 2018 recipient of the the David R. Thorud Leadership Award at the University of Washington.

Megan Schumaker-Murphy has worked in early childhood education for 15 years as a special education teacher, early interventionist, and teacher educator. At last count, Ms. Schumaker-Murphy worked directly with more than 300 families and more than 150 teachers and early interventionists serving more than 1,000 young children across those settings. She is a doctoral candidate and instructor at DePaul University in Chicago where she lives with her family and two adorably naughty cats.

Preface

My motivations for writing the prior editions of this book were both personal and professional. I began my career in early childhood education more than 45 years ago as an unqualified child care teacher. During the intervening years, I've often wished that I had known even a fraction of what I know now about child development, and effective teaching and learning so I could have been a better teacher. I initially wrote this text to help ensure that new teachers get off to a better start than I did and that the children do, too.

My professional motivations emanate from the current explosion in research that should be informing our practice to a much greater extent than it is today. Neuroscience and research on child development, teaching, and curriculum provide considerable guidance about effective practices and what children truly need to be physically and mentally healthy and successful in school and life. In addition, I continue to feel the responsibility to clarify and explain what *developmentally appropriate practice* really means—that it is not ages and stages but rather a complex decision-making process on the part of teachers that is embedded in social and cultural contexts.

As I wrote this fourth edition, I reflected a great deal on my entire career. I had the privilege of spending time and videotaping at the Center for Young Children (CYC) at the University of Maryland, my alma mater. I'm proud of the fact that the CYC is NAEYC-accredited because I developed and directed the accreditation system. When I visit the program and many others like it in our country, I see what we early childhood professionals continue to envision for every child—a caring community of enthusiastic learners, effective teaching, engaging and challenging curriculum, and developmentally appropriate practice implemented as it is intended. My mentor, Dr. Carol Seefeldt was one of the visionaries whose work influenced the design and curriculum at the CYC. I feel her presence there and in my work every day.

Many parents, policy makers, economists, business leaders, and researchers now consider early education essential for long-term success in life. Our profession has a deep responsibility to meet these lofty expectations. But the power of early education depends on the quality of teacher-child interactions and the effectiveness of instructional practices. To achieve their potential, children need and deserve highly competent, well-educated, well-compensated teachers. But most of all, we have a responsibility to ensure that young children have safe, secure, and joyful childhoods. Only then can we fulfill the promise that lies within every child.

New to This Edition

- A new cross-cutting theme of the entire book is the importance of developing children's executive function, self-regulation, and positive approaches to learning. Every chapter and many established features, such as *Becoming an Intentional Teacher and Promoting Play*, present examples of effective curriculum and teaching to promote these goals for children.
- New *What Works* features in 10 chapters discuss executive function, self-regulation, approaches to learning, or brain development.
- The revised Chapter 13 is a STEM chapter with discussion and examples of engineering and increased emphasis on science standards and teaching practices in addition to mathematics and technology.
- Chapter 1 is updated with discussion of new policies, changing demographics, and new research on child development and effective early education. The chapter addresses both trends in the field and challenging issues such as adverse childhood experiences, stress in children's and families' lives, the opioid crisis, threats to children's play, bullying, and social media.
- Chapter 3 is updated with a discussion of new research and ongoing issues such as the importance of situating decisions in cultural context, scripted curriculum, and academic rigor and developmentally appropriate practice. The reorganized chapter includes learning materials with environments.
- Updated research and new strategies for dealing with toxic stress and challenging behavior appear in Chapter 8 and Chapter 14.
- The updated Chapter 2 includes the history of Reggio Emilia and discusses Loris Malaguzzi as a major historical figure.
- New *Promoting Play* features in six chapters emphasize protecting children's right to play, especially in kindergarten.
- Chapter 1 and Chapter 16 provide a discussion of NAEYC's *Power to the Profession*.
- Updated culture and language lenses are provided on culturally responsive curriculum, teaching, and learning, as well as discussions on professional ethics in challenging times.
- New examples of developmentally appropriate digital media for children, teachers, and families appear throughout the text.
- New artifacts of children's work appear throughout.

Book Organization Continues to Reflect *Guidelines for Developmentally Appropriate Practice*

This book is designed to teach the concept of *developmentally appropriate practice* for students, because an understanding of its principles is the foundation on which to build early childhood programs and schools for children from birth through age 8. Chapters are organized according to NAEYC's guidelines for developmentally appropriate practice, which I have coauthored for more than 30 years.

Part 1, "Foundations of Early Childhood Education," describes the current profession and the issues and trends affecting it today (Chapter 1), the rich history from which developmentally appropriate practices evolved (Chapter 2), and an overview of its principles and guidelines, which are described in depth in later chapters (Chapter 3).

Part 2, "Dimensions of Developmentally Appropriate Practice," includes chapters describing the key factors teachers must consider as they make professional decisions. Chapter 4 presents an overview of current knowledge about how all children develop and learn. Chapter 5 addresses the unique, individual differences among children, including children with diverse abilities. Chapter 6 discusses the critical role of social, cultural, and linguistic contexts on all children's development and learning and how teachers must embrace a diverse society to help every child succeed in school and life. Though addressed in different chapters, these three dimensions are integrally connected.

Part 3, "Intentional Teaching: How to Teach," describes the role of the teacher in implementing developmentally appropriate practices. Each of the interconnected aspects of the teacher's role is addressed in separate chapters: building effective partnerships with families (Chapter 7), creating a caring community of learners and guiding young children (Chapter 8); teaching to enhance learning and development (Chapter 9); planning effective curriculum (Chapter 10); and assessing children's learning and development (Chapter 11).

Part 4, "Implementing an Effective Curriculum: What to Teach," describes both *how* and *what to teach* children from birth through age 8 in language, literacy, the arts, STEM, social-emotional development, social studies, physical development, and health. Each chapter demonstrates how the continuum of children's development influences decisions about curriculum content and intentional, effective teaching strategies for children of different ages.

Early childhood educators join this profession and stay in it because they believe their work can make a difference in the lives of children and their families. But to make a lasting difference, our practices must be effective—they must contribute to children's learning and development. This book reflects this core goal by building on the basic framework of developmentally appropriate practice while going beyond to emphasize intentional teaching, challenging and interesting curriculum, and evidence-based, effective practices for a new generation of early childhood educators. Each of these key themes is discussed on the following pages.

Intentional Teaching of Young Children

This text builds on the framework of developmentally appropriate practice emphasizing that effective teachers are intentional, thoughtful, and purposeful in everything they do.

Intentional teachers know not only what to do with children but also why they are doing it and can explain the rationale for the decisions they make to other teachers, administrators, and families. To help students understand this concept, **Becoming an Intentional Teacher** features reveal what teachers are thinking in classroom situations, *how* and *why* they select the strategies they do, and challenge students to reflect further on these scenarios.

Becoming an Intentional Teacher

Expanding Children's Experience

Here's What Happened The preschool I work in is located in a rural community. Our curriculum is based on the Bank Street approach. At the beginning of the year, the children were very excited about riding the bus to school for the first time. They had so many questions that I decided we should pursue the topic. The children interviewed the bus driver, who is one of the children's mother. They drew pictures of the bus, sang "Wheels on the Bus," and played school bus. Based on the children's keen interest, I decided to introduce the idea of drawing maps of their bus routes. Some children have lengthy rides from the country while others live closer by.

Here's What I Was Thinking The basic premise of the Bank Street approach is to begin the curriculum study in the "here and now" and expand children's experiences and learning from there. The school bus study began easily enough with the initial enthusiasm of riding to school. But I anticipated that these rides would soon become boring. Distracted preschoolers might create unsafe conditions on the bus. I decided to enhance the learning experience with the challenge of mapping their routes. This required keen observation and focused attention on the children's part. It also introduced them to geography and mapping skills.

Reflection Many schools today are given a curriculum that prescribes certain topics of study such as *seasons* or *animals* that may not reflect the lives and experiences of the children. If you were a teacher in such a situation, how could you apply the principles of the Bank Street approach to make the experiences more meaningful?

Current Research on Effective Practices

In an era of expanding research on child development and learning, Common Core State Standards, Early Learning standards, accountability, and rapid change in the field, the text makes research understandable and meaningful for students and illustrates the connections between child development, curriculum content, assessment, and intentional teaching.

What Works features present research-based practices in action, including descriptions of demonstrated effective practices such as strategies to develop executive function and using relaxation techniques to prevent challenging behaviors.

What Works

High Quality Programs Promote Executive Function

The most frequently used observational measure of preschool quality is the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). This tool assesses three aspects of program quality: the emotional climate, classroom organization, and instructional climate. Research shows that children in classrooms with higher scores on each dimension have positive outcomes in academic subjects such as literacy and mathematics, but notably in executive function, which facilitates learning across all areas. Teachers' positive, responsive relationships with children predict working memory, impulse control, and mental flexibility—that is, their executive functioning. The more emotional support teachers provide children, the better they are able to focus their attention, control their behavior, and engage in learning.

In addition, well-organized classroom routines promote executive functioning and positive approaches to learning. In such classrooms, children are more eager to learn, behave appropriately, pay attention, and persist at tasks. CLASS scores on instructional climate measure how well teachers support children's higher-order thinking, problem-solving, and language development. These teaching strategies have been found to help children behave more positively because they control negative impulses and use language and reasoning to solve problems rather than quarreling or fighting. Research in early elementary classrooms has similar results. For example, scores on classroom organization in kindergarten positively affect children's self-control, work habits, and engagement in learning.

Most standards for both program quality and child outcomes—NAEYC, Head Start, and state early learning guidelines—address these key elements of quality for a reason. They work in children's best interests.

Sources: Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, 2017. *Executive function and self-regulation.* Retrieved November 5, 2017, from https://developingchild.harvard.edu; Teachstone, 2017. *Effective teacher-child interactions and child outcomes: A summary of research on the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Pre-K–3rd Grade.* Charlottesville, VA.

Language Lens

Preparing to Teach Dual Language Learners

Eight different languages are spoken among the children in Natalia's kindergarten class. Natalia and two of the children are the only ones whose first language is English. Natalia works hard to create a caring community where all the children comfortably experiment with learning English while also developing their home languages. She strives to communicate with the parents by using translators. Last year, Natalia's class also included eight languages—but some of them were different from those spoken this year.

The number of languages represented in Natalia's classroom may seem extreme, but linguistic and cultural diversity is now the norm in our nation's schools. In the next 20 years, the biggest single child-related demographic change is predicted to be an increase in dual language learners. Most of these children speak Spanish as a home language, but many others speak Asian, Middle Eastern, and African languages. California, Florida, and Texas continue to have the largest percentages of Spanish-speaking families, but the Hispanic population grew in many regions of the country. In fact, Georgia's Hispanic population more than doubled in two decades.

In the past, most teachers could safely assume that they would never encounter a language other than English in their entire careers. Today, Natalia's experience, or something like it, is not so very rare. New teachers may find it beneficial to learn another language themselves, but learning eight languages is not a reasonable expectation. What can new and experienced teachers such as Natalia do? They can start by remembering some important principles about dual language learners:

- People who speak the same language, whether Spanish or another language, are not all alike—they come from a variety of countries and cultures.
- Learning two or more languages does not confuse children as some people think, but rather enhances brain development.
- Dual language learners can better focus attention because alternating languages requires intense concentration.
- Supporting home language development is essential because children can learn many skills in their home language and apply those skills as they learn English.
- Teachers need to intentionally teach English vocabulary and provide lots of opportunities for children to play together and practice their developing language skills.
- Communicating with families is essential regardless of the effort required.

The children of today must be prepared to function as citizens of a global society. Speaking two or more languages is an important skill for the 21st century. When children enter early childhood programs speaking a language other than English, the foundation is already there on which to build.

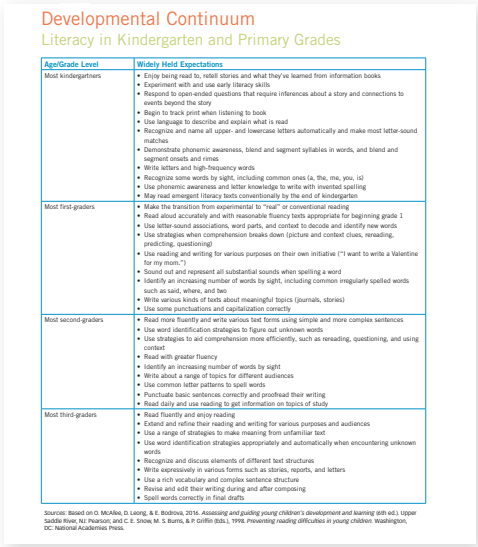
Sources: Flores, 2017. *How the U.S. Hispanic population is changing.* Washington, DC: Pew Research Center; National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017. *Promoting the educational success of children and youth learning English.* Washington, DC: The National Academies Press; Bialystok & Werker, 2016. The systematic effects of bilingualism on children's development. *Developmental Science, 20*(1).

Lens features present insights on culture, language, and including all children. These features discuss practice through diverse *lenses*, expanding the sources of information teachers use to make decisions and helping them look at questions or problems from broader perspectives. Widening the lens with which teachers view their practice is a strategy to move beyond the persistent educational tendency to dichotomize difficult or controversial issues into "either/or" choices, and move toward "both/and" thinking.

Connections between Curriculum and Child Development

Unlike many early childhood texts that focus on child development only, this text shows how child development and curriculum content knowledge are connected.

In the **Developmental Continuum** feature, the text provides an overview of the continuum of learning in the areas of language, literacy, mathematics, and cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development and describes how child development is linked to curriculum planning for children from birth through age 8.



Developmental Continuum

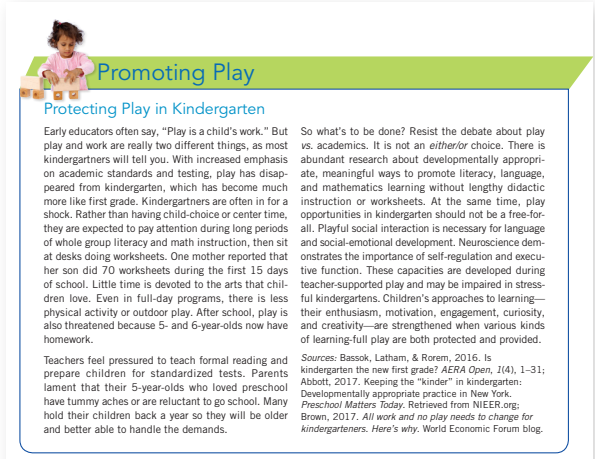
Literacy in Kindergarten and Primary Grades

Age/Grade Level	Widely Held Expectations
Most kindergartners	• Enjoy being read to, retell stories and what they've learned from information books • Experiment with and use early literacy skills • Respond to open-ended questions that require inferences about a story and connections to events beyond the story • Begin to track print when listening to book • Use language to describe and explain what is read • Recognize and name all upper- and lowercase letters automatically and make most letter-sound matches • Demonstrate phonemic awareness, blend and segment syllables in words, and blend and segment onsets and rimes • Write letters and high-frequency words • Recognize some words by sight, including common ones (a, the, me, you, is) • Use phonemic awareness and letter knowledge to write with invented spelling • May read emergent literacy texts conventionally by the end of kindergarten
Most first-graders	• Make the transition from experimental to "real" or conventional reading • Read aloud accurately and with reasonable fluency texts appropriate for beginning grade 1 • Use letter-sound associations, word parts, and context to decode and identify new words • Use strategies when comprehension breaks down (picture and context clues, rereading, predicting, questioning) • Use reading and writing for various purposes on their own initiative ("I want to write a Valentine for my mom.") • Sound out and represent all substantial sounds when spelling a word • Identify an increasing number of words by sight, including common irregularly spelled words such as said, where, and two • Write various kinds of texts about meaningful topics (journals, stories) • Use some punctuations and capitalization correctly
Most second-graders	• Read more fluently and write various text forms using simple and more complex sentences • Use word identification strategies to figure out unknown words • Use strategies to aid comprehension more efficiently, such as rereading, questioning, and using context • Read with greater fluency • Identify an increasing number of words by sight • Write about a range of topics for different audiences • Use common letter patterns to spell words • Punctuate basic sentences correctly and proofread their writing • Read daily and use reading to get information on topics of study
Most third-graders	• Read fluently and enjoy reading • Extend and refine their reading and writing for various purposes and audiences • Use a range of strategies to make meaning from unfamiliar text • Use word identification strategies appropriately and automatically when encountering unknown words • Recognize and discuss elements of different text structures • Write expressively in various forms such as stories, reports, and letters • Use a rich vocabulary and complex sentence structure • Revise and edit their writing during and after composing • Spell words correctly in final drafts

Sources: Based on O. McAfee, D. Leong, & E. Bodrova, 2016. *Assessing and guiding young children's development and learning* (6th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson; and C. E. Snow, M. S. Burns, & P. Griffin (Eds.), 1998. *Preventing reading difficulties in young children.* Washington, DC: National Academies Press.

- Chapters 12 to 15 help early childhood teachers understand right from the start that there is content in the curriculum for young children. They describe the goals for young children's learning and development that predict success in school and life. Each of these chapters includes examples of effective strategies such as teaching children of diverse abilities in inclusive classrooms or ways to promote dual language learning.

The **Promoting Play feature** presents current research on the important role of play in development and effective strategies to help children learn through play or protect their right to play. These features address play across the full age range, from birth through age 8. Discussions of play are also integrated in each chapter throughout this book as an effective means to support all domains of development and promote learning in all curriculum areas. Today, many people are concerned about how the standards movement is negatively impacting play. We often hear statements such as "We can't let children play because we have to teach literacy," or "We don't have time for outdoor play in primary grades because we have to get children ready for standardized tests." Play should not be treated as a separate part of an early childhood program or day that can be cut if someone deems it unimportant. Therefore, you will find a discussion of play in every chapter of this book.



Promoting Play

Protecting Play in Kindergarten

Early educators often say, "Play is a child's work." But play and work are really two different things, as most kindergartners will tell you. With increased emphasis on academic standards and testing, play has disappeared from kindergarten, which has become much more like first grade. Kindergartners are often in for a shock. Rather than having child-choice or center time, they are expected to pay attention during long periods of whole group literacy and math instruction, then sit at desks doing worksheets. One mother reported that her son did 70 worksheets during the first 15 days of school. Little time is devoted to the arts that children love. Even in full-day programs, there is less physical activity or outdoor play. After school, play is also threatened because 5- and 6-year-olds now have homework.

Teachers feel pressured to teach formal reading and prepare children for standardized tests. Parents lament that their 5-year-olds who loved preschool have tummy aches or are reluctant to go school. Many hold their children back a year so they will be older and better able to handle the demands.

So what's to be done? Resist the debate about play *vs.* academics. It is not an *either/or* choice. There is abundant research about developmentally appropriate, meaningful ways to promote literacy, language, and mathematics learning without lengthy didactic instruction or worksheets. At the same time, play opportunities in kindergarten should not be a free-for-all. Playful social interaction is necessary for language and social-emotional development. Neuroscience demonstrates the importance of self-regulation and executive function. These capacities are developed during teacher-supported play and may be impaired in stressful kindergartens. Children's approaches to learning—their enthusiasm, motivation, engagement, curiosity, and creativity—are strengthened when various kinds of learning-full play are both protected and provided.

Sources: Bassok, Latham, & Rorem, 2016. Is kindergarten the new first grade? *AERA Open, 1*(4), 1–31; Abbott, 2017. Keeping the "kinder" in kindergarten: Developmentally appropriate practice in New York. *Preschool Matters Today.* Retrieved from NIEER.org; Brown, 2017. *All work and no play needs to change for kindergarteners. Here's why.* World Economic Forum blog.

- The emphasis on effective curriculum reflects current trends such as the goal of aligning prekindergarten and primary education, NAEYC accreditation and CAPE professional preparation standards, and enhanced expectations for teacher qualifications as described in the 2015 report, *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth through Age 9: A Unifying Foundation* by the Institute of Medicine and the National Research Council, the 2018 report of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM), *Transforming the financing of early care and education*, and NAEYC's Power to the Profession initiative.

Revel™

This fourth edition of *Effective Practices in Early Childhood Education* is available in Revel.™

- Provide an all-in-one solution
  - Fully digital and highly engaging, Revel gives students everything they need for the course—all in one continuous, integrated learning experience. Highlighting, note taking, and a glossary let students read and study however they like. Educators can add notes for students, too, including reminders or study tips.
- Engage students at they read
  - Revel was designed to help every student come to class ready to learn. To keep students engaged as they read through each chapter, Revel integrates videos, interactives, and assessments directly into the author-created narrative. Thanks to this media-rich presentation of content, students are more likely to complete their assigned reading and retain what they've read. So they'll show up to class better prepared to participate and learn.
- Encourage practice and review
  - Embedded *Check Your Understanding* concept checks afford students opportunities to check their understanding at regular intervals before moving on. Assessments in Revel let instructors gauge student comprehension frequently, provide timely feedback, and address learning gaps along the way.
- Foster critical thinking through writing
  - The writing functionality in Revel enables educators to integrate writing—among the best ways to foster and assess critical thinking—into the course without significantly impacting their grading burden. Assignable *Shared Writing* activities direct students to share written responses with classmates, fostering peer discussion.

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- **Dede Dunst, Mitchell Community College**
- **Hannah Mills Mechler, University of Texas at Dallas; Texas Woman's University; Tarrant County Community College**
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