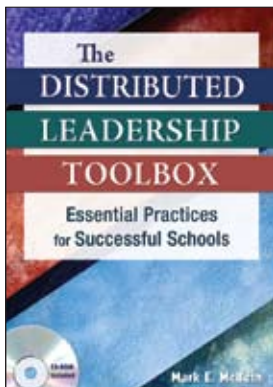


**The Distributed Leadership Toolbox: Essential Practices for Successful Schools.** Mark E. McBeth. Corwin Press, 2008, 320 pages. Available at [www.corwinpress.com](http://www.corwinpress.com).

Current thinking has expanded the concept of school leadership; principals are no longer considered the only leaders in a school. Successful schools have transformed themselves into productive, high-achieving organizations whose leaders include principals, teachers, resource staff, and parents.

*The Distributed Leadership Toolbox* offers readers a structure to engage in a series of meaningful “dialogues about their leadership practices as they relate to enhancing and changing classroom practices.” The author offers a vision of facilitative conversations between leaders and followers, and provides tools to use in perfecting leadership skills as they affect classroom strategies and student achievement. In the first



few chapters, the author juxtaposes traditional thoughts on leadership and a new perspective of how interactions between leaders and followers

enhance change and growth in the classroom.

The crux of the book revolves around the description of three cycles used to diagnose, design, and implement new leadership practices:

*The information cycle* has seven dimensions designed to analyze current leadership practices and to modify and/or replace them with new practices. There are 20 different tools

readers can use to assist them.

*The practice cycle* outlines new practices for consideration, with six tools for reader use.

*The reflective practice cycle* includes six tools that schools can use to analyze new leadership practices and modify them if necessary.

A CD included with the text provides templates for each cycle, accompanied by facilitator tips to be used with leadership teams or in faculty meetings. The CD allowed us to simply enlarge many of the templates for use in our school’s team meetings.

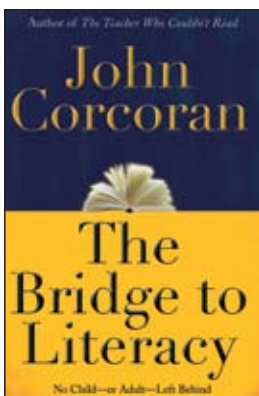
While it does take a while to become adept at using some of the tools, the outcomes have proved worthwhile at our school, where they have enhanced collaboration.

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**The Bridge to Literacy: No Child— or Adult—Left Behind.** John Corcoran. Kaplan Publishing, 2008, 234 pages. Available at [www.kaplanpublishing.com](http://www.kaplanpublishing.com).

Beyond the time educators invest in reading books to learn about new methodology, strategies, and current research, each of us hopes for a few sacred moments to read for direction, inspiration, and a newfound energy. This book is one that educators have been waiting for. It is a true story that will inspire all educators as they learn about the invisible crisis of illiteracy.

Author John Corcoran tells an unbelievable story—his own. It is a dramatic, heart-wrenching story that combines success in the corporate world with an overwhelming feeling of failure while living in a subculture of illiteracy. He tells how and what he did to survive when learning to read appeared hopeless. Corcoran describes his feelings toward educa-



tion and his teachers, from early elementary years through higher education, and shares his ideas of what must be done within the educational system to decrease the

percentage of illiterate children and adults.

Readers most likely will not agree with all of Corcoran’s personal opinions, but the story itself will inspire any educator to acknowledge the urgency of recognizing nonreaders early on, and intervening quickly and effectively. You will be awakened, realizing the magnitude of negative effects non-readers have on our society.

Corcoran writes of the importance of assessment in the early years. He

believes early screening and instruction by teachers who offer different ways to learn a concept can unlock the doors to literacy. One of my favorite parts of the book is the section where he talks about social promotion and the fact that handing students a high school diploma, knowing they cannot read, is not worth the paper on which it is written.

Corcoran believes teacher-training programs at universities must change to ensure that new teachers know how to teach both students who easily pick up the gift of reading and those who struggle in learning to read. He also expresses his thoughts on parents’ responsibilities to teach their children to read.

In *The Bridge to Literacy*, Corcoran clearly and thoroughly explains the importance of guaranteeing that every child learns to read.

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