
According to the authors, Management by Wandering Around (MBWA) is “an approach to leadership based on the belief that leadership is visionary, goal focused, and people centered.” Larry Frase first connected MBWA to school leadership in 1990. When Frase passed away, his colleagues William Streshly and Susan Penny Gray completed this update, The New School Management by Wandering Around. The authors believe that a school leader who follows MBWA engages in “an active, person-to-person process that relies on deeds, involvement, and participation to create better schools.” They want school leaders to identify teachers as their primary customers. As a result, MBWA principals increase their physical presence, spend at least 40 percent of their day in classrooms, and wander their schools with a purpose.

What should principals do while wandering? The authors use MBWA as the theoretical frame to present “practical approaches to the school administrator’s job and strategies for dealing with the nitty-gritty of school leadership.” The book is divided into ten chapters. Chapters one through four provide a brief definition of MBWA and descriptions of its potential for school leadership and effective schools. A leadership style survey will be particularly useful to the school leader who wants to practice MBWA.

The last six chapters present methods, routines, and techniques with regard to curriculum supervision, classroom observations, time management, student discipline, teacher evaluation, and employee dismissal. Interspersed throughout each chapter are reflection questions to increase the reader’s engagement with the material and assist with the application of these ideas to the reader’s leadership repertoire.

Several surveys and inventories also are included in this book. Additional materials and resources are available for download through the publisher’s website. I downloaded many of these items and have already incorporated several into my daily leadership practice.

The first four chapters left me unsure about MBWA as a theory and wanting more details. The last six chapters, however, concisely presented practical advice and resources that all good school leaders need. Add the additional resources and you have a book that should be placed as a reference to the shelves of my colleagues, whether or not they espouse the MBWA philosophy.

Reviewed by Jeffrey Carroll, Principal, J. Blaine Blayton Elementary School, Williamsburg, Virginia.


Project-based learning (PBL) dates back to the turn of the twentieth century. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, it gained favor in many public schools throughout the United States. Today, project-based learning is the “best teaching practice of the new millennium,” writes author William N. Bender in Project-Based Learning: Differentiating Instruction for the 21st Century.

“While project-based learning is not new, it has recently received increased emphasis as educators and business leaders look for ways to move educators forward and develop students’ skills in 21st century technologies, problem-solving, and collaboration,” he writes.

Project-Based Learning may be used as a reference guide or road map to implement PBL in a classroom or school. In it, Bender explores the connections between PBL and differentiated instruction, technology, and instructional strategies, as well as viable assessments.

“With increased emphasis in the educational literature on authentic learning, technology in the classroom, and project-based problem solving, PBL is receiving increasing attention as the teaching paradigm of the future,” writes Bender.

He argues that teachers should evolve and improve their tech skills and pedagogy. Educators will appreciate his suggestions of relevant and innovative online resources to enhance PBL instruction, such as wikis, Twitter, Moodle, YouTube, and Khan Academy. However, he also highlights best PBL practices that do not require technology to accomplish, such as cooperative group work, student-directed inquiry, flexible grouping, and scaffolded instruction.

With its up-to-date, online resources and plethora of references tying PBL to the Common Core State Standards, this book is a valuable resource to PBL veterans as well as newcomers. The section on content coverage versus standards-based learning emphasizes the importance of assessment and higher levels of student engagement, which result in higher levels of student achievement.

“The content coverage issue can present a barrier to implementation of PBL if teachers feel that using a PBL instructional approach might prevent them from covering the educational standards required,” warns Bender. Yet, most educators who will buy this book are ready to or have already moved beyond traditional paper-pencil/worksheet pedagogy, and are interested in innovative and creative ways to engage students in authentic learning.

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