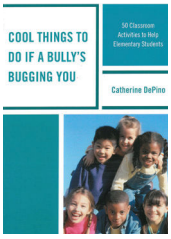
Cool Things to Do If a Bully's Bugging You: 50 Classroom Activities to Help Elementary Students. Catherine DePino. Rowman & Littlefield, 2016, 113 pp.



Bullying prevention is a relevant topic in elementary schools that deserves much more than discussion. It requires student engagement, strategies, and the opportunity to practice what to do and say if a student is being bullied. The author of *Cool Things to Do If a Bully's Bugging You: 50 Classroom Activities to Help Elementary Students* goes one step further and also explores how students can "transfer the knowledge about positive things to do to prevent and deal with bullying to all areas of their lives."

The book's format is very resourceful in that each of the 50 classroom activities is outlined for whole, small, and individual group instruction. Thus, the activities are quite flexible based on the need of the student, educator, and particular situation at hand.

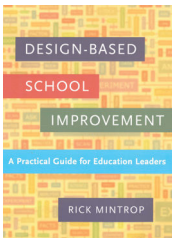
In addition to promoting citizenship and character education, the activities reinforce language arts (speaking, listening, reading, and writing) and social studies curricular standards. Therefore, an educator could integrate an activity into a lesson plan to support a curricular need while also addressing a bullying concern. Another helpful formatting tool is the "Cool Quiz" at the end of each chapter, which is designed to assess understanding of the topic and to lead further discussion.

The activities in *Cool Things to Do* present a variety of opportunities for students to explore how to react to a bully, such as having rehearsed and prepared responses, knowing how and when to ask for help, and using body language when feeling uncomfortable or threatened. The book also explores how to creatively work through the impact of bullying experiences. For example, creating a comic strip where the superhero defeats a bully can provide students with a feeling of empowerment.

This book is a helpful resource that can be used in a variety of ways at the elementary level. Principals, counselors, classroom teachers, and parents will appreciate the helpful strategies presented. Unfortunately, bullying is a topic that school personnel must be prepared to address swiftly. This book supplies readers with a multitude of developmentally appropriate activities to provide assistance and reinforce the victim's self-worth.

Reviewed by Julie Bloss, principal of Grove Early Childhood Center in Grove, Oklahoma.

Design-Based School Improvement: A Practical Guide for Educators. Rick Mintrop. Harvard Education Press, 2016, 272 pp.



As a principal who is searching for ways to address achievement gaps among several groups of students in my school, I was hooked when I read the author's assertion, "We know too little about how equity-minded leaders act on their values through practical interventions *and* make them work within their organizations." *Design-Based School Improvement* serves as a practical guide for school leaders who want to create lasting change and improve schools from the inside, rather than relying on outside consultants and prepackaged solutions that may lack "context sensitivity," which author Rick Mintrop says is at "the base of all successful improvement."

The book starts with a definition of design development: "a systematic and disciplined form of innovative problem solving in educational organizations." Each chapter is focused on one step in the design-based approach and includes the stories of four school leaders as they work through solving a problem of practice in their respective contexts. These problems of practice include behavior management in schools staffed by novice teachers, cultural relevance of instruction, instructional supervision, and shaping a respectful school climate. The chapters include focusing questions that school leaders can reflect on as they tackle change and problems of practice in their own schools and districts. Each chapter also includes a section called "Excursion into Theory," which introduces the research base that supports that chapter's specific step of the design process.

While the book presents a structured problem-solving process, some of the chapters—for example the chapter on how to consult the research base to better understand a problem of practice—might not be necessary for all school leaders to read. Having read this resource with my own school's problem of practice in mind, I found it pushed my thinking in new directions and provided me with specific steps I could take to examine equity and bias in instructional practices in service of closing our achievement gaps. Because of the concrete steps outlined in each chapter, this book is one that principals can use repeatedly to address numerous challenges they are facing in their schools and districts.

Reviewed by Jen Thomas, principal of Hearst Elementary School in Washington, D.C.