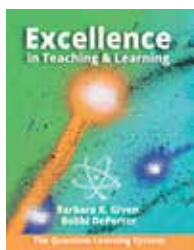


Excellence in Teaching and Learning: The Quantum Learning System. Barbara K. Given and Bobbi DePorter. Learning Forum Publications, 2015, 322 pp.

Education has been turned upside down and sideways in the past decade. Brain research has given us new information that has educators rethinking all that we do—from how to set up a classroom to how to construct a lesson. Quite frankly, there is so much to know and apply that many of us can get overwhelmed.



Barbara K. Given and Bobbi DePorter provide a guidebook for how to effectively integrate brain research into a classroom. *Excellence in Teaching and Learning* begins with an introduction of the brain's six natural

learning systems: social, emotional, implicit, cognitive, physical, and reflective. Then, each system is carefully examined and paired up with methodology and strategies from the Quantum Learning System to help teachers and schools better serve students.

The brain's natural learning systems are organized into the two larger categories of culture and cognition. The cultural systems—social, emotional, and implicit—provide the context for how we set up interactions within a school. Cognition, the authors state, relates to conscious mental activities and include the cognitive, physical, and reflective systems.

In particular, “Part 5: Physical Learning and Deliver Component” stood out to me. I was surprised to learn that the authors place the physical system in the cognitive category instead of culture. Previously, I believed that students getting up and moving or participating in recess

was part of the school's culture. The authors effectively argue that physical learning is part of cognition. Research clearly shows a link between the amount of movement students participate in and how much they are able to think and learn. Fortunately for educators, Given and DePorter go on to present tips and techniques for how to bring physical movement into an academic classroom.

Excellence in Teaching and Learning is a learning tool that I will return to time and again. Despite the dense research material, you will not get lost in research jargon. Given and DePorter describe the research so it can be used as an easy reference to support educational practices. This is a great book for a teacher book study or professional learning community.

Reviewed by Ted Murcay, executive principal of Creswell Middle Prep School of the Arts in Nashville, Tennessee.

Impact: How Assistant Principals Can Be High Performing Leaders.

Christopher Colwell. Rowman & Littlefield, 2015, 159 pp.

Are assistant principals subordinate? That is the question I asked a few times while reading *Impact: How Assistant Principals Can Be High Performing Leaders*. At



one point I looked up the definition and, according to my Google search, “subordinate” is defined as (noun) a person under the authority or control of another within an organization, or (verb) treat or regard as of lesser importance than something else. Why would anyone write a book and describe an assistant principal in this way? Despite this, I got over my distaste for the word and focused on the

true premise of this book: collaborative leadership, and how “the assistant principal can and should be considered key as a leader within the school leadership team.”

Colwell carefully crafts *Impact* in a style that allows you to dissect four key themes: the principal partner, the faculty partner, the assistant principal as instructional leader, and the assistant principal and daily operations. Within each theme, there are chapters that outline research and practical examples to help distinguish leaders and high-performing leaders.

Chapter 7, “Leading From the Middle,” is where I feel the book really comes together and illustrates the unique relationship between someone who is not quite a teacher but also not the principal of a school. A recurring theme that emerges is the key role of the assistant principal as keeping the pulse of everything that is happening while still finding time to be an instructional leader.

One thing that I feel is missing from *Impact* is the use of technology in 21st century schools. Having access to technology tools such as Google Hangout, Google docs, Voxer, and Twitter to enhance all levels of communication, increase family engagement, and build a strong network of professional colleagues challenges the premise of not being a high-performing leader because of time and isolation.

Experienced assistant principals might find the book pretty tedious, but I do recommend it for all students in educational leadership programs because it provides insight on how assistant principals can serve as a liaison to and for all stakeholders. I also recommend this book for new principals looking to develop and maintain a strong leadership team.

Reviewed by Sheilah Jefferson-Isaac, assistant principal of Northern Parkway School in Uniondale, New York.