

Book Reviews

Rita Hoots

Department Editor

SCIENCE ACTIVITIES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Science for ALL Students. By Marty Berda & Mary Jean Blaisdell. 1998. Facts On File, Inc. (11 Penn Plaza, New York, NY 10001-2006). 286 pp. Loose-leaf binder \$165.

 I applaud this effort to make science education more inclusive. This loose-leaf bound collection of activities contains useful adaptations for students with visual and motor disabilities. The adaptations would probably not be noticed by any students; they blend seamlessly into the activities.

Effective adaptations need not be expensive or complicated. This book provides simple measures to make science more accessible. For instance, the common conservation of momentum activity that uses a large marble and smaller marbles is changed to have a tennis ball roll down a Hot Wheels[™] track and impact colorful plastic golf balls. Would students doing this activity realize it was adapted for special learners? Probably not, yet the activity would benefit students with poor motor skills or visual impairments. It also decreases concerns about students swallowing or shattering the marbles.

Don't expect to find many new activities in this book; the authors purposefully selected activities that are familiar to teachers. The book contains many

useful reproducible student sheets. The illustrations are clear, but not extremely artistic. They present a diverse population of children doing science.

While I love the idea of the book, I am shocked by the \$165 price. The book could help new elementary school teachers who often need help in finding effective science activities and in adapting learning. However, teacher explanations and hints are limited to a few sentences. Nevertheless, with the shift to more inclusion in our classrooms, all teachers must learn how to make science available to all students. I commend this book for advancing this goal.

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ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE

Honey, Mud, Maggots, and Other Medical Marvels. The Science Behind Folk Remedies and Old Wives' Tales. By Robert & Michele Root-Bernstein. 1997. Houghton Mifflin Company (215 Park Ave. South, New York, NY 10003). 279 pp. Hardback \$24.

 As your festering wound begins to turn gangrenous, the doctor says, "I'm going to put some maggots in there to clean out the wound; then I will pack it with honey and cover it with some cellophane."

With this provocative introduction (paraphrased here), the Bernsteins present the results of their prodigious research in a highly engaging, very readable, largely nontechnical, and highly informative manner, complete with an extensive bibliography.

Many modern medical practices began as multicultural folk remedies or old wives' (and shamans') practices from Africa, Brazil and Borneo to Appalachia and America's deep south and over hundreds to several thousand years from ancient China, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Rome and Greece. Many were dismissed as harmful and/or foolish as modern scientific medicine came to the forefront; many, but not

all, have been shown to have real scientific value as their biochemical bases have been discovered.

In 13 pithy chapters, the reader is introduced to or reminded of smallpox vaccination, wound-cleaning maggots, honey to heal wounds, mineral waters of Bath, eating clay (geopharmacy), phlebotomy (blood letting), medicinal leech and "laudable pus", therapeutic agents in saliva, circumcision, contraceptive techniques and agents, and cigarette cellophane wrappers instead of gauze bandages. But, there is also a strong caveat about crackpots and panaceas.

The terminal chapters cover the similarities and differences between biological and medicinal evolution; what we can learn about healing from apes; and the cultural milieu that circumscribes the use of various medical practices. Finally there is a call for a consortium of hospitals, medical insurers and the government to underwrite the development, testing and dissemination of cost-effective nonpatentable therapies.

This book would appeal to the secondary and college science student, and would also engage the attention of the general reading public.

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POP - NATURE

Concrete Jungle. Edited by Mark Dion & Alexis Rockman. 1996. Juno Books (180 Varick St., 10th Floor, New York, NY 10014). 219 pp. Paperback \$24.95.

 **Concrete Jungle** is a regrettable example of the sort of naturalist writing directed toward lay audiences that actually sustains "eco-illiteracy" rather than eliminating it. Billing itself as "the intersection of urban living and Nature in a contemporary fashion," the book claims to "look ahead to the next millennium with creative irony, even as it confronts the seriousness of our environmental devastation," but what it really manages to do is present a confused amalgamation of often unrelated graphics and essays

Rita Hoots, Book Reviews Editor, is a professor at Yuba College and teaches classes in the biological sciences, human anatomy, and chemistry. Her various degrees in the sciences, counseling, and education come from the City University of New York, University of Wisconsin-Madison, California State University-Sacramento, and the University of California-Berkeley. Before entering the education field, Hoots was for many years a researcher in cell ultrastructure and immunology. Her predominant passion in education is directed to the popularization and illumination of science for the public. Her address is: **Science Dept., Yuba College, 41605 Gibson Rd., Woodland, CA 95776; e-mail: rahoots@ix.netcom.com.**