Crisis Prevention and Intervention in the Classroom: What Teachers Should Know

by Victoria B. Damiani. Lanham, MD. Rowman & Littlefield Education. © 2006.
177 pages. ISBN 9781578863402.

Reviewed by Shellie Hipsky

"I look at the body on the floor.
Killing the bastard that deserves to die,
Ain't nothing like it in the world,
But he sure did bleed a lot" (5).

The hauntingly macabre words in this poem were written by Barry Loutaitis, who at the age of 14 in 1996 walked into his 9th-grade algebra classroom with three guns. He shot and killed two classmates and his teacher. When the experts examined his past to determine what led Barry to that chilling moment, they found that the poem was written for English class before the shooting. They evaluated family issues and a steady downward slope of mood and behavior that was witnessed by teachers prior to the event. These occurrences—compounded by a preoccupation with media that focused on death and killing, and bruises from bullying that he was enduring—were signs. These could have signaled to the teachers and administration that a crisis might occur.

The book *Crisis Prevention and Intervention in the Classroom: What Teachers Should Know* serves as a resource for teachers, ranging from the preservice to veteran, showing them how to recognize and react to problems in a productive way. The author explores a multitude of crisis situations that could affect the classroom negatively: natural disasters, death or suicide (of a parent, teacher, or student), hostile students, and parents in crisis. Throughout the text, Damiani provides the reader with case studies, or as she calls them "reality checks," which serve to provide real-world examples on which to base reflection and to help the reader problem solve what went right and wrong in the scenario. As a teacher of preservice educators who are being prepared for the classroom, I certainly will use these sections with my students to engage them in discussion.

The book is broken into three sections: school crises, interventions, and preventions. The end results of the most extreme and shocking cases begin the book; the

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second section suggests ways to intervene so that an emergency situation doesn't arise; and the book closes with ways to set the tone and refer students for support services. An excellent section is provided for Crisis Response Teams, as well as a section that offers commonsense classroom management techniques.

The midst of a crisis is an unstable and critical time that demands immediate problem solving. Practical suggestions for how to prevent and react to crisis situations are presented in an easy-to-comprehend format. This book will serve to better prepare teachers for the instant when they need to react during a crisis situation.

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