Editorial Reviews

Review

From the moment Michie begins teaching in Chicago in the early 1990s, he tries to impress upon his mostly Mexican American middle school students the importance "of speaking up intelligently about matters that concern them." Building his lessons around the kids and their lives, Michie jettisons much of the back-to-basics coursework the central office wants him to cover. Instead he has students debate school policies, make audiotapes of relevant novels...and "deconstruct" the dubious social values of such pop-culture TV programs as Ricki Lake, Cops, and the Jerry Springer Show.

Michie writes as candidly as he does vividly, acknowledging occasional doubts about his teaching style...Still, the book is far from pessimistic. Michie is a passionate believer in the power of education. And his open and ongoing struggles to become a better teacher are inspiring--both to his students and the reader. -- Teacher Magazine, February 2000

Greg Michie has written one of the season's most fascinating, albeit under-publicized books. Michie moved to Chicago and became a teacher in an inner city school, where he basically found another world--not a foreign world, as many comfortable suburbanites may think of it, but one different in its innate toughness. There he met and was "educated" by his students as much as he helped educate them. Michie's book is full of passionate writing and is of immediate interest to anyone concerned about children and/or education. -- Creative Loafing, November 6, 1999

Michie wrestles with a lot of big issues here: segregated schooling, police brutality, drugs, gangs, sexism, racial bias, childhood sexual abuse. But he does so through the watchful eyes of his students, whom he never gives up on. -- The Progressive's "Best Books of 1999," Jan. 2000

There's a genre of education narratives that features a lone crusader who after minor setbacks achieves what everyone said was impossible: transforming a classroom of knuckleheads into high achievers. Michie's book breaks this mold. In the tales he tells, he fails almost as often as he succeeds. But there are lessons to be learned in either instance. --From the Chicago Reader, September 24, 1999

About the Author

Gregory Michie teaches in the College of Education at Illinois State University. A teacher in Chicago public schools for 9 years, he received the Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Teaching in 1996. He is the author of See You When We Get There: Teaching for Change in Urban Schools.