ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

EDUCATION

From the Heart of a Teacher
Diana Hilton
AuthorHouse
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Five Stars (out of Five)

Teaching is more than just standing in front of a room and speaking. Instead, such professionals have to address the individual needs of a classroom. Diana Hilton's book, *From the Heart of a Teacher*, describes a school year in an urban and low-income school. With many years of experience under her belt, Hilton explains that the learning process is never over for a teacher. This book provides methods and insight into what affects a child's learning: one's home environment, students' social skills, and the resources and approach of the school and teacher.

Hilton's courage and positivity drive the book. She does not shy away from the dangers and challenges linked to being one of the few white women in an urban school. Instead, she seeks to problem solve. Every teacher—new and experienced—should read this book. Not only will it inspire people to look past student behaviors, but it will challenge teachers to do more: reach out to students' families, address their individual needs, and adapt lessons and teaching techniques.

Some of the most interesting parts of this book are when Hilton describes individual students, their performance and personae in the classroom, and her experiences with the students and their families outside of the classroom. For example, when the teacher at the heart of this book visits a student's home to discover that the home has no furniture and is overrun with children, the reader is as surprised and jolted as the teacher. The full weight of the student's reality hits home when the teacher discovers the grandmother half-asleep and in pain in a room containing nothing more than a mattress. Life is not easy for this community's residents, and Hilton is careful not to judge.

Hilton also takes the time to explain how a teacher's background can affect their approach to learning and the classroom. The speaker in this book understands how one's past can affect a person's future and personality. For this very reason, Hilton opens the book by explaining the teacher's own past: the alcoholic father that made her a pleaser and the poverty that pushed her to do well in school.

The title of the book could be more specific. The strength of this piece is not just Hilton's positivity and open-mindedness, but it is also her attention to entering and navigating a new culture with different races, parenting skills and approaches, and poverty issues. With such complex social issues approached with grace, a title linked to navigating such worlds may have proven more relevant.

Hilton's book speaks to one teacher's strength—how she speaks and teaches straight from the heart. With the school year painstakingly recounted, everything from phone calls home to lesson planning is explained. Hilton shows that healing and community are possible if a person enters a classroom with the best of intentions, a hardworking mindset, and an open heart.

Lisa Bower