for her common-sense insight into the essentials of the Waldorf early childhood classroom and wise perception of the nature of young children. There are many gems included in this section, which may seem self-evident upon first reading; a bit of consideration to her statements reveals the depths of her practical wisdom, gleaned from decades of working with young children. For example, in discussing the teacher’s gestures during circle, she observes: “Every movement we use in a presentation should be performed with inner participation. The children need to sense that we are engaged with our whole being. It is also beneficial if the movement originates from exact observation of a human task or work activity, the characteristic movement of an animal, or some process in nature, which will make it seem compelling and real.”

She also emphasizes the importance of the teacher’s speech: “It is possible to express the character of something by placing special emphasis on the consonants, for example with words like rumble, scurry, rustle, or hop. If you are unsure of the text or have not thought it out in advance, the children will have a tendency to start misbehaving. Total familiarity with the verses and poems frees you from depending on a written text and instead allows you to concentrate on the children. It will immediately cause the children to feel protected by you and they will joyfully join in with the activity.”

Regarding the children’s speech, she advises: “We always allow the children to live in the game without requiring them to speak or sing along. They are not consciously aware of whether they are singing or speaking along with us, provided we do not call their attention to it.”

Let’s Dance and Sing! and its companion WECAN volume, Play with Us! now create a full body of classroom material, only tantalizing hints of which we have had in the past. Both volumes are now available through WECAN Books.

Movement Journeys and Circle Adventures, Volume 2
by Nancy Blanning and Laurie Clark
Reviewed by Ruth Ker

Once again Nancy Blanning and Laurie Clark have collaborated to produce a rich collection of early childhood treasures. This book, Movement Journeys and Circle Adventures, Volume 2 (and the first volume as well, in my opinion), needs to be on every early childhood educator’s shelf. Both volumes are full of timeless resources, innovative games, circles and important movement journeys for our work.

Nancy and Laurie, who are both still working with the children of our time, show an intimate understanding of the value of meeting the children wherever they are in their development. Working with the wealth of material in these books can help the educator, in a fun-loving way, to bless the children with rich experiences that foster development through movement; meaningful, purposeful content; and fanciful imaginations.

Many of us have worked with Volume 1 for a number of years, and Volume 2 follows the same path of expertise. Whether it is a seasonal game, a new poem or circle that “will be perfect” for a particular child or group, or fresh ideas for circle equipment, Volume 2 will be sure to improve your practice.

I’m hoping that you will take the time to peruse this resource as soon as you get a chance. The children in your care will be fortunate to partake in the result of your efforts.