**Summary and Review of a Professional Text**

Wormeli, Rick. (2005). *Summarization in Any Subject: 50 Techniques to Improve Student Learning*. Alexandria,

Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. (226 pages)

Wormeli, Rick. (2013). *About*. *Teaching and Learning: Rick Wormeli’s Resources for Practical and Compelling*

*Educational Change*. Retrieved from

<http://rickwormeli.net>

Rick Wormeli was one of the first Nationally Board Certified teachers in America. He is noted for his ability to bring innovation, energy, validity, and high standards to everything that he does, including presentations and his instructional practice. He has 34 years of experience teaching math, science, English, physical education, health, history, and coaching teachers and principals. His work has been recognized all over the media, including: ABC’s “Good Morning America,” “Hardball with Chris Matthews,” *National Geographic* and *Good Housekeeping* Magazines, *What Matters Most: Teaching for the 21st Century*, and the *Washington Post*. He actually dabbles in the media as well, as a columnist for *AMLE Magazine* and a frequent contributor to *ASCD’s Education Leadership* magazine. He also serves as an author. His book, *Meet Me in the Middle*, is actually an award-winning book. He also has a track record of best sellers, including: *Day One and Beyond; Fair Isn’t Always Equal: Assessment and Grading in the Differentiated Classroom; Differentiation: From Planning to Practice; Metaphors & Analogies: Power Tools for Teaching any Subject*, all five published by Stenhouse Publishers, as well as *Summarization in any Subject*, published by ASCD. His latest book, *The Collected Writings (So Far) of Rick Wormeli: Crazy Good Stuff I Learned about Teaching Along the Way*, was released in 2013. His classroom practice is a showcase for ASCD’s best-selling series, “At Work in the Differentiated Classroom.”

His authentic and plentiful presentations, obvious sense of humor, and unconventional approaches, are only a few of the reasons why he’s been asked to present to teachers and administrators in all 50 American states, Canada, China, Europe, Thailand, Japan, Vietnam, Korea, Australia, the Middle East, and at the White House. It is hard to doubt the work of Rick Wormeli with a background like that, but it does not even stop there. He is also a seasoned veteran of many international Web casts. He is Disney’s American Teacher Awards 1996 Outstanding English Teacher of the Nation. He won the 2008 James P. Garvin award from the New England League of Middle Schools for Teaching Excellence, Service, and Leadership, and he has been a consultant for National Public Radio, *USA Today*, Court TV, and the Smithsonian Institution’s Natural Partners Program and their search for the Giant Squid. To top it all off, Wormeli was the graduation commencement speaker for the highest performing, public high school in the Washington, D.C. area, in June of 2012.

Rick Wormeli recognized the fact that educators agree that the ability to summarize, as in, to grasp notable information and structure it for meaning, long-term retention, and successful application, is an essential academic skill. Even science has backed up summarization’s ability to improve comprehension and achievement. However, where most people stop the discussion here because summarization can be dull, Wormeli uses this book to argue that it is not only one of the most effective practices used to improve student learning, it is also one of the most flexible, responsive, and engaging. This particular book, written by Wormeli, explores a collection of classroom-tested summarization techniques that involve written, spoken, artistic, and kinesthetic summarization techniques for both individual assignments and group activities across the content areas. This book is designed for, and is particularly useful for, students in grades 3-12; however, the techniques that are offered here are adjustable to any curriculum and presented with abundant directions and vivid, multidisciplinary examples. Any teacher would find the practices in this book valuable. The book goes on to clarify the process of teaching students how to summarize and includes a section on the importance of paraphrasing. The book concludes with the ability to put all of this new information into practice by including an assortment of original text excerpts and activity prompts.

Ultimately, this book is an extraordinary tool designed for educators to be able to easily and instantaneously put into practice via application of the many strategies discussed in this book. After helping teachers learn how to teach students to summarize, the book is intended to put the skills of summarization into the hands of students everywhere. Summarization, in this book, is described as a key fundamental element to an education. By increasing student comprehension, one can also increase student success, and summarization is one of the most effective ways to do such a thing. This book spends the majority of its length reviewing and introducing summarization techniques. It includes techniques from Acronyms to Word Splashes. By that measure, this book is designed for teachers and students alike. For the younger students especially, it would be best for the teacher to read the material and then express the application via the strategies as they see best to the students. Once the students are older however, they are fully capable of reading for themselves all about the techniques and why summarization has made such a case for itself. This book serves as a handbook for those who read it. It offers a plentiful amount of tools, how they are best implemented, and the best way for these strategies to be presented to students before they begin to apply them to their own learning. Wormeli does an excellent job of balancing between the student’s view and the teacher’s view throughout the book.

This book even includes a fantastic format. The strategies are systematically arranged in an alphabetical order for easy and quick reference. Wormeli predicted that people would want to easily and frequently refer to the various methods within the book, so he planned ahead. Each and every technique is fully described with varied forms in the pages that follow. In fact, Wormeli has even provided a reference Chart of Summarization Techniques. The book, printed in a large format (yet another way it is easy to read), is written primarily as a comprehensive instruction and resource guide for English and reading teachers.

For the teacher, this is definitely a great tool for enhancing not only their own lecturing methods, but also their students’ learning and performance. For the student, relating what has been observed or experienced in a clear, succinct manner, orally or in written form, is a helpful skill to mater. More critically, when they attend lecture, read, or write news articles, identifying the salient information, no matter what subject they pursue, structuring that information for meaning and successful application, are not only part of effective study skills, but will serve as effective life skills in the long term. In a knowledge-based economy, workers must be able to read or perceive something, then make sense of it by manipulating the information, reorganizing it, and applying it to a new situation. They must constantly and freely explore new ideas and analyze them. This process is similar to the one journalists use to relate the daily news, which is also a great example of how summarization is indeed a real world skill, as Wormeli so clearly emphasizes throughout the book.

As far as real world application of this book goes, most of the techniques can be adapted and enhanced, with a little imagination, for use with non-academic materials. This would allow people who are currently pursuing business and industry the ability to learn and master the techniques as well. Once they have learned and mastered the skills, the success of the application of them will be made apparent in the way it affects the real world.

To help the reader become more knowledgeable and comfortable with summarization, the author has included special instructional practices for teachers in the beginning chapter. In addition, the author has also presented a special section on paraphrasing. It is easy for readers to grasp the concept and agree with Wormeli that paraphrasing is fundamental to creating summaries. These additions help to enhance the book even further. At the end of the book, there are also sample texts and summarization practice activities. The Resources found within the book, just waiting to be explored, act as a goldmine of information. The summarization techniques in this book are also capable of being used as a way to assess student learning.

The presentation and design of the book is set up to be one that can be continuously referred to due to its easy layout and thorough organization. There is plenty of information that can be found within these pages to help anybody, at anytime become more efficient with how they take in information, retain it, and then apply it to a new concept later on. There are plenty of teacher-specific strategies, as it is a book designed for teachers, but the book fulfills its purpose so well that it would not be hard to adapt the information Wormeli provides in the book. Wormeli himself really believes in what he is teaching, and wishes for everyone to fulfill the book’s purpose. It is easy to tell that because he starts off the book by saying, ‘AS YOU READ THIS BOOK, PLEASE STOP AT REGULAR INTERVALS AND SUMMARIZE WHAT YOU’VE READ.” (Page 2).

Besides the fifty strategies themselves, the extra resources tucked away in the book proved to be extremely valuable. Wormeli spent a lot of time in the book also going over the purpose of summarization, and the various ways it can be used to show learning, growth, and understanding, before, during, or after a lesson and/or unit. That is something useful that can be pulled from the book, that a teacher should always have summarization as a goal. Wormeli takes this so seriously that he describes teachers incorporating strong summarization into their lessons could be taken as gifts they give to their students. He says, “One of the greatest gifts we can give to students, then, is to teach them (1) how to identify salient information, no matter what subject we teach or how we present it, and (2) how to structure that information for meaning and successful application.” (Page 6).

One could take everything from this particular work of Wormeli’s writing and apply it to her own teaching in several different ways. She could keep in mind that we should teach students to summarize with the awareness that it is a strategy that will open a topic for their minds and will make the content stick. From that, she could keep summarization a goal for her classroom, performing one of the provided activities two to three times a week. Also, if she happened to hang on to the idea that summarization is also a good form of assessment, and then she could begin right away as using one of the techniques for a pre-assessment.

I plan to use summarization quite often in my own classroom. I want my students to be aware of just how effective it really is in enhancing their learning. I would also like to use the summarization techniques before, during, and after lessons and units. I want my students to be able to track their learning, while they also track their improvement in the particular skill of summarization. There is so much room for differentiation within summarization, especially when Wormeli provides readers with fifty techniques to choose from. Personally, I am a fan of graphic organizers, and I like the idea of giving my students a few options to choose from every time we explore summarization. I would also like to just have blank copies of the various graphic organizers around my classroom, so students may access them as a way of taking notes during any subject or free-time reading.

Due to the abundance of information in a topic that Wormeli seems to have coined for himself, I could not notice any glaring weaknesses. He presented his argument well through clear vocabulary, straightforward concepts, and plenty of new definitions and examples. Also, the book features plenty of visuals, which became the most effective for my own understanding of the purpose and concept of this book. This book is one I would like to incorporate into my own collection, as well as encourage others to obtain it. The concept is one that I found myself wishing I had been more exposed to when I was in elementary school. As I continued to read, I realized how helpful it would be for me today, as a college student, or to be used by teachers today. I could even see how impactful this information will become in my own classroom later on. Because of this, I would have to say that this is one of the most relevant and current books to contemporary culture that I have ever read.

In a nutshell, summarization is the act of restating essential information from text or an experience in as few words as possible or in a new, yet efficient, manner. This book was able to help me understand the concept of summarization and how it could be applied to my life right now, as well as in the future, as I transition from student to teacher. This text is one of the most clear and persuasive reads I have had in a long time. I would definitely recommend it to teachers and students because I found it useful on both levels.