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Endorsement: *Freedom to Learn*

With *Freedom to Learn*, Willans and Williams have not just produced another must read book, but instead have created a detailed framework that must be implemented. There are many examples of authors showing the neuroscience behind why current educational climate and instructional practice must change. There are even more examples of educators explaining effective strategies that have created quantifiable positive results in student achievement. However, after examining either of those kinds of works, the issue for most educators remains understanding why a strategy may or may not be effective with their students. An even bigger obstacle exists in translating neuroscience into practice, basing daily classroom strategy, in their own schools, on real brain research. *Freedom to Learn* documents the why and the how together in an understandable and replicable way.

Educators at all levels are beginning to pay much more attention to social-emotional learning, and the search for effective methods in that arena leads to Willans and Williams' work. After reading and studying *Freedom to Learn*, educators will understand the vital importance of the connection students must feel with peers, their surroundings, and especially with their teacher, in order for learning to occur. To make the concepts actionable, readers are introduced to difference-making strategies, which can be put in place immediately. *Freedom to Learn* is not your typical approach, but how well has the typical approach been working for either individual educators or for the entire educational system in our nation? In striving to truly develop lifelong learners, *Freedom to Learn* puts the why and the how-to together, clearly documenting the need to reject temporary test score improvement as validation of educational success. It is not just another educational philosophy book to read, but instead, it is a "must read AND must implement".

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William J. Decker".

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Making a difference for over 50,000 students in 21 School Districts along the Mississippi River in Eastern Iowa

