



# **An Empty Seat in Class: Teaching and Learning After the Death of a Student**

*Rick Ayers*

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The death of a student, especially to gun violence, is a life-changing experience that occurs with more and more frequency in America's schools. For each of these tragedies, there is a classroom and there is a teacher. Yet student death is often a forbidden subject, removed from teacher education and professional development classes where the curriculum is focused instead on learning about standards, lesson plans, and pedagogy. What can and should teachers do when the unbearable happens? *An Empty Seat in Class* illuminates the tragedy of student death and suggests ways of dealing and healing within the classroom community. The book weaves the story of the author's very personal experience of a student's fatal shooting with short pieces by other educators who have worked through equally terrible events and also includes contributions from counselors, therapists, and school principals. Through accumulated wisdom, educators are given the means and the resources to find their own path to healing their students, their communities, and themselves.

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