



Teaching as Scholarship: Preparing Students for Professional Practice in Community Services

Gingras, Jacquie; Robinson, Pamela; Waddell, Janice; and Cooper, Linda D., eds.

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Book Review

Tags: collaborative teaching | community based learning | engaged learning | student activism

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This book brings together faculty reflections on pedagogy and inter-professional collaboration from a broad range of disciplines within a single institution in Toronto: Ryerson University. While a single institution may appear to provide only a limited contextual perspective, the nature of the varied disciplines represented here provides a diverse set of resources, drawing from early childhood studies, nursing, disability studies, social work, sociology, city planning, and midwifery. Though the fields of theology and religion are not represented among the contributors, educators in theological and religious education will resonate with the need to better equip students for inter-professional engagement.

Though all contributors are from the same institution, the commonality or coherence among chapters ends with the institutional affiliation of the authors. The editors note the book's lack of coherence, and justify this by saying that the "frontiers" of community-services-related learning "are not neat, formulaic, or easy to navigate" (5). For this reason, reading this text cover-to-cover can be a disappointment, since the chapters are not of equal quality, nor do they create any obvious structure or overall argument.

That said, there are gems in particular contributions for those interested in learning about teaching techniques and reflections that draw from critical pedagogies and integrative approaches, bringing the best of new theories in education. For instance, in "Drawing Close: Critical Nurturing as Pedagogical Practice," authors May Friedman and Jennifer Poole bring together insights from Indigenous studies, Black feminist thought, maternal pedagogies, and mad studies to argue for a way of being in the classroom that promotes a nurturing

relationship between student and teacher, challenging the Enlightenment and Western ideals of independence as a goal of education. These authors call for a suspension on neoliberal concerns for risk and lack of efficiency, instead arguing that an interdependence approach requires the risk of blurring the distinction between teachers and students (96). If a reader of this book were to choose one chapter to read from among the many contributions, this would be the chapter to focus on, and the bibliography provides additional resources to pursue.

Other chapters included interesting suggestions and interventions in education, such as “Educating for Social Action among Future Health Care Professionals” which focused on a learner-centered model for course creation. This chapter includes appendices for how the authors Jacqui Gingras and Erin Rudolph were able to craft a course with considerable input from students regarding course themes, which assignments they would have to complete, and what grading rubrics would entail. Other chapters (3, 8) draw from narrative theory and describe the way students are taught to listen to the narratives of clients as well as to their own personal narratives. While this book’s chapters are not equally helpful, the insights available in a few choice chapters are worth the read.

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