

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

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Gingras, Robinson, Waddell and Cooper's book, *Teaching as Scholarship: Preparing Students for Professional Practice in Community Services* targets educators of post-secondary professional programs with a community focus who seek to add tools to their teaching practice. The book provides a practical roadmap for implementing a selection of innovative teaching and learning strategies, while offering critical examinations involved with putting these contemporary practices into action.

Overview

This work is developed from the lived experience of the contributors who were part of the Faculty of Community Services (FCS) at Ryerson University where they established a research centre focussed on the scholarship of teaching and learning (The Centre for the Advancement of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, or CASTL). The book is designed to show a variety of methods of scholarly education, and is organized into nine chapters—each featuring a different teaching strategy. Overall, it is described as representing the “collective experience of faculty members working in FCS, a community of practice that is messy, but also very thoughtful and critical” (p. 5). Each approach is supported by 1-2 pages of relevant and recently published sources.

In the first chapter, Hart and Kaas-Mason examine the pedagogy of interprofessional education (IPE) and illustrate how it served as roadmap for the establishment of an interprofessional program at Ryerson University. Following this, Kennedy and Jancar (Chapter 2) outline the background and development of a writing skills initiative program designed to prepare students for their professional practice. This particular chapter provides a framework of the initiative including the implementation of a key role, the WSI Teaching Assistant (p. 27) and chart of this role's primary tasks (p. 29).

The narrative methodology of documenting stories of families and their encounters with public services in Canada is explained and discussed, along with ethical considerations (Chapter 3). Bailey, Zanchetta, Pon, Velasco, Wilson-Mitchell and Hassan (Chapter 4) explore the development of critical thinking in

a social justice context and provide the background, rationale and theoretical underpinnings of the Teaching-Student Intellectual Partnership Process (IP) that “acknowledges that students recognize their rights and responsibilities in constructing knowledge, and consciously give themselves permission to transform into critical thinkers” (p. 64). A proposed model of IP is clearly illustrated and explained (p. 65).

The middle of the book (Chapter 5) includes a few entertaining stories told by the author (Church), who works in the field of disability studies. Church informally recalls her encounters, over dinner, with both Tara Fenwick and Nancy Jackson (on separate occasions) as they engaged in scholarly discussion on topics such as “Knowledge as Co-emergent” (p. 78) and “Actors Instead of Instruments” (p. 80). While the chapter jumps widely out of the format followed by the first half of this book, it offers a breath of fresh air that captures two spirited discussions exploring feminist teaching and learning perspectives, both critically—and metaphorically.

Final chapters include subjects of teaching as caregiving and nurturing (Chapter 6), preparing professionals for social action through a learner-centred, co-constructed learning community (p. 107) (Chapter 7), narrative reflective practice (Chapter 8), and art-based learning in a social work classroom (Chapter 9). The conclusion of the book, written by Usha George reinforces the value of classroom teaching and, at the same time, encourages learning outside the boundaries of the classroom. George calls the profession to consider new ways of teaching and learning to prepare for the future of higher education.

Critique:

Gingras, Robinson, Waddell and Cooper’s book is relevant for college and university teachers and researchers, particularly those based in community services. As a reader, I felt immersed in the projects as the authors described their initiatives: both the challenges and beneficial outcomes were described in honest, critically reflective, and (at times) unorthodox conversational styles that mirrored the unpredictable nature of the methods presented. Still, the book is practical, as each chapter provides ample background of the strategies, and offers frameworks and recommendations for future considerations. I can envision this book expanding with future editions that explore the teaching and learning strategies presented, as well as others that stretch the classroom boundaries of scholarly teaching and learning. Overall, I would recommend this book for teaching professionals connected with community who are curious about new teaching methods, are