

Teachers and Curriculum



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

KAI AKO ME TE MARAUTANGA

VOLUME 9 2006



TEACHERS AND CURRICULUM

KAIAKO ME TE MARAUTANGA

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VOLUME 9 2006

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Teachers and Curriculum is an annual publication of the School of Education, the University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand. It includes articles about curriculum issues, research in the area of curriculum and informed curriculum practice. Reviews of curriculum-related books may also be included. The Opinion item is contributed by a leading New Zealand educationalist.

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NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

Teachers and Curriculum provides an avenue for the publication of papers that:

- raise important issues to do with curriculum
- report on research in the area of curriculum
- provide examples of informed curriculum practice
- review books that have a curriculum focus

This peer reviewed journal welcomes papers on any of these from tertiary staff and students, teachers, and other educators who have a special interest in curriculum matters. Papers on research may be full papers, or if time or space is at a premium, research notes, that is, a 2,000 word summary.

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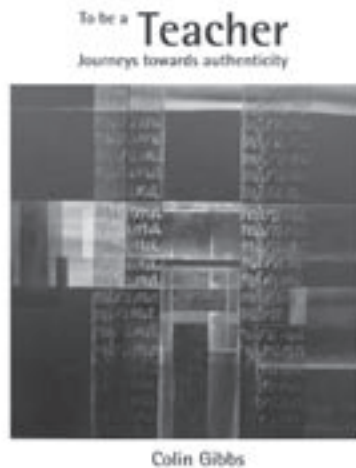
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BOOK REVIEW: *TO BE A TEACHER: JOURNEYS TOWARDS AUTHENTICITY*



COLIN GIBBS

AUCKLAND: PEARSON EDUCATION NEW ZEALAND (2006)

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**REVIEWED BY: JOHN SMITH,
DUNEDIN COLLEGE OF EDUCATION**

This book is the distillation of more than 30 years of experiences as a classroom teacher and teacher educator. Its synthesis of philosophy, practice and research makes a significant contribution to our understanding of what it is to be a teacher.

The book is organised in four parts. Part one discusses effective teachers and learning.

The basic premise of this section is that the basis of teaching is relationships; a message that can easily get lost in today's demands on teachers for learning objectives, learning intentions, continuous assessment – all aspects of current schooling that are attempts to turn teaching from a human endeavour into a technocratic process.

Part two describes the ways in which a school can become a community of learners and the role rituals can play in establishing and maintaining this community. This is an important section because we need to articulate the ways in which our schools can become places which acknowledge our need for ceremony and ritual in our lives.

Part three examines the work of outstanding teachers. This section gives key ideas from a range of teachers from Beeby to Ashton-Warner to Montessori to Steiner. This section is particularly valuable because New Zealand teachers should be aware of the range of philosophies and ideas that exist in the education world. Much media comment is directed at failing students. Rather than pressure teachers for more direct instruction of failing students and constant mulling over the minutiae of test results, we may better serve our students by considering some of the ideas of these outstanding teachers and allowing our teaching of these students to be influenced by many of the ideas. Our literacy instruction may be better served by a rereading of the ideas of Sylvia Ashton-Warner than the latest issue of *Reading Research Quarterly*.

The final section is devoted to research. It describes research techniques. This section would be better served by being expanded into a book of its own, 26 pages is not enough for the complexity of its contents. I feel this chapter is a nod towards the current mantra of research and more research in education. Perhaps we should have a moratorium on new educational research and spend the next decade in understanding and applying extant research.

The book is exceptionally well laid out and its clever use of text boxes, questions and summaries helps the reader understand the complex ideas discussed. It is an important contribution to education literature and will be particularly useful in pre-service teacher education classes.

As Colleges of Education are captured by universities, people with Colin's blend of practical experience and theoretical knowledge will become increasingly rare in informing teacher education. Classroom teachers have so many demands on their time and energy that graduate study is extremely difficult. Yet universities, with their insatiable demands to publish, and publish in particular genres, with a

consequent diminishing of the value of practical experience, mean that teacher educators will be drawn almost exclusively from the ranks of those who have hardly set foot outside a university. So the mixture of theory, research and experience which constitutes current preservice education will be replaced with theory and research unmediated by classroom experience. Drawing together educational philosophy, relevant research, and teaching practice, each of which is integral to what it means to be a teacher, Colin focuses on the important things that matter in the lives of teachers and students. I recommend this book to all inquiring teachers.

John Smith is a teacher educator at the Dunedin College of Education. He may be contacted at John.Smith@dce.ac.nz