

esses. Another type of book might focus more on the machinations within political arenas. This positioning is entirely appropriate, and the book effectively serves the early childhood community – practitioners, policy-makers, undergraduate and postgraduate students, teacher educators and researchers – both within and well beyond New Zealand.

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V. CARPENTER, H. DIXON, E. RATA AND C. RAWLINSON (EDS.). *Theory in Practice for Educators*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press (2001). 241 pp. NZ\$42.95 (ISBN 0 86469 396 6)

C. MCGEE AND D. FRASER. *The Professional Practice of Teaching*. 2nd edition. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press (2001). 358 pp. NZ\$74.95 (ISBN 0 86469 3907)

Education reforms in New Zealand from the mid-80s until today have brought with them a range of changes across all sectors, not only in education but also in the public sector more generally. One of the unifying themes is the concept of the marketisation of education, which encompasses the notions of choice, competition and the creation of quasi-markets. In the reform process, the curriculum, its teaching, and the educational providers, i.e. teachers, were unfairly blamed for economic failure, essentially for not providing an education to meet market needs. This conjunction of ideas and pressures has had an unusual effect upon the course of teacher education in

New Zealand. While other Western countries moved towards combining the various facets of education into faculties at the various universities, New Zealand institutions were given carte blanche and allowed to make their own decisions about how to prepare and present degree programmes in education and how to create (or re-create) themselves as teacher education 'providers'. In Canada, the US, England and Australia, programmes of teacher education sit alongside and draw upon subjects such as educational psychology, history, sociology and curriculum studies. In New Zealand, some colleges of education or teachers' colleges have combined with or been absorbed into the local university; some have negotiated a partnership with their local university; others have gone it alone; and a plethora of private training institutions (PTIs) have been created from scratch. The result is that the teacher education 'product' is very variable in content, presentation, ideological perspective and quality.

Further to this, there was a move towards equalising the tertiary sector – I suppose with 'the level-playing field' of the free market concept in mind. This has meant that, unlike the former funding pyramid, polytechnics and teachers' colleges would now be treated equally with universities, not only in terms of perceived status but also in terms of access to funding (including research funding) etc. I would argue that the thinking behind this process is flawed for a number of reasons. A major issue for colleges of education is they were almost exclusively geared towards preparing teachers as practitioners, and their staff and students therefore had little time for carrying out research. This is still largely the case. It could also be argued that there was a 'never the twain shall meet' situation between colleges of education and university departments of education, where the former were seen as 'no nonsense' practically-based institutions, and the latter as carrying out research with a theoretical orientation but being largely impractical in terms of teacher education. The mutual negative stereotypes that emerged were that colleges of education staff were critical of the university departments as 'out of touch ivory towers', and colleges of education were seen by those in universities as places where superficial teaching prepared inferior students badly for the hurly-burly of the real classroom.

The move to a market model has meant that colleges of education and universities have been in competition with one another, or have merged, amalgamated or formed a partnership. There have also been several messy divorces and several ongoing uncomfortable relationships. This is the context within which these two books, both written for a teacher education market, have been written.

The Professional Practice of Teaching is edited and written by members of staff of the School of Education at Waikato University, and *Theory in Practice for Educators* is written and edited by Auckland College of Education staff with input from Massey University and Wellington College of Education personnel.

Theory in Practice for Educators is a well-designed and produced book. The editors argue that teaching is an intellectually challenging profession and the key theme that unifies the various topics is the importance of nurturing and developing of theory for teaching practice. This is regarded as important not only for teachers' critical skills but also for how and what they will teach their pupils. The book covers the following topics in a critical and challenging fashion: issues of development, learning and pedagogy (Justine Mahon and Jean Rockel); understanding learning (Joy Cullen); tension and compromise in education: an historical overview of issues (Sue Sutherland, Joce Jesson and Heather Peters); transforming New Zealand education (Joce Jesson); curriculum and (re)production (Vicki Carpenter); teachers and socio-economic class (Elizabeth Rata); Maori education: rejection, resistance, renaissance (Colleen McMurchy-Pilkington); diversity (Elizabeth Rata with Patricia O'Brien, Ray Murray, Diane Mara, Sue Gray and Catherine Rawlinson); and gender issues (Ruth Williams and Jeanne Sheehan).

Conceptually, the book is excellent. It approaches important contemporary areas in teaching from a critical perspective, with the issues of education for equality and social justice as a fundamental principle. There is also an implication that for teachers it is important to fight back against the undermining of teachers as professionals that has occurred under economic rationalism (see Sullivan, 1999, 1998, 1997, 1994). This is reflected in the competition between the teacher as a technician and the teacher as reflective practitioner. The technician perspective is essentially that teachers need to concentrate on keeping up with the provision of knowledge (read information) in a globalising world. There is not time for other things (which shouldn't concern the teacher anyway) – in a material sense you've got to 'keep the customer satisfied' and to prepare students to meet the needs of the economy. This stance is essentially pragmatic and non-critical. The reflective practitioner, on the other hand, not only teaches facts but also how to critically interpret and be concerned with the wider issues, such as the implications of following a particular course or seeing several ways of interpreting what on initial observation seems to be fact. It also implies being a caring and responsible citizen. The reflective practitioner also role models this for students. This book in its presentation and content argues for critical and reflective practice.

One criticism is that as, an editor, I would have worked through some of the pieces more thoroughly so that excess wordage and ineffective communication were more clearly cut back and honed down; in other words, it is a bit rough about the edges. Two approaches to editing are that all contributors are edited so as to ensure that the quality of the ideas is not impeded by incomplete thinking or inadequately edited writing, or that all the authors get on with what they have to say and are edited for number of words, not how words are used. I feel that the second method may be ideologically

preferable, but the reality is that it may lead to a lack of clarity and precision, as it does here.

The second edition of *The Professional Practice of Teaching* is well written and edited. It is also firmly based on scholarship and research but does not become overly complex as a result. The editors succinctly identify teachers as 'extended professionals' and teaching as an art rather than a social science. It is a very useful foundation text for teaching practice in New Zealand. Deborah Fraser's chapter on 'Developing Classroom Culture' is a useful starting point for the book. In the chapter, Fraser provides, in a detailed and clear fashion, the many issues that teachers need to consider in order to create safe and effective classroom settings. She appropriately finishes the chapter with Palmer's (1998) six paradoxical tensions within classrooms. Another excellent chapter is Miles Barker's 'How do people learn? Understanding the learning process'. Barker provides an introduction to five learning theories (behaviourist, developmental, humanistic, social constructivist and enactivist) and discusses their theoretical foundations, how they are enacted and how they differ. They provide useful understandings, and his introduction and description of the enactivist approach, although only formative, is novel and interesting. He also provides case studies to illustrate the differences between approaches, discusses how a variety of teachers may be at different stages of their growth as teachers, and then finishes up the chapter with four drawings illustrating his own journey as a teacher through these theories. His chapter takes some complex thinking and makes it accessible and interesting – effective teaching in action!

Other chapters provide the basis for discussions of areas important for training teachers to consider. The topics are: what makes an effective teacher, what curriculum is and what teachers need to consider in light of our new curriculum framework. How to function effectively in the classroom is considered from a variety of perspectives. Classroom interaction is considered by Clive McGee, managing the classroom environment by Russell Yates, planning for effective teaching and learning by Judith McGee and Marilyn Taylor. Jan Robertson and Jane Strachan examine 'Teachers Taking Leadership'. Mary Hill's focus is assessment and evaluation. Maori educational ideologies within mainstream education are discussed by Russell Bishop, Barbara Whyte examines culturally diverse communities and Barbara Harold looks at the issue of linking schools and communities. Catherine Lang provides a written pep talk for teachers preparing to go into the workforce, and Alan Hall examines professionalism and teacher ethics. Essentially, this is a how-to-do-it introduction to becoming a good classroom practitioner.

These two books could be described as being both complementary and at odds with each other. *Theory in Practice for Educators* challenges teachers not only to learn to be good teachers but also to be critical and reflective

thinkers and to pass this on to their pupils. *The Professional Practice of Teaching*, on the other hand, provides recipes (both tried and true, and innovations) for becoming a good teacher. Although the editors refer to teaching as an art, contemporary thinking is not challenged much, and teachers are not urged to be critical thinkers. Indeed, this iteration of the reflective practitioner does not have the depth of critical and ideological challenge that is found in *Theory in Practice for Educators*. For instance, in his chapter on classroom interaction, Clive McGee discusses ideological stances that teachers take on, but relates this to vague notions of constructive or child-centred approaches. This seems to show a lack of understanding about what ideology is (and this has become increasingly central to teacher professionalism in recent years) and does not give contemporary teachers credit for the critical and theoretical understandings they demonstrate in defence of their profession (see Sullivan, 2001).

A further useful illustration of this can be found in a comparison between how McGee and Vicki Carpenter treat curriculum. For McGee, curriculum is how the syllabus is shaped and what teachers need to take on in order to provide subject matter; it is essentially instructive rather than critical. Carpenter sees curriculum as ideological and deals with the hidden and null curricula; what is left out and what is not realised are seen as just important as the explicit curriculum. This is also critical and instructive, although the instructive aspect is less developed than in McGee's chapter. The final chapter of the book was written by the editors but also includes Martin Thrupp as an author, and has more of a critical edge to it.

In summary, the McGee and Fraser book is well written and edited. It contains a goldmine of information but, in my opinion, does not have an adequate critical edge. Teachers' professional and ideological foundations are as important as what they teach and how they do it. The Carpenter et al book, on the other hand, is very well argued and an excellent presentation of critical thinking/reflective practice, but is not as well written or as full of interesting and diverse practical information. Clearly, this criticism could be taken as a description of two books with different purposes in mind. I prefer to think, however, that although they have not yet locked horns, there is an important and underlying debate that the two perspectives seem either too polite or timid to take up. I say let the debate begin! It is an important one.

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