

The Challenge of Teaching

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Editors

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Through the Eyes of Pre-service Teachers

 Springer

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Foreword

Scholarly books are often hard to get into. The way they are written often seems pretentious. There are too many technical terms and acronyms and too much jargon. As a result, it just seems easier for us to learn about what's happening in schools by watching television, exchanging tidbits of information with friends and family and scanning the newspapers. However, what we manage to glean from the media and our personal experience can only give us a partial glimpse of what is going on. This is why a book such as this one is so valuable.

The writers who have contributed the chapters in this book do not pull punches. They are surprisingly willing to tell some uncomfortable truths about themselves and the circumstances they have found in themselves as teachers in training. It was their frankness that kept me turning the page.

Have you ever wondered why playground bullies behave the way they do? One of the chapters provides a clue. Have you given much thought to why there seems to be quite a drift away from government schools to private and independent ones? Jillian Bedworth offers an interesting and a worrying explanation. Can teaching be challenging and rewarding when others say it is a low-status job dominated by women? Lance Albrecht tackles this question head-on.

The book has the modest aim of putting together the views of teacher education students on their practicum experiences. Such a volume could have been difficult for a general reader to wade through. In this case, however, the editors of this collection have gathered their material over several years and made sure to include a wide range of interesting and insightful pieces. The end result is surprisingly compelling.

The editors point out that Chaps. 5 to 35 explore a diverse array of topics from some quite personal vantage points. Each contributor was asked to write a personalised account and to do so using a common template and touching on some of the

relevant research. Even so, as a reader, I did not anticipate how searingly honest some of the chapters would be.

It is this mix of the scholarly and the personal that gives this book its distinctive feel. I think you will find, as I did, that it has the ring of authenticity.

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