

## Book Reviews

*Engaging Technology in Theological Education: All That We Can't Leave Behind.* By Mary E. Hess. New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005. xi + 157 pages. ISBN 0-7425-3223-2 (cloth); 0-7425-3224-0 (paper).

This is not a how-to book on technology. The market is loaded with them and some are very helpful (the ones by Pratt and Palloff come to mind). But when it comes to theological educators, few will have any interest in reading a how-to book on technology until they have read a compelling “why-to” book on technology. Enter Mary Hess.

Hess is not from around here. She's a woman in a field dominated by men, a Roman Catholic teaching in a Lutheran seminary, a theological educator with a degree and background in media literacy, a layperson in a world of clergy, and she's a why-to thinker in a world primed for how-to lists. But the reader will find that precisely these aspects of Hess's identity have made some of the most important contributions to a perspective that is philosophically deep and culturally diverse and relevant – not to mention just plain interesting. She may not be from around here, but she clearly belongs here.

The book is a collection of essays delivered on various occasions to theological educators around the country. As such, each piece stands more or less on its own and presents a full-orbed discussion. Chapter one, “Rich Treasures in Jars of Clay: Theological Education in Changing Times,” as the title implies, is something of a reflection on Paul's text in 2 Corinthians about being “afflicted, but not crushed” and making the life of Jesus “visible in our mortal flesh.” But it is also much more than that: a pressing interaction with Parker Palmer's ideas about teaching and an exploration of the profound metaphor of the play (Christian community is a drama company centered around a script, which is rehearsed by actors, performed before multiple audiences each of which contributes something unique to the performance and calls for some improvisation on the part of the actors, etc.). Chapter two, “Searching for the Blue Fairy: Questioning Technology and Pedagogy in Theological Education” takes as starting point not a biblical text but a recurring image from media culture, the search for humanness on the part of a humanoid (like the wooden boy, Pinocchio, or the young robot in the movie *A.I.*) as a means of reflecting on what it means to be human. Hess brings this question to the realm of learning: How do humans learn? And more specifically, is embodied-

ness crucial to human learning? Hess's answer to these questions leads us into a discussion of media culture, that aspect of human community that uses “mass media as sources of meaning-making materials, as symbolic inventories or cultural databases, of environments from which people draw materials and around which people create rituals that in turn construct meaning” (28). In all of this Hess presses home the point that we will neither be able to use mass media as a tool for good or to fight it as an instrument of evil until we “take seriously the expressive nature of media and . . . fight minimalist and instrumental notions of how digital technologies ‘work’ ” (30). That is, if we think mass media is merely a tool to be used, we don't understand it.

Chapter three, “Understanding by Design: Creating Learning Experiences That Meet the Challenges of the Twenty-first Century” probes the challenge before theological education to engage the new demographic represented by the seminary student of our times (which is not the demographic that showed up in seminaries fifty years ago). The answer lies in a better understanding of pedagogy and in a sophisticated use of technology, one that makes technology serve pedagogy and learning outcomes. Chapter four, “‘You've Got Mail': Teaching and Learning in Online Formats,” goes to the heart of the question of the usefulness of distance education technology for theological education: can digital and virtual spaces facilitate processes that are genuinely embodied and relational? In chapter five, “All That We Can't Leave Behind: Learning from the Past in Engaging New Media,” Hess advocates that we need “to learn from what other literacy advocates within religious communities have done . . . and keep in mind that digital technologies are cultures that we are embedded in, not just tools we use” and that we continue to treasure “those essential elements of the Christian witness that are central to [our] faith life” (90). Chapter six, “Embodied Pedagogies: Engaging Racism in Theological Education and Digital Cultures,” makes a fascinating connection: the cultural meanings we have applied to the details of our bodies (their gender, their color, etc.) have to be significant for any discussion of embodiedness and learning. Hess shows us how feminist theologians and theologians from marginalized communities have significant contributions to make to these discussions. She also provides a few tantalizing suggestions about how digital and virtual environments can be used to dismantle racism. Chapter seven, “Freeing Culture: Copyright and Teaching in Digital Media,” takes on the

intimidating subject of copyright law and its interpretation. Hess argues that concerns for the common good of the culture that were at the foundation of the first copyright laws have given way to commitments to profit seeking and profit maximization. Hess offers an alternative view, calls the church to raise its voice and sets forth several practical suggestions to combat this view. Finally, chapter eight, "Seeing, Hearing, Creating: Exercises That Are 'Low Tech' but That Engage Media Cultures," the most how-to chapter in the book, presents a set of "three separate learning exercises that all have at their core learning goals related to integrating theological reflection and digital cultures" (133).

Though the book is a collection of essays from various venues, a lot of attention has been given to weaving them into a new whole. This literary critic found it difficult to detect the seams in the text that marked the boundary between original presentation and editorial additions aimed at integrating each of the pieces into the larger whole.

Every chapter ends with a section entitled "For Further Reflection." These include lists of books, media (film, music, etc.), and websites that provide more materials for thinking through the ideas presented in the chapter. Chapter two has a series of "Questions for Faculty Discussion." That chapter in particular would provide a great in-service discussion for seminary faculty members.

One of the greatest strengths of Hess's work is that it reflects her engagement with two very different and very significant constituencies. On the one hand readers will find themselves introduced to a host of models, systems, and theories from innovative philosophers, scholars, and educators. This book is extraordinarily full of them: Ronald Heifetz's concept of adaptive challenge; Parker Palmer's vision of the nature of new learning communities; Jack Seymour's typology of theological education; McTighe and Wiggins's rubric for the six facets of understanding; R. Shweder's concepts, particularly that of thinking through others; Lee Shulman's list of core competencies that spiritual pedagogues require; Mary Boys's history of religious education; Ruth Frankenberg's work on the social "construction of whiteness;" and Hankinson Helson's description of "epistemological community," to mention just a few. On the other hand, readers will be impressed (and maybe a little surprised) with how Hess takes seriously voices from popular culture. The subtitle to the book is an allusion to a U2 song. Many other songs, movies, and other forms of digital and mass media are mentioned. Granted, the two groups are not lumped together and given the same treatment or force, but the fact that both are present and woven into a dialogue makes this work quite unique.

Some readers will have a hard time seeing that this book has anywhere near as much to say about technol-

ogy *per se* as it does about media literacy. It takes a fairly informed reader to understand the contextual relationships between technology and media and how it is that talking about the one is, by definition almost, talking about the other. Hess doesn't really provide that introduction, which would have been helpful to many of us. Thus, it could be argued that the book would have been as aptly titled *Engaging Media in Theological Education* instead of its current title.

This critique notwithstanding, seminary faculties have in Hess's book a series of wonderful discussion starters about the "why-to" of technology for theological education.

Steve Delamarter

*George Fox Evangelical Seminary*

*Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope.* Bell Hooks. New York and London: Routledge, 2003. xvi + 200 pages. ISBN: 0-415-96818-6 (pb). \$17.95.

Bell hooks's most recent contribution to scholarship on teaching and learning, *Teaching Community*, consists of a collection of essays that combines the genres of intellectual autobiography and pedagogical memoir in order to offer a brief academic and social history of the aims of African American, feminist, and cultural studies. *Teaching Community* urges deeper reflection about a guiding goal that informs critical race and feminist theories of transformative education – forming students with habits of mind, heart, and practice for critical thinking and living that resist socialization into a dominator culture and that inspire progressive social change. In her view, education functions as one potent site for cultivating in both teachers and students a practical wisdom that critically confronts domination in all its forms (racism, sexism, elitism, imperialism, etc.) as well as seeks to imagine and uphold a more just democracy (xii–xiii). hooks recognizes that at times democratic education itself carries sociopolitical implications and constitutes a site of sociopolitical change: "Without ongoing movements for social justice in our nation, progressive education becomes all the more important since it may be the only location where individuals can experience support for acquiring a critical consciousness, for any commitment to end domination" (45). Thus, by making connections between critical thinking and real-life issues, especially real-life activism for social justice (46), educators bridge rather than reinforce a stereotypical gap between the elite university and the everyday world (41–42); they also engage in a "vocation rooted in hopefulness" (xiv). Taking the works of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire and theologian Mary Grey as her starting point, hooks elaborates a pedagogy of hope, in which

educators are called to open students up to critical thinking that is linked to creating community, that is, to imagining alternative possibilities for a more just common life (xiv–xv). hooks understands community in light of what Martin Luther King, Jr. called the beloved community (35–36) and what Parker Palmer describes as “knowing that community, feeling that community, sensing that community, and then drawing your students into it” (xvi).

For hooks, creating community in the classroom resembles both democratic process and a healthy family life, as shaped by “mutual willingness to listen, to argue, to disagree, and to make peace” (120, cf. 126). Such community begins by critically resisting what she terms dominator pedagogy, and replacing it with an alternative pedagogy based on freedom and mutuality. hooks characterizes dominator pedagogy as indoctrination into ideologies that “support imperialist white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy” (xiii, cf. 1, 130–131). Dominator pedagogy reinforces such status quo structures and ideologies of domination through authoritarian styles of teaching and learning (8, 43ff.), which in her view are also closely linked to a fear of questioning (6–7) and to a sociopolitical and educational culture of shaming (93–94, 102). hooks interprets dominator pedagogy in light of the conventional patriarchal family (117–118) and taking into consideration an increasing commodification of education, which shapes students into “a professional managerial class schooled in the art of obedience to authority and accepting of dominator-based hierarchy” (20) and teachers into academics, into “a chosen group, a large secret society, elitist and hierarchical, that sets them apart” (22). Drawing on her own rich and varied teaching experience, especially her most recent experience of leaving her distinguished university professorship for alternative settings to better actualize her teaching vocation, hooks proposes a liberating pedagogy that “mak[es] the classroom a place that is life-sustaining and mind-expanding, a place of liberating mutuality” (xv) in which teachers and students “decolonize their minds, maintain awareness [about domination], change behavior, and create a beloved community” both inside and outside the classroom (40). Liberating pedagogy involves challenging all forms of hierarchical dualistic thinking, an us vs. them mentality, and replacing it with a both/and mentality. For example, liberating pedagogy challenges conventional canons in a variety of disciplines not only to open up space for a postmodern hearing of a variety of voices in those disciplines (7–8), but also to problematize and renounce what hooks sees as a prevalent and persistent form of “white supremacist thought” that often frames course and discipline curricula – namely, that white authors tap into universal human experience and their texts are “for everybody,” while black authors speak exclusively about and to black experience and their texts are “for

colored only” (39). Going beyond such segregationist thinking about curriculum expands the canonical texts within many disciplines so that educators do justice to human diversity in what they teach and begin to practice pluralism, a commitment to engaging with that diversity, in how they teach (47).

In this way, critical race and feminist theories of transformative pedagogy help identify and foster good practices of teaching that can apply more widely to various educational settings, in and beyond the classroom (xi). Focusing particularly on anti-racist pedagogy, hooks explores several examples of what liberating pedagogy looks like based on real-life examples of teaching. Pedagogies for “unlearning racism” involve “a spirit of hopefulness about the capacity of individuals to change” (73) and thus provide tools for such change. For example, when students suggest that racism no longer impacts the U.S. since the achievements of the Civil Rights Movement, hooks asks them how they would like to be reborn in terms of race and gender – an exercise that alerts them to persistent and deeply embedded realities of racism (26). Believing that racism is a socialized behavior that is reinforced by our choice to reinscribe or resist it (53, 56), hooks argues that unlearning racism entails equipping students with the ability to imagine personal and social life otherwise (185, 195–196). Imagination figures prominently in hooks’s view of education as practical wisdom (ch. 16); habits for creating community, such as openness, critical thinking and questioning, and many others (cf. 197), are oriented toward a prophetic imagination that envisions and begins to actualize alternative possibilities for our common life. But there is a fundamental paradox to a prophetic imagination; imagining a different future begins with (1) challenging a pragmatic but often problematic “fixation on the future” that predominates in college settings for students and teachers alike (165–167), and (2) being fully present in the now, taking account of our current problems and possibilities (172–173). Based on these few but insightful examples from her own pedagogical practices, the classroom in a liberating pedagogy begins to embody, exemplify, and testify to a more just personal and common life that hooks envisions and seeks to realize. Whereas dominator pedagogy and culture sometimes yield broken-hearted students who “give up hope,” who come to despair about themselves, their education, and their hopes for society (48–49, cf. 85–87); a liberating pedagogy, what hooks calls education as the practice of freedom, inspires habits of “radical openness,” such as respect, generosity, risk, courage, civility (110, 112), and most especially joy and pleasure in learning “as an end in itself, and not as a means to reach another end, class mobility, power, status” (49).

Hooks alludes to the connections between transformative education and religious studies through spiritu-

ality. She recounts her own “life in the spirit” (158) – her own spirituality of mystical experience in a fundamental Baptist church in Kentucky, silent prayer in chapels at Stanford, and meditation on the oneness of life in various Buddhist traditions – in order to show that “spiritual self-recovery” is connected to “the political self-recovery of colonized and oppressed peoples” (161–162). Spirituality for hooks, besides its political implications for social justice, played and continues to play an integrative role in education. Thinking with June Jordan and Parker Palmer, hooks contends that spirituality communicates a sense of wholeness, rather than perpetuates what most students feel about themselves and their knowledge, namely dislocation, disconnection, and fragmentation (177, 179–180). According to hooks, the classroom informed by spirituality serves “as a place of passion and possibility, a place where spirit matters, where all that we learn and know leads us into greater connection” (183).

Throughout her more than twenty books, and especially exemplified in *Feminism is For Everybody* (South End Press, 2000), hooks resists the “academization of feminism” (xii), that is restricted to elite women and men, and instead demonstrates the impact and influence of feminist education for a broader popular audience. Thus, bringing hooks’s educational theory to bear on teaching theology and religion in undergraduate and graduate settings is in keeping with her own goals. First, in regard to teaching courses in theology, feminist, black, Latino/a, and many other contextual theologies play a key role in teaching both introductory and advanced courses in Christian theology because, based on hooks’s educational theory, these theologies bring to the foreground real-life implications of Christian claims for good and for ill in the church and society. Second, studies of U.S. theological education in the 1980s and 1990s by Edward Farley, David Kelsey, Joseph Hough and John Cobb, Charles Wood, the Cornwall Collective, the Mud Flower Collective, Barbara Wheeler, and Rebecca Chopp all were preoccupied with *paideia*, or the formation of future Christian ministers, broadly understood. hooks underscores that such formation entails not only spiritual formation for keeping together an often fragmented sense of self and of theological disciplines, but also formation for engaging in political process and for effecting social change.

Hooks addresses many other topics of keen interest to all educators at various stages of their careers, such as reinventing one’s teacherly vocation, recognizing and addressing burnout, negotiating relations of solidarity among racially diverse scholars, dealing with sexual relations between students and teachers, and so on. What I find most compelling about *Teaching Community* is that hooks holds up her own teaching, what she calls “teaching with love” (133–135), in a critical light to testify to the (at times failed) connections between

education and social change. In this way, *Teaching Community* parallels what some Christian theologians do when they give an account of the hope that is in them (1 Peter 3:15).

Rosemary P. Carbine  
*College of the Holy Cross*

*Contemporary Theories and Practice in Education*. 2d ed. By Yves Bertrand. Madison, Wis.: Atwood Publishing, 2003. 463 pages. ISBN 1-891869-46-3. \$24.95.

*Contemporary Theories and Practice in Education* is Yves Bertrand’s revised edition of an earlier introduction to learning theory. Retired from the University of Quebec Tele-Universite, Bertrand taught as a member of the philosophy faculty and writes as a non-specialist in education theory about that subject. His background is a welcome addition to the community that explores the scholarship of teaching, and I suspect the traditional scholars of this field (i.e., schools and colleges of education faculty) would agree.

Bertrand’s outline contains four sections. The introduction gives a summary of education foundations. Section 1, entitled, “Academic Theories,” contains three chapters covering classical education, generalist theories, and functionalist theories. Section 2 explores “learning environment theories,” section 3 examines “social theories,” and section 4 examines “humanistic theories.”

Bertrand’s categorization reflects his own classification system, which is where the book provides strong analysis. Specialists in the field of education theory do not typically organize learning theory in this manner. Most of his book, however, is a summary of information rather than a critical analysis of that information. Yet, his chapters do provide an introduction to the history of education theory and to thinkers in that field that readers may find helpful. Introductions to Dewey, Friere, and Friere’s understudy Ira Shor are particularly strong. The summarized sections on group dynamic approaches to education, such as those of Montessori and Kurt Lewin, also yield helpful insights. Bertrand’s treatment of Dewey presents a summary of process education. While the book neglects many of the current trends in theory, it does have an introduction to critical theory and pedagogy that serves effectively as a snapshot of current trends.

The value of Bertrand’s book to readers of *Teaching Theology and Religion* will be its summary of selected theories. This work can provide a cursory look at twentieth-century developments in pedagogy. There are limits, though, to this study. The book does not specifically address learning theory in the context of higher

education. Many sections, such as the chapter exploring the Montessori method, address childhood education. Bertrand's book also curiously omits discussions of some thinkers and some subjects in the topic of his book. Missing are references to the work of Stephen Brookfield, especially his work in the field of critical theory. Also missing is any dialogue with metacognition or transformative learning. The chapter on spiritualistic education focuses heavily on the interesting work of Steiner, but does not focus on the more recent studies in the integration of spirituality and higher education. Particularly helpful would be the book's dialogue with Elizabeth Tisdell's *Exploring Spirituality and Culture in Adult and Higher Education* (Jossey-Bass, 2003).

Readers with some background could consult this work as a summary or refresher, as well as to see how a non-specialist arranges the material. However, for those who are looking for one or two books on learning theory to augment their teaching of a discipline in religious studies, I suggest you look elsewhere for your first reading.

Merrill M. Hawkins, Jr.  
Carson-Newman College

*Electric Worlds in the Classroom: Teaching and Learning with Role-Based Computer Games.* By Brian M. Slator and Associates. New York, N.Y.: Teachers College Press, 2006. viii + 182 pages. ISBN 0-8077-4675-2. \$31.95.

Any teacher scanning the landscape of students and laptops in the classroom must inevitably confront the question: "Are my students playing video games or are they on task?" Slator *et al.* suggest that the answer to this question can be . . . yes. The World Wide Web Instructional Committee (WWWIC) at North Dakota State University (NDSU) wants to harness the power of instructional technology to teach through socially interactive simulations and virtual environments. To this end, they have developed five role-based computer games to teach the physical and social sciences. The WWWIC argues that simulated environments such as theirs need not fully replicate any given phenomenon in order to function effectively. Instead, they maintain that moderately simulated environments can facilitate the development of cognitive frameworks and the social construction of knowledge. In short, the WWWIC designs games that teach *how* to think like a scientist more than *what* to think about any given scientific domain. Throughout the book, their case is persuasively argued, carefully supported, and vividly illustrated.

*Electric Worlds in the Classroom* is representative of the innovative work emerging from the new interdisci-

plinary field of computer game studies. Much of the literature in that field is largely theoretical, drawing upon philosophical, literary, and social science foundations. In contrast, readers will find *Electric Worlds* to be a more technical work. While the first three chapters carefully document the theoretical underpinnings of WWWIC's work, the remaining nine chapters generally delve into the technical descriptions of each computer program and their means of assessment. Thankfully, the authors define their terms both in-text and in the glossary. The bibliography is well constructed and will provide interested readers with direction for further investigation into technical issues.

For the teacher of religion and theology, it may be the introduction that provokes the most useful pedagogical reflection. There, the authors outline the principles of their design strategies for teaching and learning. They aim to design educational experiences that are role-based, goal-oriented, based on learning-by-doing, immersive, exploratory, game-like, interactive, and multi-user. For those who teach in the areas of religion and theology, these may sound like alien concepts. However, the authors argue that these principles best support their endeavors to teach through enculturation. The pedagogy described in *Electronic Worlds* aims to teach through direct social experience, immersive cultural inquiry, and hands-on student performance.

Emerging electronic pedagogies such as these should not be dismissed simply because they seem too technical to manage within the academic disciplines of religion and theology. Behind *Electronic Worlds* lies an epistemological assumption: video games and the internet have changed the way that students prefer to think, to inquire, and to learn. Today's students are still capable of learning about complex systems. Further, they readily muster the motivation to delve deeply into subject matter when authentically interested. If this describes the contemporary milieu of students today, then what is the academy's responsibility to match their educational delivery systems to these new contexts?

Although most readers of this review likely lack the necessary computer skills to design virtual environments that are reflective of their disciplines, every reader can evaluate his or her own syllabi and teaching methods in light of the principles listed above. For example, in what ways can the academy sponsor learning-by-doing as a complement to learning-by-hearing (or reading) alone? How can professors design immersive and interactive learning experiences without the benefit of computer technology? In what ways can the syllabus invite students to actively participate in the processes of exploration and identity-formation as opposed to merely outlining a guided tour that promises little more than predictability and passivity? Can learning feel like play? Most teachers of religion and theology experience histories, texts, and cultures as evocative, world-making

phenomena. Students of religion and theology have been brought up in an electronic culture that packages world-exploration as playful entertainment. The work of the WWWIC provides a window into one possible synthesis of the two.

For those interested in further exploring the theoretical implications and pedagogical horizons of computer game studies, seek out the work of James Paul Gee of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He has written quite accessibly on video games, semiotics, and learning theory in his *What Video Games Have to Teach Us About Learning and Literacy* (Gee 2003, N.Y.: Palgrave Macmillan) and *Situated Language and Learning* (Gee 2004, N.Y.: Routledge). For lively reading about enculturation and online video game players, see either Edward Castronova's *Synthetic Worlds: The Business and Culture of Online Games* (2005, Chicago: University of Chicago Press) or T. L. Taylor's *Play Between Worlds: Exploring Online Game Culture* (2006, Cambridge: MIT Press). Any of these will provide the thoughtful religious educator with helpful insights into the nature of today's student population and their changing expectations for learning.

Mark Alan Hayse  
*MidAmerica Nazarene University*

*Life on the Tenure Track: Lessons from the First Year.*  
By James M. Lang. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005. xiv + 186 pages. ISBN 0-8018-8103-X. \$18.00.

Lang offers an interesting and accessible narrative of his first year of teaching in a tenure-track position, during 2000–2001 in the English Department of Assumption College, a small Roman Catholic school in Worcester, Massachusetts. He writes gracefully in a genre that we might describe as journaling with mild literary aspirations. We might also call his narrative a memoir, since Lang freely discusses his family, health, feelings about moving, and many other matters that place his work as a teacher in broader contexts. Alternatively, we could approach his book as a focused reflection (complete with the “lessons” that Lang flags in his title, directed primarily at younger colleagues) about Lang's pedagogical strategies and how he responded to various challenges of learning the ropes at Assumption: managing time, dealing with departmental politics, serving on committees, writing for publication, and so on. Finally, we might note that this book grew from a series of columns that Lang wrote for the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, beginning when he entered the job market and continuing during his years as a junior professor. It

may represent a trial balloon for Lang's stated temptation to forsake the academy for freelance writing of “creative nonfiction.”

The book is written with a voice and perspective that invites readers to experience life through Lang's eyes as his year unfolds. He supplements this chronological structure by highlighting different issues (e.g., teaching, grading, committee work) in successive chapters. Often he adds comments based on three years of hindsight, but even these “older and wiser” reflections reflect the point of view of a relatively young teacher.

Partly because Lang worked at the Searle Center for Teaching Excellence at Northwestern University before moving to Assumption, he is committed to, skillful at, and reflective about his strategies for active learning. It is interesting to think with him about how to work with various kinds of students in several kinds of classes as he encounters these challenges in a fresh way. It is also sobering to watch him struggle to find strategies for managing his crush of overwork while doing the minimum damage to his personal life, quality of teaching, and goals for publishing. (Although the book will probably find few non-academic readers, I wish it could be required reading for legislators who question the work commitments of teachers.) One of the lessons he imparts is that beginning teachers in positions like his should not expect to write anything during their first two semesters. Lang claims he reserved more time for his spouse and children than most young academics of my acquaintance are able to do; he even ekes out a few open weekends during parts of his semesters. However, as the year progresses, his time for free weekends and writing steadily dwindle, his overwork literally lands him in the hospital, he tells heartbreaking stories about losing touch with his children, and he eventually realizes that “I am letting my life slip away from me. I have allowed the tenure track to become a parasite, permanently attached to me, gnawing away at the parts of myself that I have always valued most.” This parasite “take[s] away as much of my life as it can, but never so much that I would think to complain about my working conditions or . . . [to] walk away” (108).

Despite raising difficult issues, the book's overall narrative is upbeat. Lang (at least Lang the literary personae, who was after all created by a Lang who is writing about himself and his colleagues in a context where these colleagues will soon vote on his tenure) speaks openly about his mistakes and problems, but also presents himself as a reasonably successful model of overcoming initial frustrations with students, solving time management problems, and learning to thrive in his new life. The book builds to an idealistic conclusion in which Lang (who is enjoying his summer at this point in his narrative) commits himself to a long life in the academy, based largely on a premise that teaching is one of the few places where one can focus one's life on harnessing

young people's idealism and joy in learning. For better or worse, he touches lightly on how to respond if a critical mass of one's students do not accept this premise.

Lang does not present his ideas about teaching in systematic or highly theorized ways. He stresses the value of interactive teaching strategies tailored to particular classes, as well as the importance of balancing teaching and research. However, his goal is not to marshal evidence for his arguments in a sustained way. Rather, it is to provide a lively case study with vivid examples and thoughtful commentary. He succeeds at this goal.

Readers of this journal might consider this book as a resource for teaching graduate students. Although Lang says relatively little about teaching on religion (he is content to recommend writing exercises on moral controversies and to note that he appreciates teaching in a school where religious commitment is nurtured without being forced on students), the book could be helpful in a teaching practicum or in other contexts in which graduate students look ahead to academic careers. For students who have unrealistic expectations about academic life or have not thought about the practical challenges that they should expect, this is a valuable preview – a lively case study that does not pull too many punches about the downside of academia but nevertheless maintains a constructive voice. Lang offers many examples that could generate discussion in a seminar on pedagogy, and he provides a model of academic behavior that gives priority attention to quality teaching.

The book might also be useful as a springboard for discussion in formal or informal mentoring that brings together younger and older faculty members. It is a quick read that could serve to remind aging faculty of their earlier experiences (or educate them on how times have changed), encourage younger faculty to be more mindful of their teaching, and initiate conversation about visions for the future of academic work.

Mark Hulsether  
*University of Tennessee*

*Service-Learning Code of Ethics*. By Andrea Chapdelaine, Ana Ruiz, Judith Warchal, and Carole Wells. Bolton, Mass.: Anker Publishing Company, Inc., 2005. xiv + 217 pages. ISBN 1-882982-83-5. \$39.95.

The book *Service-Learning Code of Ethics* is meticulously researched. After a brief listing of the relevant literature available, the authors note, "... there is a paucity of literature on the ethical challenges involved with this pedagogical undertaking, especially in higher

education" (xi). This book, then, is tailored to fill this gap and address problems encountered in the practice of service-learning.

The target audience of the book is everyone involved in service-learning on the academic side: students, faculty, and administrators. Following this rubric, then, the book is divided into five sections: Introduction, Students, Faculty, Administrators, and Assessment and Risk Management.

The first section is an introduction to service-learning in general, and the authors' proposed code of ethics in particular. According to statistics gathered by the Campus Compact, service-learning is becoming more wide-spread on college campuses, more faculty are incorporating service-learning components into their course requirements, and more students are taking such courses (5). Whereas I am less convinced of the value of service-learning by arguments that appeal to the grand ideals of democracy and citizenship, I am convinced by arguments based on the idea "that optimal learning occurs through active engagement with the course material" (6). The first chapter provides both rationales for the importance, even centrality, of service-learning in the curriculum of colleges and universities.

The goal of this book, however, is not to convince the reader of the value of service-learning. Therefore, it quickly moves on to its main point: to offer guidelines for dealing with the ethical dilemmas that arise when engaged in such pedagogical practices. The authors note, "service-learning is about relationships among faculty, students, the college or university, and community agencies, each group having different agendas, resources, and levels of power. A code of conduct is needed to provide standards and guidelines for appropriate professional conduct, roles, and responsibilities to guide the interaction among those involved in service-learning as well as the products of their labors" (15). Six ethical principles are proposed for guiding the decision-making process: beneficence, nonmaleficence, justice/fairness/equity, fidelity/responsibility, autonomy and respect for people's rights, and integrity (16). Codes for students, faculty, and administrators, based upon these ethical principles, are then enumerated (17–19).

The next three sections address specific dilemmas encountered by students, faculty, and administrators during the course of service-learning projects. First, a scenario is described (for example, there are chapters entitled, "Conflict Between Student Personal Commitments and Service-Learning Requirement," "Student Poses a Potential Risk in Service-Learning Placement," and "Allocation of Institutional Resources and Service-Learning Implementation"). Next, the reader is taken through a series of steps that include identification of the dilemma, relevant principles in understanding the dilemma, possible courses of action, a recommended decision, and reflection upon that decision. At the end of

each chapter, an additional dilemma is presented allowing the reader to work through each of the six steps in the ethical decision-making process on his or her own. In addition, the appendix has fifteen more scenarios.

Because of the clarity of presentation, this book can easily be picked up and consulted for specific problems and guidelines for solving said problems. At the same time, this strength can make the reading of the book repetitious, since each chapter in the three central sections follows the same format.

The final section presents assessment tools and recommendations for risk management. The assessment tools are geared toward measuring the process (rather than the outcome) of service-learning for students, faculty, and administrators. For example, all three forms ask if the individual being evaluated "treated [all involved] in a manner consistent with ethical principles" and how well the person responded to "changing needs and circumstances." I did wonder if these assessment tools were developed in actual service-learning environments. The authors do ask the readers to share the results of their use of these assessment tools. I would have liked the authors also to have shared the results of their own use of these evaluations.

Having never incorporated a service-learning component in my classes, I feel better acquainted with the learning opportunities and the potential pitfalls of service-learning projects. Therefore, this book is useful for people considering this type of pedagogy as well as for people already engaged in these practices. Students, faculty, and administrators can gain insight from reading the sections describing problems that arise from the others' points-of-view. This book would be helpful for any undergraduate professor or administrator, but I also see its usefulness for seminary and divinity school programs where such community engagement has always been a part of the curriculum.

Jennifer L. Koosed  
*Albright College*

*Teaching & Performing: Ideas for Energizing Your Classes.* By William M. Timpson and Suzanne Burgoyne. Madison, Wisc.I: Atwood Publishing, 2002. 268 pages. ISBN 1-891859-43-9. N.P.

This book introduces educators to techniques and exercises from the stage. The title, *Teaching & Performing: Ideas for Energizing Your Classes*, adequately sums up both the content and the structure of the book: it presents a variety of ideas in an informal, personal language, without too much programming or pedagogical theory. (This is not to say this work is not theoretically informed: Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

(Continuum 1970) and especially Augusto Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed* (Pluto Press 1979) feature prominently.) The most problematic word in the title is the ampersand. While the "&" might suggest that teaching parallels performing or that teaching is a kind of performing (indeed an earlier version of this book was called *Teaching as Performing*), in fact the ampersand disguises the extended simile that gives this book its shape: teaching is like performing. College professors can apply any aspect of the theatrical enterprise, from acting exercises to stage-managing, from playwriting to lighting design, in improving their teaching. However, this guiding simile is not consistently applied. Are teachers like actors or more like directors? Is a lecture like a three-act play or like an improvisation exercise in a theatre class? Are students our audiences or fellow actors? Sometimes this incoherent appeal to the dramatic tradition unfortunately produces rather obvious suggestions with only vague connections to theatre. For example, the authors argue that our teaching should be engaging in the same way the theater is (although anyone who has suffered through an evening of bad actors earnestly declaiming awkward prose knows the latter half of that equation does not always hold up). Also unfortunately, sometimes this book connects teaching and performing quite tenuously. For example, Timpson and Burgoyne write about "actors who have been trapped in a certain kind of role. They've become *typecast*. Can Sylvester Stallone do more than Rocky-like films?" to make the point that we teachers should not be typecast as "experts" in our field and thus feel "uncomfortable with small-group assignments for which you turn control over to your students" (91).

Nonetheless, this book contains much that will be very useful for teachers of religion and theology. A glance at the highlights of each chapter should show this. Chapter 1, on planning for the classroom, makes the excellent point that actors know that "intense preparation frees them to lives to live 'in the moment,' " (48) and indicates how the same might apply to teachers. In chapter 2, on warming up, we learn that just as actors get in character through physical and vocal warm-up exercise, you, the college professor, should "put your plans aside just before class and allow yourself some time to concentrate on your physical and emotional readiness" (52).

Chapter 3, on the lecture, I found particularly helpful. Beginning with an analysis of the dramatic structure of Sophocles' "Oedipus the King," Timpson and Burgoyne show how the lessons of dramaturgy can help us write a successful lecture. They suggest giving a lecture a three-act structure, ending in a *dénouement*, and being aware of the objective (an active idea that forms a through-line). Chapter 4 covers student-teacher interaction including questions and discussions. Chapter 5 concerns the value of creativity and spontaneity in the

classroom. Chapters 6 and 7 urge us to use drama, controversy, and conflict to go beyond teaching the bare facts of our subject. (Once again, these chapters have a tenuous connection to performing. Here, the authors seem to use the word drama not in the sense of “theater” but in the sense of “excitement.”)

Chapter 8 is a collection of “performance-enhancing exercises,” including several theatre games invented by the great theorist of improvisation Viola Spolin. However these games seem better suited for a teachers’ retreat, say, than the classroom. Chapter 9 contains short descriptions of several scenes from movies and plays involving teachers and students. Most are from the inspirational teacher genre, such as the films *Stand and Deliver* and *Dangerous Minds*, but there are also a few more disturbing portraits of academia, such as *Oleanna*, David Mamet’s play about sexual harassment, and Edward Albee’s classic *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf*. Most of the scenes have no practical purpose as far as I can tell, other than giving teachers some new titles to put on their Netflix queue.

The book has some obvious flaws – it is repetitive, poorly paced, and seems put together in a rather slapdash manner. For example, both chapters 1 and 3 feature almost identical subsections on costumes, and chapters 3 and 4 repeat similar information on using props in the classroom. In both cases, a single mention would have been more than enough.

This book works best when it presents practical, specific advice. I particularly liked the series of tongue twisters and physical warm-ups to be practiced before class (65) and the admonition to begin each lecture with a hook. And flaws aside, the key points of the book are important, if not necessary, to even the most dedicated educators. In a nutshell, Timpson and Burgoyne tell us that teaching and learning are activities that do not take place wholly, or even mainly, on an intellectual level. As teachers, how we look, how we gesture, how we pitch our voice, how well or poorly we are heard, all have an effect on our teaching. Our bodies and our voices are instruments and need to be taken care of and made use of. A class period can be structured like a play, complete with structure, suspense, and a climax. While these ideas may not require a 260-page book to be effectively communicated, they cannot be stated too often.

Elijah Siegler  
*College of Charleston*

*The Way of the Teacher*. By J. M. Haile. Central, S.C.: Macatea Productions, 2005. xii + 116 pages. ISBN 0-9728602-1-5. \$19.95 (paperback).

The first sentence in the preface to *The Way of the Teacher* is compelling: “This book is for the dissatisfied

teacher” (vii). But it is abundantly clear that this is no traditional book on teaching. Soon we learn that, while the book aims to help teachers improve, “You will find no arcane techniques here that might suddenly transform you into an enthralling presence in the classroom, a beloved mentor to your students, and a revered member of your faculty. All the technique in the world can little help your students, unless your attitude is pure, and if your attitude is pure, then you will find or invent the techniques you need” (vii). How can this be? Every book on teaching is about technique, isn’t it? We need to know what to *do* to be better teachers, not how to *be* – right?

J. M. Haile is a scientist who writes mostly on molecules and thermodynamics. Perhaps it is not unusual, then, to find a global approach to thinking about teaching. Upon first glance, *The Way of the Teacher* looks like poetry: short lines, spread out on the page, interspersed with quotations by thinkers ranging from Francis Bacon to Richard Feynman to Lao Tzu – even one from an anonymous student evaluation in which a student flunking a class tells the teacher it isn’t the professor’s fault! Some challenges are familiar: “Let’s stop teaching the courses and start teaching the students” (15). Others may be especially difficult for professors helping students prepare for ministry careers: “Learning is not the same as professional practice. . . . To restrict teaching to the actions of professional practice is to train, not to educate” (33).

Some books about teaching are instruction manuals. Others are like philosophy texts, and this is one of those – Haile intends it to be “not a map but a signpost” (ix). This is a book designed to make you think about teaching: What do you believe about students, and how does that drive your teaching style? What do you believe about teachers, and how does that inspire your work in the classroom? Whose input is feeding your approach to learning and teaching? Why might it be important to teach in one way or another? What is the larger picture of the academic enterprise? The preface to *The Way of the Teacher* recommends different ways to use this book: read it once through then go back and consider small pieces in more depth, read it individually and then discuss various portions with your colleagues, journal on what you are finding, and so on.

Section breaks are accompanied by oft-abstract figures: some look like people, some look like arrows, some look like . . . ? At the end of the book, one is rewarded with an appendix explaining the illustrations. Each is a tangram, our old friend from geometry class. “Every tangram is composed of seven plane figures called *tans*. . . . From the seven tans, literally thousands of evocative tangrams can be created, illustrating that even a small number of objects can be organized into a multitude of meaningful patterns and that the patterns are more important than the objects from which they are

composed” (107). What a helpful reminder that teaching need not be – indeed, *must* not be – a regurgitation of material presented in the same way every time to every group of students, and that we dare not become so consumed in our course content that we neglect the processes of learning. Haile admits that in constructing this book, “. . . if I’ve felt that you might not be sufficiently stimulated by a particular idea, presented in one way, I’ve sometimes reached for an alternative presentation or even its negative . . . there are as many possible ways to mastery as there are Master teachers” (ix).

Haile’s readers are challenged to move beyond simple ways of teaching. Exploring how learning happens, for example, the author exhorts, “In addition to attending lectures, students must explore and exercise new patterns of thought. They can do this by observing and using, reading and writing, questioning and answering, combining and dissecting, computing and simulating, discussing and presenting, playing and thinking. Education is not a spectator sport” (45). Professors are encour-

aged to read beyond their disciplines, in order to broaden their teaching: “Do you think knowledge should be taught and learned in separate, compartmentalized chunks? Or, do you believe all knowledge is interconnected and that today’s societies need citizens who have integrated knowledge from diverse domains?” (viii).

A written review in paragraph form is insufficient to capture the enchantment and challenge inherent in this book: you must see it, wrestle with the poetic format, seek to understand the illustrations, interact with the quotations, savor the material in small pieces. *The Way of the Teacher* is not an easy read. We may find ourselves alternately frustrated, angry, challenged, delighted, confused . . . but never bored. This book may serve more as inspirational literature for teachers than any other sort of educational tome.

Laura K. Simmons  
*George Fox Evangelical Seminary*

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