



The Quest for Meaning: Narratives of Teaching, Learning and the Arts

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The Quest for Meaning: Teaching, Learning and the Arts presents a narrative, arts-based approach to pedagogy and research in higher education. Through narratives of experience, the book offers revealing, poignant examples of the transformative power of the arts and of narrative inquiry in learners' lives, and of the centrality of story in their ongoing quest for meaning. The Quest for Meaning will be valuable in a wide range of graduate and undergraduate settings. It provides a framework for the development of new pedagogies which integrate the theory and practice of narrative, arts-based approaches to education. The work makes a contribution to the fields of narrative and arts-based inquiry and pedagogy, qualitative research methods, holistic and integrated studies, and self-directed inquiry. It will appeal to a range of audiences who are interested in this creative, integrative approach to education, and who want to gain insights into how students learn, from their own unique perspectives. Grounded in Dr. Beattie's interconnected approach to research and pedagogy, the book begins with her own story of teaching, learning, research and the arts. This provides the backdrop to an account of a collaborative pedagogy designed to enable students to conduct in-depth narrative inquiries into their lives, and to learn how to do narrative, arts-based research with others. Here, Beattie provides insights into the practices and processes of solitary and collaborative inquiry, and the interaction and integration that take place within the three kinds of dialogue she proposes; the dialogue with the self, the dialogue with others, and the dialogue between the dialogues. The book's other twelve narratives show from learners' unique perspectives, how the creation and re-creation of their ways of ways of knowing and being is a distinctively individual process involving all aspects of their humanity. Individually, these narratives provide valuable glimpses into the challenges, the joys, the frustrations and emotionality, and the important personal satisfactions involved in the processes of learning, unlearning and re-learning. In their own voices, these learners tell of the diverse ways in which they became more responsive to their own inner lives, to the perspectives and understandings of others, and to the creation of more meaningful narratives for their current and future lives. Collectively, the narratives highlight the importance of recognizing personal experience in settings of higher education. They also present compelling evidence for acknowledging the significance of inquiry, creativity, imagination, dialogue, interaction, and integration in enabling learners to bring the whole of their being to the learning process, to the exploration of the stories by which they live, and to the creation of new narratives for their future lives. The Quest for Meaning: Narratives of Teaching, Learning and the Arts is a work of art in itself... Mary Beattie, together with her co-authors show us that embedding the Arts in our learning, teaching and researching is not an option: it is an imperative. Robyn Ewing, Professor of Teacher Education and the Arts, University of Sydney, Australia. . This book is an important contribution to arts-based research and narrative inquiry and will be welcomed by those working in these fields. It describes a multilayered experience that allows students to share their own stories in creative and engaging ways. The stories told in this book are inspiring and should encourage readers to creatively reflect on their own stories. John (Jack) Miller, University of Toronto/Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Canada, author of The Holistic Curriculum and Education and the Soul

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Irvin Ashbaugh:

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