

Professional Education with Fiction Media: Imagination for Engagement and Empathy in Learning (editors Christine Jarvis and Patricia Gouthro, Palgrave Macmillan) has an ambitious goal of providing “the beginnings of a unifying theoretical framework for using fiction to teach in professional contexts.” Exploring how educators can use fiction in a targeted and meaningful way, *Professional Education with Fiction Media* achieves its aim of showcasing specific contributions of what narrative fiction can bring to professional education by gathering together the voices of educators who teach professionals in a range of disciplinary contexts. Disciplinary experts offer distinctive ways to enhance students’ self-awareness and criticality by focusing on the value fiction can offer to professional education.

Jarvis captures the overarching purpose of these ten case studies in her thorough introductory summary of the vital role reading fiction plays in education: in developing novel ways of seeing and understanding others; in unveiling “questions of power that may go unchallenged by more conventional teaching methods”; in developing our imaginative sensibilities; and in providing a medium to interrogate human intentions. Jarvis believes that human beings attach importance to engaging imaginatively with fictional characters and situations and that fiction should be a vehicle for teaching outside the context of normal literary content.

Catherine Hayes’ contribution discusses how the use of a popular British TV situational comedy can transform learning for podiatrists by raising an awareness of social stereotyping and pernicious assumptions related to ageing. Hayes’ use of the character Nana from *The Royle Family* illustrates a “means of examining perspectives in abstraction from the remainder of societal values, with a level of social deconstruction that is not necessarily possible with real characters whose lives cannot be deconstructed in the same way because of a lack of insight into them.” Candice Satchwell’s chapter on working with disadvantaged children and young people in which she relates how she uses stories to “unfreeze” her young readers’ personality systems in order for them to enter into other people’s experiences has the laudable aims of inspiring social change and challenging prejudice. Satchwell’s work and the other projects explored in *Professional Education with Fiction Media* demonstrate powerfully how reading fiction has more to offer than reading a text book or case study: fiction allows readers to develop empathic connections to characters, bringing us closer to an understanding of others and ourselves.

In another enlightening chapter that takes the form of an interview with Samantha Halliday, Professor of Law by Christine Jarvis, we are able to grasp the reasons Halliday encourages her students to look at film and literature to see how the law functions in fictional worlds. Halliday demonstrates how film and literature act as a simulative hinge for students to recognise how power operates. Subsequent chapters offer their own distinctive approaches to using literature in a professional curriculum. Randee Lipson Lawrence reveals her techniques in getting students to imagine dialogues for, inter alia, resolving personal conflict. In describing the activities of a science book club, Joanna Verran demonstrates how novels can be used to promote a better understanding of disease and epidemiology. Drawing on American and English classic literature such as Alcott’s *Little Women*, Stoker’s *Dracula*,

Gaskell's *Mary Barton* and Maugham's *The Painted Veil*, Verran delineates the close relationship between microbiology and art as she provides another lens through which educators can use fiction to expose their learners to different perspectives, circumstances and viewpoints.

In possibly the most “literary” chapter, Cheryl Reynolds deconstructs the “post-modern” novel, as she informs us that its typical features of paranoia, fragmentation, intertextuality, metafiction and hyperreality can help students navigate the complex, ambiguous and hyper-connected professional lives they lead. Novels such as Nabokov's *Lolita* and Kafka's *Metamorphosis* do not “hanker after beacons of meaning in a seemingly meaningless world” so can engage learners in stimulating debates about professional roles and identities as readers address issues of fragmentation, incoherence and disunity in an increasingly uncertain world.

Patricia Gouthro reminds us in that professionals shoulder a substantial level of responsibility in their fields – law, medicine, nursing, social work, education, business – and they need to be prepared to adapt to an atmosphere of on-going change and disruption. In her chapter of how to teach professionals to function in a society characterised by the increasing influence of managerialism and evidence-based observable outcomes, she is convinced that fiction is a valuable resource for providing insights into how to make sense of our lives. Ann Harris' chapter reinforces Gouthro's point about how effectively fiction creates meaning for us. In her informative discussion of how *Dr Who* highlights the tension between power and knowledge, Harris reinforces how crucial it is for us, as professionals, not only to be aware of our considerable responsibilities but also to be prepared to ask pertinent and at times difficult questions.

Each chapter of this impressively erudite and significant book reminds me of Iris Murdoch's dictum in *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970) that from the study of literature, we may not grasp propositional truths or acquire new beliefs, but our way of seeing the world will be forever altered. In Jarvis and Gouthro's *Professional Education with Fiction Media*, such a dictum resonates throughout. We educators need to heed the powerful voices gathered here and adapt our practices accordingly.

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