

REVIEWS

Alan Booth & Paul Hyland, eds. *The Practice of University History Teaching*. Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 2000. Pp. xiv, 258. Cloth, \$74.95; ISBN 0-7190-5491-5. Paper, \$27.95; ISBN 0-7190-5492-3.

Practicing historians and teachers are all too aware of the primacy placed on research over teaching by many in the academy. Research is the "serious" work of historians, teaching something merely to be tolerated. Although that's a pervasive attitude, readers of this journal undoubtedly will scoff at such a distinction, knowing all too well the importance that both activities play in the historical profession. But recognizing the false dichotomy of choosing research or teaching as the more important of our duties doesn't undercut the reality that scholarship on teaching history is not regarded with the same respect as "content" research. In *The Practice of University History Teaching*, British historians Alan Booth and Paul Hyland have edited a collection of essays that confront this issue head on. The challenge, they assert, is "to re-emphasize the importance and scholarship of teaching, to bring a research perspective to history teaching and learning."

This challenge is taken up by 38 historians, most of whom are working in Great Britain. The editors group eighteen essays in three sections that mirror the normal process of preparing a course, conducting it, and assessing student learning. In "Context and Course Design," the first of the book's three main sections, the contributors tackle a number of issues that confront contemporary teachers of history: structuring courses to focus on developing concrete skills in students, enhancing student communication and group-work skills, and using information technology both in the traditional classroom and in distance-learning courses. Essays in the second section, "Enhancing Teaching and Learning," consider issues of active learning, oral history, fieldwork in history, and dealing with large seminars in creative new ways. In the final section, "Learning and Assessment," the authors consider assessment in a myriad of forms, from reworking the history essay to assessing group work and collaborative learning.

The strength of this collection lies in its applicability. Informed by field work, surveys, and other research methods, the authors all focus, as the book's title suggests, on practice. As a result, this is not a collection of vague assertions to rework our teaching practice, but rather a collection of tangible evidence about the relationship between teaching and learning outcomes. Each essay is chock full of ideas that can be applied immediately as we prepare our courses, conduct them, and finally assess student learning. Readers will find essays that address methods they currently employ as well as those they haven't yet adopted or considered. As a result, these essays don't just inspire positive change, they provide a wealth of examples to enhance our current practice and/or guide us into new methods, and they provide the evidence that shows what those new methods are capable of doing to improve student learning. Historians at all levels, from surveys to graduate seminars, will find something of value in each of

the essays. It will also be valuable as an assigned text in any course designed to prepare future history teachers. *The Practice of University History Teaching* is a fine example of rigorous scholarship on teaching, one that addresses large pedagogical questions in concrete ways that can be taken directly into the classroom where they belong.

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Paul N. Stearns, Peter Seixas, & Sam Wineburg, eds. *Knowing, Teaching, and Learning History: National and International Perspectives*. New York & London: New York University Press, 2000. Pp. ix, 482. Paper \$25.00; ISBN 0-8147-8142-X.

The 22 useful and engaging essays in this book represent leading work in the scholarship of teaching and learning related to history. The collection is a valuable effort by a group of interdisciplinary, international authors to address the complex interaction of learning theory, classroom practice, and the discipline of history in the United States, Canada, and Europe.

As the editors note, this volume grew out of a session at a meeting of the American Historical Association and developed into a larger, international effort. More broadly, it is part of a confluence of three major trends. First is the cognitive revolution in learning and teaching. The second involves changes in the discipline of history, especially the inclusion of marginalized groups and the critique of historical narrative. The final trend has been the growing interest in issues of historical memory and the public representation of history.

Limitations on space prevent a full discussion of each piece, but together the essays in the volume address these large trends and note that while difficult, improving history teaching and learning is possible; the essays collected here represent attempts in this direction.

The editors divide the book into four parts. "Current Issues in History Education" contains seven essays that assess the complex interactions of what history is, how it should be taught, and why it is important to learn in the United States, Canada, and Europe.

In Part Two, "Changes Needed to Advance Good History Teaching," four contributors, Diane Ravitch, G. Williamson McDiarmid, Peter Vinten-Johansen, and Shelly Weintraub recommend changes to improve professional development and history teacher education. In general, they conclude that greater emphasis should be placed on content in teacher training and that interdisciplinary programs, such as the one at Michigan State discussed by McDiarmid and Vinten-Johansen, are the best means to increase teachers' training in historical reasoning skills.

The six essays in Part Three, "Research on Teaching and Learning in History," reflect on the findings of various studies on what history is and how people, both