

“Many faculty pursue the teaching enterprise in good faith but without sufficient reflection about its purpose and potential impact. *Teaching Justice* invites criminal justice educators to pause for a moment—and then to engage in a conversation with the authors about how to enrich the minds of students and give greater meaning to our own lives. We are challenged not only to convey quality information but also to invite our charges to pursue a more just and ethical future. Authentic and accessible, this is a volume that all present and future teachers in our discipline should read—and then keep close by to consult regularly.”

Francis T. Cullen
Distinguished Research Professor Emeritus
University of Cincinnati

“*Teaching Justice* is one of the most innovative books on pedagogy that I have ever read. It should be mandatory reading for every criminal justice instructor, and it is destined to become a classic in the field of the scholarship of teaching and learning.”

Walter S. DeKeseredy
Chair, Director, and Professor
University of West Virginia

“In this age of ‘fake news’ and outright lies, questions of justice must be part of our classroom discussions. *Teaching Justice* does just that, raising intriguing issues and stimulating analysis. We must question the nature of justice and the purpose and operation of the criminal justice system . . . Braswell and Whitehead draw upon their extensive educational background and experience to raise issues about criminal justice education as well—especially the importance of mentoring and listening (the most ignored communication skill). The book should be read by all instructors and students to clarify the purpose of their work.”

Gennaro F. Vito
Professor, Department of Criminal Justice
University of Louisville

“*Teaching Justice* by Braswell and Whitehead will inspire students to stop and think about the consequences of their decisions, and will help them find their moral compass. Too often we want to divide our actions into right and wrong, good and bad, but as this book illustrates, the decisions we make can have long term consequences, not only for ourselves but for others. I highly recommend this book to anyone that wants their students to go beyond accumulating facts and knowledge so that they can better understand the human element of the justice system.”

Edward J. Latessa
Professor and Director
University of Cincinnati

“After reading this book, I set out to figure out who should read it. Most of all, I would insist that new faculty and senior doctoral students who seek to engage students in a justice classroom should read it ... and fill the margins with commentary. This book is both charge and assurance, both invective and affirmation. It is both theoretical and deeply personal ... It is honest, reflective and nurturing. It covers the compass from high-minded ideals to practical exercise suggestions for the justice classroom. The authors’ decades of experience-soaked wisdom about the justice classroom will, if wielded well, help bring about future generations of transformative and capable justice professionals.”

Michael DeValve
Assistant Professor
Bridgewater State University

Teaching Justice

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Michael Braswell

PROFESSOR EMERITUS

DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND CRIMINOLOGY
EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

John Whitehead

PROFESSOR EMERITUS

DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND CRIMINOLOGY
EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY



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*This book is dedicated to Robert “Jack” Higgs,
dear friend and master teacher, and all the times we spent
talking about the mysteries of teaching and life. And to our students,
especially our graduate assistants, who kept us on
the straight and narrow.*

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Foreword

One of my most memorable college professors taught Shakespeare. Many decades later I can picture him in front of the class, rocking back and forth, hands clasped behind his back, eyes twinkling, beginning the day's lesson with his trademark, "Now, friends ..." His lectures were always an energetic and challenging exploration of whatever play we were covering that day. I was not an English major. In fact, I took very few English courses other than to meet requirements. But that class was special because of him. Everyone felt his love for Shakespeare, and it was contagious. He chuckled, he exhorted, he acted out parts and he made the prose come alive by sheer force of his personality. He also made everyone feel special to him. He attended most college events from the arts to football, and he stopped to chat with innumerable students and faculty as he rode his bike around campus. His interest in everyone and everything was not feigned. Even after retirement he was a fixture at the college. He embodied the essence of a scholar-teacher-mentor: exactly what the authors seek to deconstruct in this text.

This is a unique book. Most textbooks are written for students, but Braswell and Whitehead have written this book for instructors and teaching assistants. It is a well written plea to think about teaching, especially teaching criminal justice, as more than a simple transmission of facts from teacher to student. The discipline of criminal justice is especially rich in complexity and personal meaning. As the authors point out: *Our sense of justice—what we think about right and wrong—informs the decisions we make in our social relationships and communities. In turn, the laws of the land and the justice process that enacts and enforces those laws are, to some extent, a reflection of our personal and collective experiences and values.* Helping students become aware of the moral as well as legal and scientific issues in the discipline is no small task. Some professors claim they are not experts and punt moral and philosophical questions to other

disciplines. This text, in a wide-ranging discussion, goes well beyond the issues of teaching criminal justice and delves into the art of teaching itself. The authors have not only taught for decades, they have been learning how to teach throughout those decades. They are introspective about the teaching experience and, in this book, they share their acquired wisdom. They comment on the challenges of the social media age, the tension between research/publishing and teaching, the true meaning of scholar, the importance of listening as a teacher, and many other things.

Each of the chapters takes the discussion down a different avenue of thought: teacher as philosopher, scholar, artist, communicator, and mentor. In the chapter discussing philosophy, the authors point out that criminal justice teachers must deal with the philosophical questions of justice, either directly or indirectly. Students, perhaps now more than ever, need to improve their analytical skills, be comfortable in their ability to consider fundamental questions of right and wrong, and develop their moral compass. Teaching a criminal justice ethics class is an obvious way that criminal justice professors integrate philosophy into the curriculum, but many other classes also address similar questions.

When discussing the teacher as scholar, the authors delve more deeply into the touchy area of “publish or perish” in academe. They note that a “scholar” may not necessarily be one who produces knowledge but, certainly, is one who devours it and is cognizant of cutting-edge research in the field. While that may not be enough for research-based universities, it can be enough to be an excellent teacher. Fundamentally, a good teacher not only imparts knowledge, but a lifelong love of knowledge. This chapter recognizes the reality that some universities want and reward lines on vitae. There is also a good discussion of quantitative versus qualitative research. Another contribution of this chapter to the discussion is recognizing the importance of asking the right questions. Academic journals are littered with excellent statistical models that help us understand the reality of justice in no appreciable way.

The standard phrase “teaching is more art than science” is exhaustively explored in the next chapter. What makes a great teacher? We know some of what makes a good teacher, and you can teach individuals to be better teachers, but greatness comes from desire. The authors propose that the art of listening is essential to be a good teacher, as is the ability to spur creativity in students. Students are obviously the center of teaching—they are not passive recipients, but, rather, willing or unwilling participants in the interaction. One must light that fire of interest, whether it be through movies, argumentation, books, volunteering, guest speakers, small group projects, or other ways. Great teachers create that spark in students.

One of my favorite chapters of the book is exploring the teacher as mentor. Over decades of teaching, certain students stand out, but the number of students' lives possibly touched by any one teacher is tremendous. The teacher-student relationship often ends up being something more, either short-term over a crisis, or long-term. Mentoring may be obvious, like career advice, but can also involve anything that comes up when a student knocks on your door and asks, "are you busy?" Relationship advice, credit card debt, medical issues, problems with parents, drug use, depression, and the list goes on. Professors are not trained to handle the problems that sometimes come to them. We refer who needs to be referred to campus counseling, but the mere act of coming with a problem is a gift of trust that must be addressed.

I think back to my Shakespeare professor—decades later he stands out—not for what he taught, but how he approached teaching. I believe that his enthusiasm and love for teaching and his genuine interest in students influenced me in a profound way. Our teaching is the sum of all the influences that we experience over the course of our careers and even as students. This book puts on paper the discussions that many of us have had with colleagues and graduate students. In our mentor role to young faculty and teaching assistants, we try to help them navigate the dueling priorities of research and teaching, provide the teaching techniques and truisms that we have developed over the years, and help them, hopefully, move toward mastering the "art" of teaching. This textbook is a wonderful tool to further those discussions. The chapters serve as springboards for discussions to help young professionals figure out how to balance departmental demands and their own goals in teaching.

One of the best compliments about a textbook is that it produces "what abouts?" That is, the reader carries on an internal dialog with the book's authors when reading, periodically disagreeing or agreeing and having additional points to make in the discussion. I found myself in such a dialog and hope that future readers have the same lively experience that I did when reading this very needed and worthwhile book.

Joycelyn Pollock, PhD
Distinguished Professor Emeritus
Texas State University

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