



SEMINAR SERIES

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Restoring the Soul of Teacher Education: A Soulful Approach to External Pressure

Taken from the writing of a book entitled: **Restoring Soul, Passion, and Purpose in Teacher Education: Contesting the Instrumentalization of Curriculum and Pedagogy**

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Host | Dr. William Pinar

► **Wednesday, April 28, 2021** | 12:30 - 2:00 p.m. (PST) | via Zoom

During the 1960s and 1970s, teacher education was seen as a training problem and during the 1980s and 1990s it was conceived of as a learning problem. In today's 21st century world, the reality is that teacher education is a policy issue; policy makers now control teacher education. Teacher educators have become functionaries and teacher education has lost its soul. Teaching has become a mundane, almost perfunctory, endeavour to match external expectations. Some new spark is needed that speaks to the soul of teachers and teacher educators, to the arcane depths of the heart and imagination, where we find *value, meaning, and oneness* with the world around us, such that we can gain a sense of fulfillment that makes life purposeful and full of passion.

The beginning premise of the book is that the practice of teaching and the education of teachers has been blindsided by a rogue wave of neo-liberalist criticism and subsequent imperious policy making that is stifling the breath out of teacher education, creating a performativity situation in which its pedagogy is paralyzed and, as Ball (2003) suggests, its soul is terrorized. Hence, I argue for expanding the focus in teacher education to include the nurturing of the pedagogical soul of teachers through ideas that have stood the test of time, through beauty of expression, through an embracing and examination of values, and a profound sense of humanity. For it is an appreciation of *love, kindness, and beauty*, particularly in language and imagery, that animates an idea, not the relentless attention to data.

This presentation will focus on how teachers can develop a soulful approach to the external pressure of a neo-liberalist audit culture. Soulfulness involves searching one's cared-for self and fully formed subjectivity for the manifestation of purpose in terms of how one uses one's personal power in line with a vision of a greater good to and for humanity. Such searching implies becoming quiet to be at peace with whatever action we have to take. It means refusing to be running around indiscriminately, all fired up but essentially going nowhere. Because it is often in these moments of peaceful relaxation that a solution to what troubles us may just be revealed. Thus, a soulful response entails a quiet struggle to hear one's inner voice and to act upon it with courage, strength, and conviction.

References

Ball, S. (2003). The teacher's soul and the terrors of performativity. *The Journal of Education Policy*, 18 (2), 215-228.

Dr. Peter P. Grimmett is Professor Emeritus at both SFU and UBC. A former Dean at SFU, he also served as the BC Deans appointment to the BC College of Teachers between 2007-2010. He has published 53 refereed journal articles, 11 books and 49 chapters in books, and in 2000 received an honorary doctorate from the University of Tampere, Finland. In 2014 he was awarded the Canadian Association for Teacher Education's *Life-Time Research Achievement Award*. His (2012) book, *Teacher certification and the Professional Status of Teaching in North America: The New Battleground for Public Education* locates recent developments in teacher certification and he is currently writing a book on the need to re-enchant curriculum and pedagogy in teacher education.