

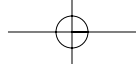
Foreword

Kathy Glass's introduction to this book takes me back to my early days as a teacher. Probably the most complimentary thing I could say about my work in those days is that I "played school" with sincerity. I certainly could not dignify what I did by calling it curriculum design. I had no sense of what that term meant. Early on, I just tried my best to learn enough each night to be able to tell my students 45 minutes' worth the next day. Working hard has merit, and I was willing to work hard, but my hard work lacked a sense of direction.

Later, I became a student of my students and understood that I needed to capture the imagination of each of my students—to attach what I was teaching to their lives in some way—if my classroom was to have power for the learners in it. I learned that truth from colleagues older, wiser, and better than I in the classroom. To this day, I believe it is critical for teachers to reach out to the imaginations, dreams, and energies of each student if we want what we teach to connect with whom we teach. At that point, my energies were directed toward creating tasks my students would find inviting. My professional sense of direction was developing.

It was much later in my teaching when I began to understand the concept of curriculum as a design plan to achieve coherent, articulated outcomes with demonstrated value for evolving learners. With access to a book—or a teacher—that could have explained, demonstrated, and illustrated the curriculum design process, I would have been a much more thoughtful and effective teacher for many more students much sooner in my career. As it happens, I was an English teacher, and so this book would have been a great asset for me and my students alike. It would have given me a rudder with which to steer both my energy and my determination to ensure that each of my students found learning to be personally satisfying—and ideally even delightful. It would have helped me see how to ensure that what I taught was sound and systematic. It would have sharpened my sense of direction as a writing teacher—and the sense of direction of my students as well.

I recently read a quotation by Hella Basu, who said that whenever someone makes an object, the philosophy behind the object is art, planning the object is design, and the actual making of it is craft. I believe that to be as true about teaching as about the arts. We teach best when what we do is rooted in a grounded philosophy; when our plans reflect our philosophy



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and bear the hallmarks of systematic, careful thought; and when we carry out the plans in ways that honor the philosophy, the students we teach, and the power of what we teach.

Kathy Glass makes a noteworthy contribution to the design phase of teaching writing—both in and beyond language arts classrooms. Teachers willing to be students of that design process should find here a reliable compass to guide that aspect of their work.

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