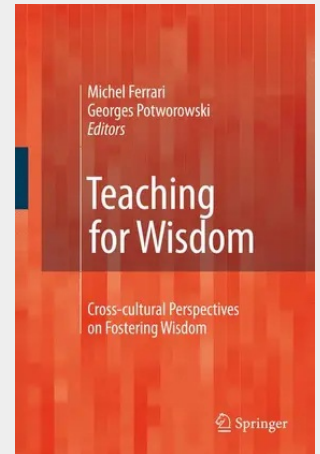


Teaching for Wisdom

Cross-cultural Perspectives on Fostering Wisdom

The chapters in this volume are all devoted to a single question: Can wisdom be taught, or at least fostered? They span many different traditions and times, which generates both problems and opportunities. The most obvious problem is that of translation. As Curnow points out in the opening chapter, the word 'wisdom' is used to translate a variety of terms from antiquity that have only a partial overlap with modern work. It is interesting to consider that the Egyptian word 'seboyet' translates as either wisdom or instruction. The same is true of terms from Buddhism or Confucianism, or even the Ancient Greek tradition acknowledged as a source of most current views of wisdom in the West; all the terms drawn from other languages and traditions have only partially overlapping meaning. With this in mind, each chapter can be read independently of the others. However, we have also arranged them in an order that reflects common themes that emerge despite this diversity. We have not arranged them by geographical region, or historical time, but rather by the sort of educational strategy they advocate to foster wisdom. The first chapter by Curnow provides a basic overview of approaches to teaching for wisdom in the West. This is already a very ambitious undertaking, spanning ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia to the renaissance and the dawn of the modern world, where the term wisdom has fallen largely out of fashion until very recently.

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