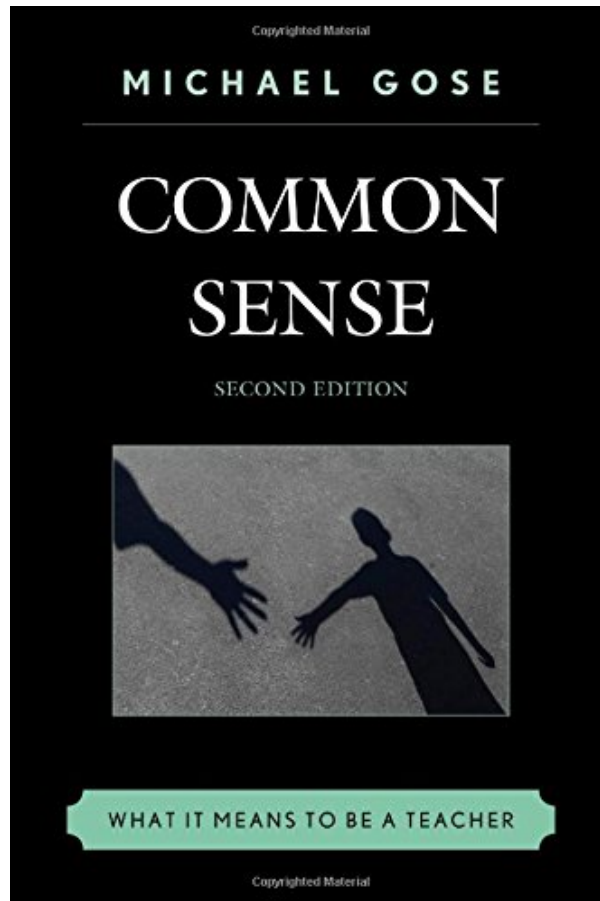


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Review

Michael Gose's *Common Sense: What It Means to Be a Teacher* is an arresting autobiographical reflection on teaching. Similar to modern classics like Richard Rodriguez's *Hunger for Memory* and Keith Gilyard's *Voices of the Self*, Gose wraps incisive reflections about education into flesh and blood narratives. With a moving examination ranging from Thomas Paine to current opinion polls and his decades of teaching experience, Gose clearly demonstrates why education remains our nation's most worthwhile enterprise. A well-crafted piece of prose, *Common Sense: What It Means to Be a Teacher* bypasses the doom-and-gloom talking points surrounding the state of American education, opting instead for practical reasons why we can and should believe in teaching. (David G. Holmes, 2013 Langston Hughes Fellow, University of Kansas, and professor of English and rhetoric, Pepperdine University, Malibu, California)

What I observed about the first edition of Gose's *What It Means to be a Teacher* remains the same only more so with this second edition of *Common Sense*. The book keeps it real. Gose sees teaching not only as a profession but as a heuristic journey full of life's joys and pains, and he keeps you guessing about what you would have done in the author's shoes. This book is about getting to know a profession that is a lot more complicated than most people realize. Gose's stories always seem to startle, puzzle, and awe, and they give you "membership" into a mysterious profession full of the most important lessons on life. He adds his own commentary about his stories, what he thinks he might have learned, and how "common sense" tells us that schools are in a lot better shape than is commonly acknowledged. Of course, schools face great challenges, and it only seems right to sit down with a book and reflect on what it all means. (Charles Park, principal, Palos Verdes High School, Palos Verdes Estates, California)

NEA Today started its review of the first edition of *What It Means to Be a Teacher* with, "Finally a book about teaching that tells it like it is." Now, seven years later, Michael Gose takes the opportunity to reflect on the meaning of his parabolic stories in the context of public education today. He concludes that while teachers and public schools have earned a lot more appreciation, they are the recipients of greater demands and diminishing resources. Gose retains what he captured in his first edition: the essence of teaching is both an art and a science requiring not only the lifelong development of one's own heart and mind, but the commitment to nurturing the hearts and minds of one's students. By sharing his best and worst moments, which are characterized by exhilaration, frustration, embarrassment and triumph, Gose reveals the dynamic,

personalized nature of what it means to be a teacher. Ever the professor, Gose invites his readers to recall and reflect upon their personal adventures as student and educator, mentee and mentor, to create individual definitions of what it means to be a teacher. Aspiring, current and former educators—really anyone who seeks insight into the world of those called “teacher”—should have the opportunity to experience *Common Sense: What It Means to Be a Teacher*. (Lisa Kodama, learning and education policy director, Washington Education Association, center for education quality director, Washington Education Association)

About the Author

Michael D. Gose, Ph.D. has taught at the elementary, secondary, and university levels. He has been a professor at Pepperdine University, teaching curriculum and methods, film, and the Great Books Colloquium since 1980.

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“Finally a book about teaching that tells it like it is,” NEA Today said about Michael Gose’s first edition, *What It Means to Be a Teacher*. The second edition continues the stories that capture the meaning of teaching and now looks back with commentary on how those tales also work as parables. In the spirit of Thomas Paine, this second edition uses “Common Sense” to tell what is really going on with students, teachers, and schools. (Hint: the reality is actually a lot more optimistic than commonly portrayed in the media.)

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