



Teachers College Press
Teachers College, Columbia University

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New book by two seasoned social justice activists challenges educators to confront the taboos they face in their teaching.

Teaching the Taboo: Courage and Imagination in the Classroom

NEW YORK, NY, January 2011: Teachers College Press, the university press for Teachers College, Columbia University has just released a provocative and highly acclaimed collection of essays by **Rick Ayers** and **William Ayers**, two activists who have each dedicated their lives to teaching and the struggle to improve education for all children. In this volume, the Ayers brothers share classroom stories and struggles; they invite readers to question the basic assumptions and unexamined truths they hold about the purposes, aims, and potential of schooling, young children, and the profession of teaching. They argue that education should not be about tests, competition, and supporting the status quo but of opening doors, expanding minds, and handing power over to students as they engage in the world.

In the foreword to this powerful book, **Haki R. Madhubuti**, the renowned poet, essayist, and civil rights activist, writes, "If given the chance, this book can be a defining text not only for those in the profession of education, but also for parents and lay readers nationwide who are truly concerned about our children and our future." In an era of high-stakes testing and rigid curriculum standards, educators who want to encourage creativity and make their classrooms a haven of expression and change all too often wind up instilling compliance and stifling creative action. In ***Teaching the Taboo***, readers will find

encouragement in the first-hand accounts of teachers daring to step outside of established classroom guidelines to reclaim their power to teach. Together, the authors have crafted a passionate but grounded call to action that is essential reading for anyone looking to evolve as an educator.

Advance Praise for Teaching the Taboo:

“Drawing from a lifetime of deep thinking about education and courageous commitment to precious students, Rick and William Ayers have given us a marvelous book. Their devastating critique of the pervasive market models in education and their powerful defense of democratic forms of imagination in schools are so badly needed in our present-day crisis!” —**Cornel West**, Princeton University

“*Teaching the Taboo* is provocative, challenging, funny in places, wild but sensible enough to be useful, inspiring, and practical for educators who are working to negate the educational madness that is infecting the schools.” —**Herb Kohl**, author of 36 Children and Painting Chinese

“Like all good teachers, the Ayers brothers challenge us to enter and engage our deepest, darkest questions and concerns in the classroom. In the end, the best thing we can do as critical educators is to teach that which is TABOO!” —**David Stovall**, University of Illinois at Chicago

“Don't be mistaken—what counts as ‘taboo’ is often the very thing that must be addressed for change to occur, as brilliantly illustrated in this new book by Richard and William Ayers.” —**Kevin Kumashiro**, founding director of the Center for Anti-Oppressive Education and author of The Seduction of Common Sense

Rick Ayers is an adjunct professor in Teacher Education at University of San Francisco and Mills College and founder of the Communication Arts and Sciences small school at Berkeley High School. He is a regular education blog writer for Huffington Post.

William Ayers is a school reform activist, distinguished professor, and senior university scholar at the University of Illinois at Chicago. A graduate of the University of Michigan, the Bank Street College of Education, Bennington College, and Teachers College, Columbia University, Ayers has written extensively about social justice, democracy and education, the cultural contexts of schooling, and teaching as an essentially intellectual, ethical, and political enterprise. He is currently the vice-president of the curriculum division of the American Educational Research Association, and a member of the executive committee of the UIC Faculty Senate. He is the author of many acclaimed works on social justice. Find him at: <http://www.billayers.org/>

Teaching the Taboo: Courage and Imagination in the Classroom

Rick Ayers and William Ayers

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Rick Ayers and William Ayers are available for interviews upon request.

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