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editors: gene v glass gustavo e. fischman melissa cast-brede

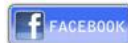
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Reviewed by Frederic Fovet
Vanguard Schools, Québec

Rapidly changing demographics and evolving socio-economic factors are now much more likely to be the deciding factors in the longevity or the brief career prospects of a teacher, than matters of pedagogy. As baby boomers retire, it is simply becoming more and more difficult to find and recruit teachers (Chevalier, McIntosh & Dolton, 2007). In such a context, it has become radically important not just to train teachers but to retain them within the profession (Schwartz & Wurtzel, 2007). If you add to this the profound overhaul inclusive education has represented for all teachers, and particularly the young and inexperienced, the tasks appears a near impossible leadership challenge (Wasserman, Gallegos & Ferdman, 2008). Teaching is increasingly becoming a juggling act between the fast paced acquisition of adapted pedagogical skills, the development of empathy and

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versatility with regards to learning and behaviour difficulties, and the discovery of the new cultures, belief, values brought to the class by a rapidly diversifying student population. Attracting new graduates to this arduous vocational jigsaw is close to unfeasible – retaining these sometimes wobbly recruits verges on the impossible.

The focus of this manual – written, one presumes, for administrative and management staff, but also colleagues – is therefore very topical and it sets itself squarely in an area which is likely to attract ever growing interest from researchers and writers during this decade.

The author is a literacy specialist still engaged in practice. As a result, this volume is tangibly based on praxis and jumps with ease from personal recollections to practical hands-on tips. Chapters are concise, clear and each address what presumably would be genuine questions from young teachers: “Observing the Coach”, and “Meeting as a Group”, etc. The basic premise and target issue are clear: “How could we provide new teachers from the start with a sense of belonging?” (p. 5). There are many ready-to-use grids and worksheets offered which may be exceedingly handy for teachers on first year assignments; all annexes and suggested forms may no doubt considerably reduce the time devoted to preparation and personal organization of tasks.

Advice and suggestions do tend to become overly specific as the volume unfolds and certain individual chapters and sections seem to address literacy issues specifically rather than teacher attrition generally with, chapter 3, “Administering and Analysing Assessments” being an unfortunately long example of this. Certain portions of the manual, although addressing what would most probably be genuinely pressing issues for a freshly qualified teacher, also tend to deviate towards pedagogical and curriculum advice (room arrangement, p. 53; or behaviour management, p. 55) rather than address the issues of leadership, attrition, on-job training and skill acquisition set out as the original concerns in the introduction, that of “reorganiz[ing] new-teacher induction” (p. 5). The pot-luck impression that ensues is characteristic of a perhaps overly ambitious agenda for a 130 page manual, and the result sadly is a handbook that is incomplete in content and haphazard in approach. One simply progressively loses any clear concept of the nature of the target

audience: administrators requiring guidance to nurture “a sense of belonging” or the teachers themselves?

This textbook also lacks some substance, as well as conceptual or theoretical depth, for any researcher looking for a praxis angle sufficiently analysed to be included in a literature review. “Keeping it Simple” appears as section heading within the manual (p. 77) and this has clearly been a key concern for the author throughout. Over simplification of a complex, multi-layered and rapidly changing issue - teacher attrition in developing countries - can however leave open dangerous pitfalls. The author often opts for a descriptive approach without ever considering theoretical models, methodological frameworks, or taking the time to situate her observations within the wider framework of educational theory. Some of the content (‘Sample welcome cards’ being a striking example of this pattern) strikes of over-simplicity and dangerously prosaic perception. This is, after all, a well researched field and it would have been helpful for some summary of current literature to be included for the perusal of school administrators or the professional mentors often alluded to in the volume. Issues such as collegiality (Jarzabkowski, 2003), remoteness of communities and isolation of teachers (Bush Tracks Research Collective, UNE, 2005), cultural dissonance with the student population (Patterson, Collins & Abbott, 2004; Hanusheck, Kain & Rivkin, 2004), lack of technological competence and training (Anderson, 1999) or lack of school leadership and support in ‘difficult’ schools (Feng, 2005; Bay, 2002) all, globally and currently, generate much thought and data on the topic of teacher attrition.

This book has the merit of being an eloquent indictment of teacher training literature by raising awareness that perhaps there is little time and space dedicated to making newly qualified teachers feel wanted and welcomed. The sink or swim mentality is still very much present and this seems a terrible waste of resources (Texas Centre for Educational Research, 2000). Would one, however, recommend *A Sense of Belonging* to a newly qualified teacher? While tempting for the sheer sake that it, at least, raises important issues, its overwhelming simplicity might leave the new recruit ill prepared for the reality of the mainstream class where, these days, students and colleagues may be from wildly varying cultures, and staff

and administration may be so overwhelmed by the demands of diversified inclusive teaching that they may have no time or resources to dedicate to the processes suggested here. Would one recommend it to an administrator or principal? While some of the tips offer a charming note of common sense, it runs the risk of making principals believe that a little superficial politeness and TLC might be sufficient to patch the serious issues that affect teacher attrition in their establishments. It will not sadly suffice.

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Editors

Gene V Glass

glass@edrev.info

Gustavo Fischman

fischman@edrev.info

Melissa Cast-Brede

cast-brede@edrev.info
