

BOOK REVIEW

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING TOGETHER: BUILDING A COLLABORATIVE CULTURE IN TEACHING PRACTICUM SUPERVISION

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This book is a collection of papers which resulted from a series of workshops in the Faculty of Education at the University of Hong Kong; workshops designed to bring about professional renewal and development in teacher educators. The papers in this collection are by teacher educators who supervise teaching practicum of student teachers. Ora Kwo has provided a useful background chapter which outlines, briefly, how views and practices regarding supervision have changed, and how attempts have been made to develop closer university - school ties. The focus is upon secondary pre-service teacher education.

Part one includes four chapters on learning with student teachers. Bob Adamson writes of his supervision experiences with a student teacher to illustrate that teacher educators can easily try to develop clones of themselves, without accepting that a great deal of diversity in student teachers' teaching approaches is a reality. It is too easy to stereotype. Margaret Taplin describes how she tried to get pre-service mathematics teachers to experiment with new or different ways of teaching the subject. She raises the interesting issue of how to do this in a non-threatening manner and relate it to course assessment; yet realises it is just a start in a complex process. Lo Mun-Ling and Lee Chi-Kiw describe an attempt to provide a more supportive and collaborative environment for student teachers as they try to overcome their anxieties in practicum teaching. Elizabeth Cheung and Benny Yung are 'relative newcomers' to teaching supervision. They got student teachers to keep journals of their teaching practice experiences, conducted individual interviews, and ran group-sharing workshops. They found what other research has uncovered, that there are numerous concerns, constraints, and problems for individuals. The value of this kind of research is that it can be taken further and eventually contribute to policy changes.

Part two has four chapters on dilemmas in supervision. Readers will be familiar with them. 1. What kind of negotiation should occur between supervisor and student teacher over lesson plans before any lesson? (Chapter 6 by Francis Lopez-Real). 2. Should a supervisor intervene in a student teacher's lesson, and if so, how and when? (Chapter 7 by Lo Mun-Ling). 3. How can a marginal or failing student teacher be 'turned around' into a passing one? (Chapter 8 by David Bunton). 4. How are tensions between school expectations and student teachers' enthusiasms for trying different methods reconciled? (Chapter 9 by Tse Shek-Kam). These chapters show a pleasing attempt by the authors to dig beneath the surface of the practicum to discover issues that can sometimes remain hidden or

ignored. Only by this revelation will inadequacies be addressed and opportunities to improve practicum be seized. They also provide raw material for the expressed aim of the book, that is, to help teacher educators improve their supervision and hence the practicum experiences for student teachers.

As Ora Kwo points out in the final chapter, the chapters provide insights that may now form the basis of further research and investigation. What is noticeable is that the experiences of this faculty can suggest avenues of follow-up for others in teacher education. The issues in the book are, of course, not new, and are familiar in the international literature. Nevertheless it is extremely useful to have another collection of studies from a particular educational context, in this case of the secondary school teaching experiences of student teachers and their supervisors. I look forward to seeing where the work goes from this point, for Ora Kwo has perceptively summarised possibilities for further theorising about the issues that have been uncovered in this useful collection of papers.

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