

BOOK REVIEW

Becoming an Effective Teacher: A Teaching Reference Book for Teachers, Teacher Educators and Student Teachers A Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) Support

FLORENCE KISIRKOI and MICHELLE D. CUDE

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The book *Becoming an effective teacher* by Kisirkoi and Cude (2021) is a good resource text written for pre-service and in-service teachers and teacher educators. Using a mix of theoretical and practical discourse, the authors of the book focus specifically on a key ingredient needed for effective teaching and learning in the 21st century, that is enabling teachers and teacher educators to conceptualise their classrooms in more student-centred ways. To dissect this very complex topic, the book is divided into three broad themes: i) The Teaching Profession, ii) Learner-centred Methods of Teaching, and iii) Towards Teacher Professional Development, with 16 chapters. The chapters presented under each theme provide a focus on different yet critical components of the themes. Through this approach both teachers and teacher educators are provided with a balanced discussion of how each component of teaching is connected such that the ultimate goal of becoming more prepared to address the changing needs of the 21st-century student is achieved through the application of student-centred teaching methods. At the end of each chapter questions are presented to prompt the reader to pause, review and reflect on the key issues addressed in the chapter. A useful list of references is presented at the end of each chapter. These features make it easy for teacher educators to integrate the content as reference material for courses being taught at the teachers' college level and for student-teachers' independent exploration of the content.

Under the first theme, entitled The Teaching Profession, there are three important chapters. The first chapter delineates the authors' position on the importance of teachers and the profession of teaching with a call for fair remuneration and greater levels of esteem for the profession owing to the heavy role played by teachers in shaping future generations. The chapter also presents the overarching purpose of the book and definitions are also presented at the end of the chapter to provide readers with a clear understanding of the key stakeholders involved in the process of teaching and learning at various levels in the local context. Chapter 2 focusses on defining teaching and the qualities of an effective teacher. The authors explore the concepts of what is entailed in teaching and the qualities of effective teachers in an integrated manner that illustrates the complex task of teaching and the importance of demonstrating effectiveness as a teacher regardless of the situation and circumstances. Chapter 3 outlines the key features of effective teacher education programmes aligned with providing



a better understanding of the critical role of the teacher educator to the student-teachers' preparation and success. In this chapter, the authors also consider the contentious issue of who has the right to play the role of supervisor. They contend that "those who do not prepare student teachers ...should not play the role of teaching practice supervisor and assessor. They have no moral right to do so" (p. 25). Chapter 3 ends with a focus on modelling student-centred practices in teacher preparation programmes supported by a case study with practical examples. The issues raised in these first three chapters have been cause for concern and debate in teacher education circles for decades and were appropriately broached for consideration and discussion as part of the theme.

The second theme explores the concept of Learner-centred Methods of Teaching coupled with active and experiential learning. The first chapter under theme two, Chapter 4, provides an overview of the learner-centred approach, active learning approach and experiential learning. Building on this broad understanding of effective approaches to teaching and learning, Chapter 5 addresses in a very practical manner, the issue of the lecture method, a staple in teacher preparation programmes that often fails to model learner-centred teaching. While the authors highlight the deficiencies of the lecture method, they do not disregard it as an important method of teaching, rather, they provide practical suggestions on how to improve the lecture method to make it more "responsive to students, more engaging and more relevant" (p. 39).

Chapters 6, 7 and 8 under this theme emphasise practical methods of teaching embedded in a learner-centred approach. These chapters focus on questioning, discussion and groupwork methods, respectively. The authors expound on the role of each of these methods in teaching, and the theoretical base guiding their development and use. The discussion of these methods is supported by concrete examples of activities that can be designed and implemented in the classroom to achieve more learner-centred teaching. Chapter 9 deals with experiential learning and introduces specific methods that can be used to support experiential learning: problem-based learning, simulations, roleplays, miming and dramatisation. In covering problem-based learning and role plays, useful examples of how they can be used in teaching are provided.

Chapter 10 speaks to the issue of assessment by providing various methods of assessment that can be applied for both formative and summative purposes. These methods are presented in support of the authors' view that teachers must be continuously gauging the extent that learners are grasping the concepts being taught. Some of the methods presented are quick and easy ways of checking students' progress, while others are grounded in providing teachers with a deeper understanding of assessment through the use of activities such as portfolios and performance-based tasks. The chapter also deals with designing good assessments through a focus on developing rubrics and test construction. The wide array of topics covered in this chapter make it a good starting point for teachers and teacher educators to begin to develop a good understanding of effective assessment practices.

Chapter 11 is focused on another critical component needed for teacher effectiveness, specifically, the use of teaching and learning resources as tools for facilitating active learner-centred classrooms. The chapter presents an overview of a variety of learning resources that can be used, guidelines for

identifying or developing them as well as possible applications in lesson delivery. Again, through these concrete examples, teacher educators and student-teachers alike are provided with clear illustrations of how to make their lessons more student-centred and effective. Although technology falls under the category of resources, the authors appropriately present technology resources as a broad heading in the latter segment of the chapter. The use of educational technology resources is presented as critical in facilitating and advancing students' learning. The authors provide much-needed guidance on how various technological resources can be integrated in the teaching and learning processes, and possible challenges that teachers may encounter as they attempt to integrate these resources in their teaching. By presenting not just the benefits but some of the possible challenges they communicate an acknowledgement that educational technology is not a panacea for achieving teaching effectiveness but, rather, a tool that must be integrated with careful thought and planning.

The final chapter under theme two is titled "How to be an effective teacher: A vision of learner-centred teaching in action". As the title suggests, in Chapter 12 the authors demonstrate how the different theories and methods discussed in the preceding chapters are connected to create active learner-centred effectiveness in the classroom. This is accomplished through a discussion of elements of effective teaching and examples of methods that can be used to engage learners and sustain their interest. This chapter provides case studies with real-life examples that focus on how to use different teaching strategies for learning-centred teaching. This chapter is also rich in opportunities for the reader to review and reflect through a series of questions presented at the end of different subtopics addressed in the chapter.

The third and final theme in this book is titled Towards Teacher Professionalism. Through a discussion of various topics in Chapters 13, 14 and 15, the authors seek to outline the steps involved in the process of becoming a professional teacher, ranging from activities and document preparation that are required for beginning teachers, to the roles of teacher educators in supporting teachers on their journey into teaching through microteaching and practicum exercises. The book concludes with a discussion of the importance of professional development for lifelong learning for teachers in Chapter 16. The authors address critical issues that neophyte teachers face as they enter the classroom

This contribution would be even greater if the authors were to make it available as an open textbook, thereby providing student-teachers, teachers and teacher educators the opportunity to customise this valuable resource for specific courses and contexts.

Reviewed by:

Dr Tashane Haynes-Brown is a lecturer in Teacher Education at The University of the West Indies, Jamaica. She serves as Coordinator for the Master's in Teacher Education Programme and Coordinator of Undergraduate Programmes in the School of Education. Email: tashane.haynesbrown@uwimona.edu.jm / tashane.haynesbrown@gmail.com

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