
International Forum
Vol. 19, No. 2
October 2016
pp. 139-142

BOOK REVIEW
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Developing Mentoring and Coaching Relationships in Early Care and Education: A Reflective Approach, by Marilyn Chu. Published by Pearson Education, Washington, DC, 2014 (216 pages).

The current century is marked with sudden changes that are affecting all fields of knowledge, including the field of education. Meeting the needs of the 21st century students is requiring teachers to adjust their teaching practices in order to help learners realize their dreams. They are limited, however, by little or lack of support that hinders them to carry out effectively this noble task of transforming the world through mentorship of the younger generations. This book guides teachers through mentoring and coaching strategies that lead to high work performance. The purpose of this book is to help “build a relationship with the mentee, and encourage[e] reflection on current practices in order to increase program quality, meet teaching standards, and promote positive outcomes for children” (Chu, 2014, p. viii).

The author of this book is an associate professor of early childhood education in Woodring College of education, Western Washington University, based in Bellingham, Washington. Her working experience and qualification gives credit to this interesting book. The review of this book is based on six main points, namely content coverage, clarity, structure, readability, relevance to the field and audience, and newness as suggested by Wa-Mbaleka (2014).

The 21st century education requires teachers to base their instructional practices on students’ background knowledge and interests. Teachers are expected to place little importance on traditional teaching methods which have been proved to turn students into passive participants, whereas the art of teaching involves teacher-and-student interaction. The shift from traditional practices to modern instructional methods must encourage cooperative learning.

To cope effectively with the new teaching environmental requirements and perform well their tasks, teachers need to be equipped with some specific professional skills. The author believes that teachers implement change effectively when they are mentored and coached by experts. Furthermore, the author emphasizes that no matter how long their experience is, teachers will

greatly impact their students and grow professionally only if they are mentored and if they coach one another. The author places special emphasis on early childhood education because it is the foundational age at which learning mental abilities are developed. The author argues that the knowledge acquired at this level affects the life time of the students.

The author defines the important terms for building the relationship-based professional development, the power of reflection during the discussion and the characteristics, skills, and competences for becoming an effective mentor. She indicates that mentors should be aware of the adult knowledge acquisition process which is impacted by cultural settings and diversity within the context where an individual grew up. When the mentorship innovation is undertaken, teamwork practices among teachers facilitate the acquisition of mentorship skills. The author argues that the mentoring process is an opportunity for mentors and teachers to share experiences. In this book, the author provides some sample items on which the mentor can base the discussion when sharing the experience with the mentee.

Compared with other books written in the same field as Chu's work, her book makes a difference as she combines mentoring and coaching. Pelan (2013) indicates that there is a little difference between the two terms because "coaching is for short time and mentoring is for long time. Coaching is about strategizing ways to handle situations; mentoring is about providing guidance" (para. 1). Chu's book combines the two concepts; which is an aspect that justifies this book's depth and meaningfulness in contrast with other books written on mentorship.

This book is actually addressed to all the teachers. "The mentoring process today is individualized to meet the needs of both emerging and experienced teachers as they encounter and reflect upon real world challenges in early childhood classrooms" (Chu, 2014 p.viii). From the viewpoint of other various authors, mentorship and coaching are only for the needs of the novice teachers. Yet, as argued in the current book, mentoring and coaching are beneficial for all teachers.

One of the unique features of this book is its emphasis on the importance of well-trained early childhood teachers. This is an important idea as Bruer (1999) indicates that at the age of 10, children learn faster, easier than any other stage of life. Children need qualified teachers to help them grow. The additional feature of this book is its newness. It is among the recent publications related to this topic which evidences the relevance and newness of its content.

This book is well organized and ideas are well integrated to fit its purpose. There is a fair division of sections into chapters and logical flow of ideas in respect of the learning principle—from simple to complex. The author of the book has enough working experience in early childhood education, which gives credit to the book. Regarding the language, the author used clear and simple

language which is an additional aspect that attracts the readers. The content fits with the title of the book and the summary that appears at the end synthesizes effectively and clearly the points detailed throughout the chapters. The wider range of the sources used by the author makes the content original and evidences the extensive study of the topic. The picture used by the author on the cover of the book conveys the content message of the book. Mentoring and coaching is a size that fits all teachers. The picture is about many hands joined together with different skin colors. The layout of the picture indicates that mentoring and coaching skills acquisition are a worldwide educational need.

This book is especially recommended to all educational practitioners without excluding other interested readers for the following reasons: (a) It shortly discusses the main ideas about the development of mentoring and coaching relationships in early care and education, which is a hot and debatable topic in educational career development; (b) it is well structured and well complemented with reflective questions, illustrative scenarios, and supported by useful tools for practical application of mentoring and coaching strategies; and (c) it is an updated book based on its literature reference list.

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