

Book title: The Art of Being a Brilliant NQT

Author: Gary Toward and Chris Henley

Publication date: 2015

The review

1. What is your overall impression of the book?

This book is a wonderfully, positive, insightful and sometimes amusing guide for NQTs, and answers many of the questions they might have as they enter the teaching profession. Toward and Henley, both experienced teachers themselves, are able seemingly to anticipate the biggest worries and concerns held by many NQTs – behaviour management, conversations with parents and career progression, to name but a few – and offer a positive insight into the way these can be approached and handled most successfully.

The book is incredibly accessible and can be dived into whenever you need it, depending on what your issue is. The chapter I have read in most depth so far is that on behaviour management as, naturally, it is my biggest concern at the beginning of my teaching career! I found the book a real source of positivity.

2. Who do you think would benefit most from reading the book? What will they learn?

This book is particularly useful to NQTs, across all subjects. The advice offered could be used by any new teacher in any subject. It is primarily aimed at secondary NQTS, though much of the advice would benefit primary school teachers too. Indeed, the book may also be useful for any teacher – I will certainly be keeping it to read again!

3. What did you think about the quality of the writing? Please consider the tone, structure and ideas. Does it suit the audience?

This book suits the audience wonderfully well – its tone is fairly informal, and its chapters are littered with anecdotes from the authors' own personal experiences. The various issues and questions discussed are set out into clear chapters, which makes it easy to find an answer to whatever your question is. The ideas are refreshing, insightful, and offer both quick and long-term solutions to a variety of problems NQTs may find themselves faced with.

4. Please discuss the research used to underpin the ideas. What evidence does the author use? Is it robust and up-to-date?

The ideas in this book come from the authors' personal experience which, in my opinion, is one of the best ways to gain knowledge of the teaching profession. The strategies offered in the behaviour

management chapter are all strategies which the authors have found work for them. Being published in 2015, the advice is up-to-date and relevant to the classroom today.

5. What did you learn from reading the book? What ideas/approaches/practice will you change or adopt as a result of reading this book?

This book has encouraged me to pay particular attention to the way I respond to the students in my classroom – it can be hard to remain positive and calm in front of a class of misbehaving Year 9 students! However, this book highlights the need for positivity and enthusiasm, and this is something I intend to keep in mind in future.

6. Could you share a quote from the book that particularly resonated with you?

“You become your self-image. So make it a good one. If you don’t feel particularly confident, act confident. [...] hopefully you won’t have to resort to faking it too often, but sometimes, faking it is okay.”

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