

Book title: The Art of Being a Brilliant Primary Teacher

Author: Andy Cope and Stuart Spendlow

Publication date: 2015

The review

1. What is your overall impression of the book?

Having not finished it yet, I'm thoroughly enjoying my read so far. The writers provide a great sense of realism in their insight into the career of a primary school teacher. At the moment, it has a flow which makes the book easy to read, which is exactly what a busy teacher needs at this time of the year. This book the authors' experiences, is packed full of creative tips, techniques and strategies for anyone currently teaching.

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

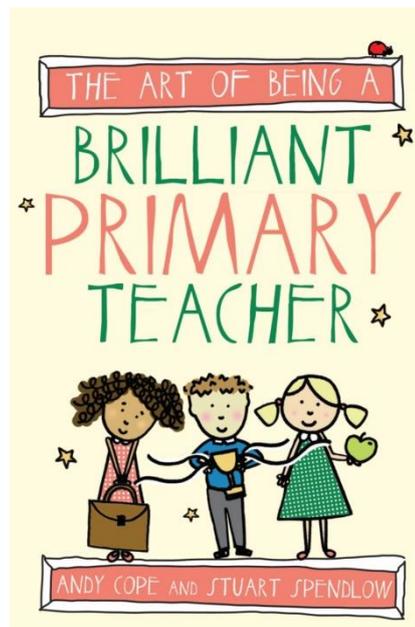
The writers will claim that it is a book which is a must-read for a wide range of teachers within any stage of their careers, however I believe this book will be most beneficial to anybody just starting it. Student teachers and NQT's tend to go through a rollercoaster of emotions with peaks and troughs varying from week to week. The information available to access for those starting their careers in teaching can be overwhelming and can range from being overly academic too incredibly informal, but this book provides a pleasant balance. Students, just like myself, and NQT's usually feel like we're alone in our field and are the only ones who are yet to form a coherent routine, so this book is useful in providing a sense calmness to your fears, as you read that the writers faced many of the same problems, and provide thought provoking reflections to ensure you are making the correct changes if necessary.

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

It's difficult to say whether the book suits it's audience since the writers claim that anybody can read this book, if at the start of their careers or at the twilight end. But when reading the book, it's clear that anybody can get enjoyment it due to it's personal style. It speaks to you in a way that feels like the writers are talking to you directly, face to face. Because they've seen everything teaching has to offer, the writer's pique the interests of the reader by providing quips which feel they belong exclusively to a staff room. The pictures which accompany the writing are frequent and look as if they've been drawn by primary school pupils, allowing the reader to resonate further with the personal style. I would say it's relevancy to any professional ambitions makes it a must-read for any primary school teacher.

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

Due to its personalised, informal style, the book does not contain many references to the source of its points and actually jokes about the process of referencing. This is due to the ideas and tips coming from the writers themselves, and streamlined to inform a wide range of readers. On the rare occasion, the writers will reference a psychologist or philosopher as the source of ideologies.



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?

What I've benefitted most from is the understanding that I'm not alone and that my reactions to teaching during my initial half term were justified and not exclusive. Teaching is a shared profession with many likeminded people and this book has allowed me to comprehend that further. One key feature of the book however, is that it focuses on positive psychology, and encourages the use of optimistic thinking within the workplace, something I will absolutely train myself to do.

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

'Stop treating change as a six-month thing (e.g. I'll get Ofsted sorted and then everything will calm down). It won't. You are a teacher. Change comes with the territory. Change is, in fact, what you are attempting to elicit in the children, so accept that change is inevitable and go with it rather than struggle against it (and, yes, we know this is going to be a very unpopular tip).'

Located within the top tips of chapter 1.