

Learning to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector

By Ewan Ingleby, Dawn Joyce and Sharon Powell

You often hear the Lifelong Learning sector called the Cinderella of education. The trouble with that description is that Prince Charming is not going to turn up and she is stuck with her father who was called, if you remember, Baron Hardup. Policy-making is continuously set and re-set by the Ugly Sisters and always includes: having to work at a number of educational levels; forming, dissolving and re-forming partnerships; taking the blame for the ills of society; finding money from nowhere; and generally leading 'an interesting life'.

Ingleby, Joyce and Powell have produced a sense-making book not only for trainees and tutors but also for anyone in the sector who is interested in professional learning. Visitors to this website will know that I value books that, as well as providing a useful mixture of explanation, activities, ideas and insight, also create a calm but critical space for professionals coping with the storms blown up by policy makers. Without books like this that take seriously the roles of professionals it is very easy to spend decades twisting and turning as the official weather vane swings one way and then another. An early reference in the text to Heraclitus who pointed out that we can never step into the same river twice neatly illustrates the nature of change with which the sector must cope; but whether it is wind or water that besets you this book provides solid support.

It is not the only book to have emerged recently from the productive interplay between F.E. and H.E. and there are more on the way. It follows the pattern of modules delivered at the University of Teeside for trainees qualifying to work in this sector. This means that the authors are careful to, for example, make sure that readers not only know about what might be regarded as semi-official orthodoxies such as multiple intelligence and learning styles but are also made fully aware of research which not only draws attention to their shortcomings but reinforces the sense that orthodoxies, whether derived from policy or theory, can and ought to be critiqued. The problem for the tutors of trainees in the sector is: do they play safe and, in order to ensure that everyone ticks the right boxes, de-problematise the process of qualifying to teach or do they add perspective and introduce trainees to theory and theorising?

Trainees and tutors using this book will not simply assemble evidence to match standards or demonstrate that they can remember some theory; they will be equipped to interrogate and bring meaning to both. For many, however, this will be dangerous and make professional learning an addiction. So, a question: will the authors now go on to tell us what a masters and a taught professional doctorate in Lifelong Learning look like? I look forward to their next book.

Look at <http://education.ingleby.continuumbooks.com>