

Book Review by Stephen Bigger.

Janet Draper and Jim O'Brien
Induction: Fostering Career Development at all Stages
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Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press, 2006.
Price: £13.50 ISBN 1-903765 – 55 – 2. vii + 88 pages.

This series is intended to illuminate the political and public debate on education from a Scottish perspective. This volume compares Scottish experience with practice elsewhere by combining the expertise of Jim O'Brien of Moray House, Edinburgh with Janet Draper from the University of Exeter. The volume draws heavily on Janet's Draper's empirical work in induction over two decades. The concept of induction is said to cover various career changes, both moving into new workplaces and institutions and also changing jobs in the same institution. This reviewer has experienced no quality induction in any career move, so there are clearly questions to be asked about the extent to which induction has the priority in our education systems that it should.

Induction has become a technical term in schools for the support given to newly qualified teachers in their first year of work, and the majority of the book focuses on this. There are other issues: crucially the induction of supply teachers which schools ought to plan carefully. Chapter 1, a scoping chapter, asks what induction is for. It sets itself a wide remit, and usefully distinguishes between directive coaching and facilitative support towards autonomy, claiming that the latter produces high innovation. Induction is thus seen as far more than 'showing the ropes' and socialising new teachers into the ways of the school. Chapter 2 explores teachers' work (and how the nature of this has changed over time) and professional development. The induction process is viewed ideally as collaborative between the mentor and the inductee, using interesting activities and reflective opportunities that makes it truly developmental: they recognise the need for staff development of mentors, and I would add, a possible opportunity for universities. Chapter 3 gives a survey of policy, starting in Scotland and extending to Hong Kong, England and a general section on 'elsewhere'. Scottish policy is described as 'directive coaching' (high accommodation); Hong Kong's as '*laissez faire*' – against the ideal of 'facilitative' (high innovation). Chapter 4 examines induction standards

and support structures. There is a natural emphasis on the Scottish Standards framework. It admits that a definition of mentor is hard, asserting only that the mentor is not a counsellor and not a buddy. A mentor needs to be seen as a significant role for which people are trained, specifically in observational skills and facilitative feedback, able to deal effectively with stretching motivated and able probationers, and supporting the under-confident. As to what is needed in an induction programme, they approve of McNally's (2002) threefold *information, nurture* and *critical reflection*, and suggest their own list of: legal, policy, community, behaviour management, conceptualisation of learning, curriculum and professionalism issues. Chapter 5 focuses on induction for experienced teachers, especially headteachers; a section on induction for supply teachers would also have been useful. The final chapter explores elements of a future better induction system. The value of induction for teacher retention is stressed, and that relative costs of induction and replacement should be taken into account in funding decisions. The nature of induction has to be empowering and facilitating, stimulating innovation, contribution and enthusiasm, rather than linked prescriptively, as at present, to compliance and anxiety. It has to recognise differences between probationers and be as helpful to potential failures as to high fliers. The desired outcome of induction (p.75), they imply, is "a self-evaluating and self-critical professional who can identify and pursue their own professional needs" rather than "an accommodating implementer of policy" (p.76).

This book is recommended reading to anyone concerned with induction and support of new teachers. It highlights the variability of practice on the ground and its marginalization as part of a teacher's workload, but nevertheless affirms its professional and financial importance. The writers warn (p.40) that creating high expectations of CPD entitlement in early career could lead to disappointment as high work-load kicks in and squeezes out possibilities. This is the experience of many, and it is up to us in universities to create opportunities for assessing reflective practice and development which draws academic study from the day job,

producing rigorous but time efficient processes which teachers can perceive as being helpful rather than a burden. Few university Registries are this user-friendly.

Reference

McNally, J (2002) Developments in teacher induction in Scotland and implications for the role of higher education, *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 28 (2): 149-164

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