

Book Reviews

What else can a teacher do? Review your career, reduce stress and gain control of your life

David Hodgson

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Assuming pedagogy to derive from the Greek for teaching, David Hodgson's book might have been better reviewed in a journal called 'Alternatives to Pedagogy' rather than this one. The text has an approachable and friendly feel, an early indication of which is demonstrated by a reference to the television show *QI*.

The assumption that the book might be about what added value a teacher might provide is quickly dispelled. This is a guide to alternative career and life choices for the disaffected. In a way it reads like a desperate internet search after a particularly arduous lesson with Year 10 students. The Crown House website succinctly describes it as a book for teachers 'stuck in a rut'. Given the amount of teachers leaving the profession this is a timely addition to the literature.

It would have been beneficial if the first part of the book had expanded somewhat on the skills which make a good teacher, since this might have helped crystallise choices about future directions. Part 3 of the book is overlong, describing 120 alternative careers. Moreover, some of those outlined do not seem obvious choices. Hence, although Learning Mentor might seem a natural step, the justification for including Dog Handler or Martial Arts Instructor is pretty thin. The formulaic nature of these pages, divided into 'Key Roles' and 'Still Interested' detracts from the strength of the arguments. Many teachers disillusioned with the profession in the UK find their career revived overseas, particularly in the Far East. This trend is not mentioned.

The comparison of job salaries might have been included later in the book, but is surely quite arbitrary and subject to change. It may also devalue the idea that some demoralised teachers may be more fulfilled in lower-paid or voluntary posts.

Many of the references to further reading are from careers journals and websites. The *Guardian* Education Section is also heavily used. It would have been beneficial if another text mentioned, Tim Brighouse's *How head teachers survive and thrive* (2007) had been more deeply mined as an exemplar of what traits a successful teacher might display.

As a starting point for anyone considering good pedagogic skills, the list on pages 62-3 could be a useful starting point for debate (communication, reflection and creativity), but these do not really

integrate with the choices offered in Part 3. The subtitle, promising to reduce stress, surely devalues the amount of stress felt by other choices listed, such as prison officer or paramedic.

At certain points the variation of fonts and somewhat simplistic diagrams gave the book a feeling of a publication which may have started life as a workshop or away-day. The resulting ideas, whilst interesting and thought provoking, do not really suit the format of this book.