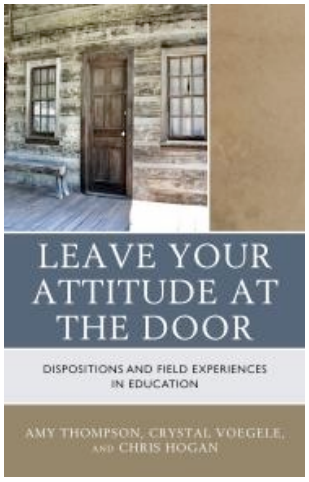


Leave Your Attitude at the Door: Dispositions and Field Experiences in Education

Thompson, Amy; Voegele, Crystal; and Hogan, Chris
Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2017

Book Review

Tags: faculty development | field education | formation

Reviewed by: Sunder John Boopalan, *Episcopal Divinity School*
Date Reviewed: September 13, 2017

If a title reflects a book's content, then this work is a particularly good case in point. The authors consistently refer to various real-life examples from the sphere of education in order to highlight the importance of attitudes and dispositions. While thus staying true to the book's title, the authors additionally share pieces of wisdom from the field informed by years of experience.

Education is a service industry. Educators and trainees are called to serve and not to be served. While this may seem like commonsense, the authors remind readers that commonsense is not all that common and the problem of entitlement is not as uncommon as one would like it to be (26). In this light, the authors make the case for the assessment of dispositions along with accompanying narratives that will address the issue in a professional and timely manner (38). While offering critical feedback, however, coordinators and instructors are simultaneously encouraged to keep in mind the need for reassurance, support, and empathy for students who are teacher candidates.

The book is filled with humor, allowing readers to let their guards down a little and see the need for inculcating professionalism in work settings. The authors narrate accounts of students in training who cite seemingly legitimate reasons for absences only to be caught – thanks to social media – going on cruises. The authors offer other cases, such as those who try to outmaneuver school buses pulling out of parking lots just to get ahead. Then, believe it or not, are those who speak inappropriately to students, including saying, "You don't like my jacket? Well, your momma liked it last night" (42).

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Working with future educators, the authors argue rightly, necessitates being proactive. While entitlement and lack of professionalism are matters of utmost concern when working with teacher candidates who are adults, these very adults also have particular lives that bring up questions of shelter, work-school balance, adequate food, parenting and other familial responsibilities. “Can you be proactive? Yes! Should you be proactive? Yes! Does it take time? Yes! Does it take work? Yes! Is it worth it? Absolutely!” (47). Through such series of questions and responses, the book presents a wealth of material in a readily accessible manner to teacher educators.

Educators are warned that perfectionism may come at the cost of unsustainable superficiality. Reminding educators that “we are they,” the authors note that “what we create together will ultimately serve our students, schools, and communities” (55). The emphasis on creating together means that authentic, professional, and healthy relationships and partnerships are acknowledged as being at the heart of a successful field education experience (55). Such relationships and partnerships need constant tending and care, much like a garden (54-55).

As readers make their way through the book, a realization soon emerges. Transcending the this-is-my-obligation attitude in order to come to a place where “we make promises and keep them” (59) is key. Commitment, talent, and care for the educational setting are tested by problems, dispositions, and attitudes (77). Anyone interested in navigating these realities would benefit from engaging this work.

https://www.wabashcenter.wabash.edu/resources/book_reviews/leave-your-attitude-at-the-door-dispositions-and-field-experiences-in-education/

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