

Can Neophytes grow into Professionals

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OUTLINE

1. Word definitions and synonyms
2. Neophytes and Professionals in Teaching
3. Can neophytes grow into professionals? If so, can we help them?
4. What is being done now, if anything?
5. My plea

Dictionary definition: Neophyte

1. a beginner,
2. a novice, a new convert;
3. a new participant in some activity,
4. a person new to a field or activity --

Synonyms of Neophyte

3. A skilled practitioner; an expert.
4. Someone who conforms to the standards of a profession: professional behaviour--

Synonyms of Professional

- ace,
- artist,
- authority,
- guru,
- master,
- old hand,
- virtuoso,
- wizard --

Neophytes and

- Amateur
- Beginner
- Bulimic learner
- 'Footsteps' follower
- Apprentice: what and how
- Knowledgeable
- Question asker

- More interested in 'learning'
- Team member / leader
- Stimulator
- Academic researcher
- Inspirer

How can neophytes grow into professionals?

- Seniority? Is it a natural process?
- Latest fad? New means GOOD? Panacea?
- High Tech Equipment? Computer literate?
- Training? Do you need a guru?
- Accountability? Is a contract required?
- Research? Problem solving or theorizing?
- Evaluation? Or is one's reputation enough?

Is seniority the answer?

- Two teachers with five years' teaching.
- Do they have the same experience?
- Teacher 1 totals 5 years' experience
- $1 + 1 + 1 + 1 + 1 = 5$

Wilhelm Viëtor (1886) 'Der Sprachunterricht muss umkehren' ('Language teaching must start afresh').

When I see THE new method, my reaction is what's next? For how long?

Is high tech the answer ?

- Laptop revolution
- Computer assisted teaching / learning
- Video-taped lessons
- Data show
- The Internet

*What if a small fuse blows?
When your good old chalkboard cannot get
that long-needed coat of paint?*

Is training the answer?

- Pre-service training;
- In-service training;
- Peer teaching;

Where there's none

- A D.I.Y approach based on previous experience of learner or observer.
- Isn't it time training met the individual needs of the learner?*

Is accountability the answer ?

- Schools are graded (just like students) according to results obtained by their students;
- Students take high-stakes standardized tests.

*Are we ready to accept outside standardized tests?
Are such tests available?
Is accountability fair to all people concerned?*

Is Teachers' accountability the answer?

Teachers could be held accountable for the knowledge of their subject;

- their personal commitment to hard work, care and enthusiasm;
- their attentiveness to students' needs, experience and levels of ability;

- students coming to school from homes that encourage learning and respect for learning?

Can I provide you with an R4 assembly line and expect you to produce Mercedes cars?

Can there be accountability without freedom of choice?

Is "publish or perish" the answer?

- Academic Research;
- Classroom Research;
- International Journals;
- Local Journals;
- Papers at Conferences.

But does research make them good models as teachers?

Is evaluation the answer?

*** WHO evaluates?**

- Self rating?
- Peers?
- Students?

- What is achieved by such visits?
- Demo classes that become the done thing to
- Teacher's conformity to the likes and dislikes of the regional inspector.

Unscheduled Pop-ins;

- For tenured teachers to be promoted.
- What is achieved by pop-in visits?
- Serve more an administrative than a pedagogical function.
- Tenured teachers will be promoted anyway, regardless of the evaluation of the regional inspector.

At the Ministry of Higher Education

"Here are your classes. Off you go. See you at the next staff meeting!!"

What is done at Sibawaih?

- We interview potential teachers;
- We test all skills + handwriting on board + reading skills;