Running Head: TEACH LIKE A CHAMPION

Teach Like a Champion: Book Study Review for Professional Growth

G. Nicole Magee

University of St. Thomas

Theresa Campos, Ed. D

February 15, 2016

*Teach Like a Champion* is a practical book with strategies that can be used immediately in the classroom. This is important because many teacher instructional books are more educational theory than practical classroom ideas. The simple breakdown of strategies is easily accessible to all levels of development in teaching practice. The main idea of the book is that great teaching can be learned and practiced. The author, Doug Lemov, has the ability to make perceptive observations of the case study teachers, and break down what they do in their classrooms into concrete techniques that all teachers can put into practice. The book also includes a DVD of video clips that clearly illustrate what these techniques look like.

Because this book is written at a basic level, I have found it to be more beneficial to the new teachers on my campus. Struggling teachers and teachers in need of classroom management also benefit from this book. For each technique, Lemov not only provides enough details so teachers can execute it, but he also includes a thorough explanation of the underlying principle behind it. Not every teacher on my campus will use every one of these techniques. I don’t believe that Lemov’s intent was to be rigid and formulaic. There is an art involved in educators making intuitive decisions about the application of techniques in their classrooms. Lemov has given the techniques names so that teachers campus wide can develop a common vocabulary to talk about these techniques as they relate to their own teaching. I think that this was wise because the strategies can be discussed in a variety of settings from faculty meetings to professional learning community meetings.

As the campus mentorship coordinator, I had the opportunity to observe new teachers implementing these strategies in their classrooms. In addition, all teachers on campus have been encouraged to use a few common strategies so that there is consistency across content areas to improve campus wide classroom management. The technique most consistently used on campus has been “cold call”. This technique involves calling on students who may or may not have raised their hand. The teachers poses a question, pauses, and then calls on a student. While this appears quite simplistic, I think it is one of the best strategies in the book. This technique allows teachers an opportunity to check for understanding because they can choose the student with whom they want to check for mastery. Instructional time is also maximized because the teacher does not waste time asking questions and then hoping that students will answer. More students are included in questioning. Some student have answers or ideas to share, but won’t engage for various reasons. We have implemented “cold call” cups. For every period, the teachers have students names written on individual popsicle sticks for cold calling students. We have seen a significant rise in student engagement since we started using this strategy.

This book is beneficial to teachers’ professional practice because it focuses on building a strong classroom culture. Teachers often set up many systems, but sometimes neglect to teach their students how to successfully perform all of the different strategies that they require. The techniques in this book provide opportunities for students to be full immersed in the learning environment. This leaves them less time to engage in behavior that teachers would categorize as disruptive. Once the professional learning community has established which techniques should be implemented, the entire campus can work together to establish high behavioral expectations in all classrooms. For anyone seeking to use this book on their campus as a professional development tool, I would advise giving teachers regular feedback on the implementation of the techniques.

References

Lemov, D. (2010). *Teach like a champion: 49 techniques that put students on the path to*

*college*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.