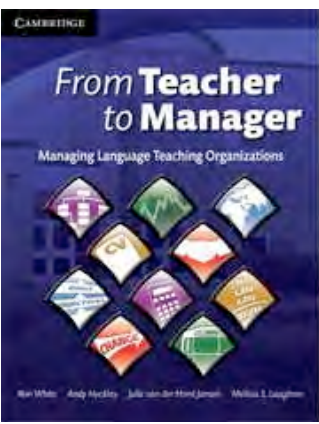


June 2010 – Volume 14, Number 1

From Teacher to Manager			
Authors:	Ron White, Andy Hockley, Julie van der Horst Jansen & Melissa Laughner (2008)		
Publisher:	Cambridge University Press		
Pages	ISBN	Price	
294pp.	978 0 521 709095	\$34.00 US	

From Teacher to Manager sets out to increase “awareness of the importance of management” (p. 1), thereby producing more competent managers. The ten chapters cover a range of topics likely to fall into a manager’s job description, everything from corporate cultures (Chapter 2) to managing change (Chapter 9). Very little prior knowledge is expected on the part of readers so each chapter defines and exemplifies key terms like *marketing mix*, *benchmarking*, *STEP*, *break-even analysis* and *continuing professional development*. There is no glossary but the index could be used to look up unfamiliar concepts. In each chapter, three features designed to make reading more active punctuate the discussion. First, vignettes or case studies apply the theory to real-world scenarios. Second, reflection boxes offer a brief opportunity to react to the text. Third, tasks are more developed activities to assess and apply your knowledge. When applicable, a model answer is provided for the tasks in an appendix.

There are two ways of reading this book. While most people will read it linearly from start to finish, it is, nevertheless, possible to pick out chapters of interest and concentrate on them. Given that most managers operate under severe time restraints, it might be efficient to read chapters as the relevant issues come up in professional life. For example, someone facing an issue with introducing a major change to the curriculum would first consult Chapter 8, *Academic Management*. The chapters are fairly self-

contained so this approach is viable. How and what you read will also depend on your background, for example, your management experience, if any, and the type of Language Teaching Organization or LTO you belong to. What the first chapter, *Managing in the LTO*, makes clear is that there is enormous diversity in the contexts within which managers work. The first task (p. 8) asks readers to analyze seven types of LTO, including a private language school, a state secondary school and the English department of a tertiary level institution. This chapter also covers the important issue of how teachers make the transition to management, pointing out that some skills are transferable, such as communication skills, while some have to be learned, such as making tenders. Those portions of the book that cover new skills are likely to be of the most value to fledgling managers.

A prime example of this is the two chapters on finance. Most managers have been language teachers and most language teachers have a background in the humanities. So, finance probably represents a scary topic for most. Chapter 6, *Strategic financial management*, basically goes through planning and decision making, resource allocation, and interpreting essential reporting documents such as profit & loss accounts and balance sheets. Even if managers do not have to produce these documents, they should be in a position to understand them. Chapter 8, *Operational financial management*, mainly revolves around budgets and cash flow. In both chapters, the tasks that involve number crunching, such as p. 194, making decisions on cost reduction, are essential to appreciating the issues. As the conclusion (p. 200) to this chapter states, "Financial management is often the most feared and dreaded part of any manager's position." Yet, it is impossible to escape the fact that money makes an LTO (not) go round. Finance is, therefore, an integral part of management education.

Concerning the book as whole, the vignettes / case studies are particularly engaging. For example, in chapter 9, *Managing change*, we have (p. 246) the case study of Rick, a new manager faced with turning things round in a school where staff morale is low and turnover consequently high. The solution offered is rather idealistic. For example, Rick's introduction of fortnightly staff meetings meets with a smooth approval—which seems at odds with the reluctance that many feel to extra administrative duties. That said, the situation itself is very realistic and even if you do not agree with Rick's approach, it will generate reflection. Indeed, many of these case studies could be used successfully in management workshops and seminars. The book is designed primarily for self-study but it could be exploited for in-house training, as well as linking into the very rare formal training courses for language teaching management.

It is clear that the move from teaching to management can be a daunting prospect, which makes the absence of literature and training in the field even more surprising. The literature on language teaching management is scant. The bibliography of *From Teacher to Manager* only refers to one other specialist book, White et al. (1991), and includes a number of references to unpublished or small circulation works, such as government reports, websites and proceedings of professional associations. This is not a criticism of the book; there is just so little out there to inform and guide managers of LTOS. It is surprising that the only other relevant book in this area, Impey and Underhill (1994), is

not mentioned, particularly as it employs a case study approach similar to the one here, but the fact remains that management issues have not featured highly on the agenda of research powering initiatives in language teaching. New(ish) managers, or even experienced managers looking for a fresh perspective or a stronger theoretical basis for what they do, would do well to read and learn from this book. Management is a massive subject so a single volume on the subject is necessarily very selective, but the way that *From Teacher to Manager* chooses and presents the most salient topics shows a real awareness of the target audience. If you have read White et al. (1991), be aware that this book is not a new version or update. The content of *From Teacher to Manager* is substantially different and it often approaches the subject from a different perspective. Whether you have drifted into management or whether the gradation has been calculated, *From Teacher to Manager* deserves a place in your busy office.

References

Impey, G. & Underhill, N. (1994). *ELT manager's handbook*. Australia: Macmillan Education.

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