

Teachers under the Microscope: A Review of Research on Teachers in a Post-Communist Region

Dana Hanesová

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This work gives vital insight into the teaching profession and post-communist society as a whole.

Teachers Under the Microscope: A Review of Research on Teachers in a Post-Communist Region by Dana Hanesová is compelling compilation of studies regarding a vital profession and the changes it has undergone as a result of political and ideological shifts.

Hanesová grew up in Czechoslovakia under socialism; she's also a seasoned educator. Thanks to her experiences, she is adept at addressing the nuances and complications of research surrounding distinct ideologies. In this book, she deftly leverages both her personal and professional knowledge to analyze the findings of many researchers. The result is a plainspoken academic text with deep insights.

As this work shows, much has changed in Central and Eastern Europe in the quarter-century since the fall of communism. This is certainly true, perhaps especially true, in the field of education. Hanesová begins by exploring the study of teachers before 1989, then branches into the more in-depth and systematic research since that time.

The shift in the quality of the research is due to the fact that in-depth inquiry was not possible under communism; democracy opened the door to changes in the profession. Hanesová collects findings from across the teaching profession, and also focuses on three particular themes of inquiry: the attractiveness of the profession and longevity of people within the profession; gender in the teaching profession; and teachers' day-to-day responsibilities and activities.

The findings that Hanesová highlights are revealing. For example, nearly a third of teachers chose their professions as children, many because of the high esteem in which their villages held teachers. The current "feminization" of the teaching profession is based on deep historical roots and perceptions of the respect and monetary compensation that teachers receive.

While much change and reinvigoration has been present in the teaching profession, before this work there's been little gathering of research about the changes compared to other parts of post-communist life. Hanesová brings together and synthesizes studies from other scholars to give an overview of the profession, its place in society, and the value of research itself as a discipline.

While Hanesová's main audience is certainly highly educated, she doesn't expect readers to have a grasp on her field—she begins by defining and exploring pedeutology (the study of teachers) before venturing into more specific findings. The book is packed with information, tables, and statistics, as well as comparisons across time periods and nations. Hanesová presents a wealth of information, pulling out common themes so educators can apply what they learn.

This volume is a professionally challenging and empowering read for teachers and administrators in Central and

Eastern Europe. It also offers an important perspective to education scholars around the world and those who study the results of communism.

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MELISSA WUSKE (September 21, 2016)

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