

Book Review

Awards and Recognition for Exceptional Teachers:
K-12 and Community College
by Hans A. Andrews
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Introduction

One of the most interesting problems to be solved in education today is how to acknowledge those who do the best work in teaching; an endeavor that is temporal and not universally defined. The qualities that comprise strong teaching have been presented in Danielson's (1996) *Enhancing Professional Practice: A Framework for Teaching* and more recently explored in Darling-Hammond's and Bransford's 2005 work, *Preparing Teachers for a Changing World*. A meta-analysis of research on the impact of teacher effectiveness on student learning by Seidel and Shavelson (2007) demonstrates clearly the complexity of the teaching act and all of the factors involved in the process.

In addition, teaching, while often personally rewarding, is not often acknowledged in public ways or through substantial financial rewards. In fact, in K-12 organizations, pay is not generally based on performance (defined as achievement changes). Discussions about "merit pay" systems have continued for decades and pay-for-performance programs in the United States were noted by Solomon and Podursky (2000) as early as 1969. But, the systems have had little success. The major arguments against "merit pay" have been summarized in Solomon and Podursky's paper *The Pros and Cons of Performance-Based Compensation*. The issues cited included the encouragement of competition rather than collabo-

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ration, difficulty in defining good teaching, and problems in using test scores as sole performance criteria, among others. In contrast, a paper by Milanowski (2003) describes a knowledge and skill-based pay system that rewards teachers who acquire and demonstrate skills linked with a performance based on public, detailed standards or practices.

In higher education, quality teaching is of great importance in teaching-oriented institutions, such as community colleges. The status of teaching's importance is clearly found in promotion and tenure criteria in these organizations. Organizations such as the National Center for Research to Improve Postsecondary Teaching, Learning, and Assessment have explored improvement of teaching and produced a number of documents to improve teaching. Nevertheless, acknowledgement of exceptional teaching performance beyond its use in promotion and tenure remains complicated by disciplinary views of pedagogy and is not clearly understood.

Part of the task of creating meaningful rewards is to understand the current state of affairs in rewarding and acknowledging quality teaching. *Awards and Recognition for Exceptional Teachers: K-12 and Community College* by Hans A. Andrews provides information on the current status of such rewards systems.

In the preface, Andrews states that the intent of the book is to highlight the importance of award and recognition programs to assist K-12 and community college leaders to find ways to reward excellent teachers and motivate others to improve their craft. He also indicates that he excluded universities because their reward systems are not usually based primarily on teaching quality. This reviewer found this to be an interesting exclusion because many public and private colleges and universities stress high quality teaching as a primary component of faculty reviews for promotion and tenure.

The book is organized into 11 chapters that provide much background and criteria for establishing these systems. It is loosely divided into three areas. In the first, three chapters present background on recognition systems. The author also discusses psychological reasons for establishing such reward systems. The second major section of the book contains seven chapters with extensive descriptions of rewards systems organized by national, state and local efforts, K-12 and community college settings, and international reward systems. The last section consists of one chapter in which the author reflects on the general status of award systems.

This review is organized into summaries of the chapters and followed by an overall discussion of the book's quality.

The Chapters

The first chapter acts as an introduction to the book and contains a summary of the reasons for creating and maintaining rewards systems. These include the needs to attract new educators and retain the ones we already have. The author provides the reader with numerous statistics regarding teacher recruitment needs. He then moves to a discussion of which institutions have rewards systems and some evidence of their effectiveness. Andrews also provides a discussion of characteristics of a quality rewards system. All of the information is heavily referenced. While a good foundation, the writing is a times choppy and does not flow well from topic-to-topic. Much of the information could be better presented in table form to allow the reader quick access to summaries of the information discussed. A key component of the chapter is the use of several theories such as Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, among others. These are only briefly explained. More detailed explanations of these theories in this chapter and in Chapter 2 would allow the book to more completely stand on its own.

Chapter 2 explores the rationale and philosophy that may underlie a rewards system. The author discusses merit pay in K-12 schools and the reasons why it has proven to be unworkable thus far. The information is helpful to the discussion, but in light of recent re-emergence of interest in this topic, more recent information about merit pay would have been helpful.

Andrews then goes on to provide an excellent discussion of components, philosophical issues and values to be considered when designing and installing a rewards system. The list is quite complete and could be used as a set of discussion points or a checklist for rewards systems. Interestingly, the values inherent in the system suggested by the author center on four values held by Governing Boards of K-12 institutions and community colleges. The Governing Board: 1. values quality in *every* classroom; 2. values the individual development needs of its teachers; 3. supports an awards and recognition program for outstanding teachers and administrative accomplishments; and 4. values a strong stand on placing those teachers evaluated as doing poorly, into a remediation process.

Chapter 3 explores, in more depth, the establishment of objectives and outcomes of rewards system. Andrews starts with a "laundry list" of objectives obtained from school administrators sorted into five categories: (1) Improvement in the quality of education; (2) promotion of a positive attitude with faculty and students; (3) improvement of the teaching environment for teachers; (4) improved public image of the teaching profession and schools; and (5) a caring attitude projected by

administrators to faculty. The chapter also contains outcomes from the perspective of award-winning teachers and the National School Board Association. In addition, Andrews also introduces evidence that teachers who have been certified by the National Board of Certificated Teachers produce higher achieving students. The later part of the chapter focuses on the needs of teachers and what motivates teachers' efforts. Finally, Andrews returns to the topic of merit pay. The chapter is full of objectives and outcomes from varying perspectives, but the information is difficult to combine. A table of these objectives and outcomes could help readers determine what they would choose as outcomes for their systems.

In Chapter 4, Andrews begins his presentation of national and state-level recognition programs for community college faculty. He opens the chapter with a discussion of the state of recognition programs in community colleges. Next, he presents a study conducted by the author and Erwin conducted in 2003. The study covers a number of topics explored from the perspectives of administrators and faculty leaders. These include the number, type, and financial amounts of awards. The discussion clearly shows lack of awards systems, especially for part time faculty. Immediately following the presentation of the study, the author begins a list of national and state awards. Each award includes a general description with a widely varying set of details. The list of programs is helpful, but the contents of each description are not standardized and make comparisons very difficult. A table of the various programs and their characteristics would have been quite helpful to the reader in thinking about and planning a new system.

Chapter 5 is a presentation of a study conducted by Andrews and Erwin (2003) on individual community college rewards system practices. The author described the method of study very well, but Andrews does not note until the end of the chapter that systems presented are a sample of colleges and not an exhaustive list. Furthermore, the overall methods are described at the end of the chapter in the summary, not in the beginning of the chapter, where they would have been more helpful.

The lists of practices and systems are presented alphabetically by state. Each college's system is briefly described. Again, the descriptions vary in completeness and contents. A standard presentation format and/or table would have helped in this discussion. Interestingly, with the exception of some brief comments at the beginning of the chapter, the author does not discuss the quality of the programs or overall findings from the study.

Chapter 6 continues the presentation of programs. This time the focus is on K-12 national award and recognition programs. The author begins the chapter with a discussion of the general characteristics of the

awards. In addition, Andrews provides a classification system of awards identified by the National School Board Association. These programs are presented in great detail, with many program origins, goals, award type, and selection formats listed. However, the format and contents vary from program-to-program. As with the other chapters listing awards, a table or common discussion format would have been helpful to this reviewer.

Within Chapter 7, Andrews presents K-12 award systems by state. He provides an interesting discussion of his approach to locating award system information on state web sites. However, as with the other chapters listing programs, standard format and contents and a table or chart for quick comparisons would have been helpful.

Chapter 8 presents the K-12 awards programs at the individual school level. The author provides little overall discussion of what he found, but does caution the reader that the list is not exhaustive. Andrews does not make comments on the nature of programs found. Again, the program descriptions are varied in detail with no common format or table to aid in comparison or analysis.

Chapters 9 and 10 contain presentations of Canadian and other international award programs. Each chapter contains a very brief introduction to the listings and a short summary of the award systems presented. As with Chapters 4 through 8, the discussions vary in length and depth with no consistent contents. Tables or charts of program characteristics would have been quite helpful.

In Chapter 11, Andrews briefly reflects on the book contents and the nature of the award programs discussed. Because it contains an overall summary, this chapter might have been more effective if it had been placed at the beginning of the book. Instead of this chapter this reviewer would have liked to have seen a final chapter that contained more recommendations for the design and installation of award systems based on the nature of the award systems found.

Overall Summary

In reflecting on the overall impact of the book, I returned to the author's initially stated purposes for writing the book. In the preface, Andrews writes, "It is my intent to highlight the importance of award and recognition programs in the quest of assisting many more K-12 officials and community college leaders to find ways to reward outstanding teachers and motivate other teachers" (preface).

Andrews did highlight many programs, but the discussion of importance of reward systems was not as strong. While presenting information on what leaders want and some literature on key features, this reviewer

looked for more discussion of motivation theories by Hertzberg, Honneth, and Maslow to set the context for the need for such systems. In addition, the author could have discussed more completely the vital components needed in effective systems and used some of the systems he found as examples illustrating these components.

The greatest strength of the book is in the listing of programs. These were organized by type of institution or organization and location. They clearly show the breadth of systems design and types of rewards. In most cases, the author presented a brief overview of how the listings were found and some comments on the nature of the groups of systems. The chapters ended with summaries of the listings. This reviewer would have liked to have seen the summaries featured more prominently and earlier in each chapter. Furthermore, the many and varied details of the systems presented by the author made overall comparisons very difficult. A series of tables or charts with key program features would have helped with this process.

If the readers of this book are to use the information for designing awards systems, I would make two recommendations. First, this book can be used as an “orientation” to the field of rewards systems. However, in designing these systems, the readers will need to think carefully about what constitutes strong systems and use the book as a source of examples. Certainly, the listing of sources for system information found at the end of the book could be of great assistance in this process.

Secondly, leaders of organizations must consider information not strongly emphasized in this book. That information includes more of what teachers and instructors need and want in the way of rewards. Ironically, Andrews notes in Chapter 1 through his findings, systems should be supported by faculty, faculty governance groups, and faculty unions.

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