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First Days of School  
Section E

Wong’s final chapter of The First Days of School can be summarized as some of his forward-looking advice to teachers. He makes the argument for the importance of continuing education of teachers. As professionals, we are never “finished” learning. What a joy! As a professional, Wong argues, we should constantly be striving to better ourselves through training, education and an ongoing commitment to the highest quality of teaching we can strive for.

He presents the distinction between teachers that are moving ahead and those that are stagnating by showing the two opposing types of teachers that he labels Leaders and Workers. He claims that workers are focused on the here and now. They only consider time and money while Leaders are not concerned with such trivial aspects of the role of a teacher, but their attention is on that of the *role* of a teacher. They do not clock in and clock out to get a paycheck. Leaders arrive to educate pupils, time and money are of secondary concern. I agree with his outlook that teachers need to be always bettering themselves and not look at teaching as a way to earn a paycheck. Too often I’ve encountered teachers that are looking to get by with as little as possible; these teachers have either lost their passion for their profession, or they lacked that passion from day one.

Some of Wong’s ideas are correct, but I believe his wording and assumptions may be a little off base. Some of his assumptions are sweeping generalizations and not always so factual. The previous sections of his books were a little more concrete and easy to apply, but this last section is a bit over-reaching. His advice for teachers to better themselves and shoot the moon are great, but he then goes on to fill page after page trying to give a pep talk or sales pitch. Some of this he could have left out.

I do wish he had made a list of the largest content-specific teacher’s organizations for various fields. This would be one question I walked away with. How do I find those particular organizations and how do I determine the “best”?