

P R O F E S S I O N A L L E A R N I N G

Growing as a Teacher

Goals and Pathways of Ongoing Teacher Learning

Clive Beck and Clare Kosnik

SensePublishers

Growing as a Teacher

Professional Learning
Volume 14

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Rationale:

This series purposely sets out to illustrate a range of approaches to Professional Learning and to highlight the importance of teachers and teacher educators taking the lead in reframing and responding to their practice, not just to illuminate the field but to foster genuine educational change.

Audience:

The series will be of interest to teachers, teacher educators and others in fields of professional practice as the context and practice of the pedagogue is the prime focus of such work. Professional Learning is closely aligned to much of the ideas associated with reflective practice, action research, practitioner inquiry and teacher as researcher.

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and

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To the teachers who participated in our study, welcoming us into their classrooms year after year, generously giving time for interviews, and offering thoughtful comments about teaching and their lives as teachers. And to our research team, for their unfailing commitment to the project, their warmth and sensitivity in interacting with the teachers, their invaluable input and guidance, their sense of humor and camaraderie, and their willingness to learn alongside us.

This is an excellent book. Written in a clear, lively style it draws on a wealth of experience and research that has tracked teachers for up to ten years to share powerful ideas about professional growth. It has heaps of ideas and insights that will excite anyone interested and involved in teachers' personal and professional development, whether formally or informally. Inspirational!

Dr. Sara Bubb, Institute of Education, University of London

This book makes a powerful case for taking teachers' professional development seriously. It brings us the voices of beginning teachers as they deepen their professional knowledge over time and makes clear the depth of commitment they bring to the job.

Professor Gemma Moss, Institute of Education, University of London

Some of us have been writing – somewhat desperately – on these ideas for years. Beck and Kosnik have given us strong evidence that the ideas are effective in practice. I hope this persuasive and beautifully written book will be widely read.

Nel Noddings, Lee Jacks Professor of Education Emerita, Stanford University

This book is based on high quality education research that really counts, and we can't say that very often. Education is now centre stage in many countries, and finally the debate is pointing towards the absolute centrality of teaching and the role of training and ongoing professional learning. This book is sorely needed.

Professor Keith Punch, University of Western Australia

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PARTICIPANT LIST, AUGUST 2012

Note: Remarkably, of the original 45 participants in our longitudinal study, 44 are still teaching, and the one who left did so for lack of a permanent position (she remained in the study until 2012). Three left the study for unspecified reasons, but are still teaching. Nearly all the teachers are in highly diverse urban schools, mostly in low income neighborhoods. When this book was written, Cohort 1 had been teaching for 8 years and Cohort 2 for 5 years.

<i>Pseudonym</i>	<i>Cohort</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Anita (case study in Chapter 6)	1	Has taught in two different schools – a high needs one for two years and an affluent one since then – in grade 4 or 5 or both. She is interested in environmental issues and would like to teach at an “eco-school.”
Anna	1	Has taught at 3 different schools and in several elementary grades, all in low income areas. She took a full-year maternity leave. For two years, she has been involved in a research project in her group of schools.
Candice	1	Taught for 6 years in lower elementary, then in her seventh year became a music and arts teacher for her school. She has taken a number of courses recently in music and arts education.
Carrie (case study in Chapter 4)	1	Has a master’s degree in science and worked in a medical lab for 8 years before becoming a teacher. She taught grade 2 the first year and then middle school focusing on special ed and science; she is now an assistant principal.
Darren	2	Teaching was a second career for Darren after 20 years in business. He has had many long-term occasional contracts but never a permanent contract.
David	1	Taught middle school for 3 years at the school where he did all three student teaching placements. He then taught secondary special education and was an administrator in this field. He is now an assistant principal.
Deirdre	2	Taught on a letter of permission before doing her teacher certification. She is very focused on working with special education children, especially in high poverty areas. She uses both Spanish and English in her teaching.

(Continued)

PARTICIPANT LIST, AUGUST 2012

(Continued)

<i>Pseudonym</i>	<i>Cohort</i>	<i>Notes</i>
John	1	Worked in government for a number of years before becoming a teacher. He has taught a full range of elementary grades.
Dina	2	Has taught elementary for five years – each year in a different school – but doesn't yet have a full-time contract. Her enthusiasm remains high.
Felicity	1	Has taught in the same school for 8 years, ranging in grades from 2 to 5. She has become a school leader for her division (grades 4-6) and enjoys this role.
Gail	2	Taught in an independent school in a high socioeconomic bracket for 3 years. She then moved to the public system and enjoys that setting more.
Heather	1	No longer in the study, but still teaching.
Jeannie (case study in Chapter 5)	1	Has taught for 8 years in a progressive inner city school at the lower elementary level. She has helped organize PD for her school in literacy, and has been involved in PD focused on culturally responsive teaching.
Jessica	2	Trained specifically for urban teaching. She has taught both primary and middle school in two different schools, in very diverse and low income areas. She integrates the arts into her teaching and serves as a lead teacher.
Jill	2	Has taught at elementary and middle school levels in two different schools, both in semi-rural communities. She has a passion for integrating technology into teaching.
Jody	1	Was an engineer for a number of years before getting her teacher certification, and has three children of her own. She has taught elementary and middle school in different districts, focusing on special education.
Karen	1	Coming from a background in social work, she has taught both special education and lower elementary. She has one child of her own and took maternity leave for a full year.
Kelly	2	Has taught middle school since she began. She took a one year leave of absence (in her third year) to teach at an international school in Brussels.
Kira	2	Has taught in three different school districts at the lower elementary level but still doesn't have a permanent position. She wants to continue in teaching while also starting a family and pursuing a doctorate.

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<i>Pseudonym</i>	<i>Cohort</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Kendra	2	Has taught middle school in three schools in the same school district. In addition to her own class, she teaches health, science, and dance to other grade 7 classes.
Lara	2	Has taught grades 5 and 6 in a private religious school since she began, and is involved in a project to introduce laptops into the school. She recently had a baby and will be on maternity leave for a year.
Laura	2	Has been at the same school for five years. She taught French immersion for three years and then physical education on rotary for two years. She now plans to return to the classroom to implement a laptop program for which she and two other teachers received a grant.
Liane	1	No longer in the study, but still teaching.
Linda	2	Has taught kindergarten from the beginning at the same school. The school has a strong partnership with a local university which provides extensive professional development for teachers.
Louise	2	Taught high school English for four years and then moved to a middle school, still in the same high needs district. She has taken a number of part-time courses that will allow her to work at the community college level.
Lucy	2	Taught middle school for four years and then became a consultant for the school district. She would like to become a school administrator eventually, but first wants to return to regular teaching which she enjoys a lot.
Margaret	2	Has taught in the elementary grades in the same school for her career. She has taken two maternity leaves and has two children of her own. She is considering moving to a private school.
Maria	1	Trained for media and journalism before turning to teaching. Has taught a number of grades ranging from 2 to 5 in a very high needs school. For her ninth year she will transfer to another school.
Marisa (case study in Chapter 1)	1	Has taught in a very high needs school, from kindergarten to fifth grade. She has taken two full year maternity leaves and has two children of her own.

(Continued)

PARTICIPANT LIST, AUGUST 2012

(Continued)

<i>Pseudonym</i>	<i>Cohort</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Mary	2	Has taught in several relatively affluent schools in lower elementary. At her current school, she is a member of the school improvement committee and will become the chairperson for the lower elementary division.
Mike	2	Has taught kindergarten over the five years at a relatively affluent school. As he has grown in experience he has helped in mentoring new teachers at his school.
Miranda	2	Taught mainly in grades 4 and 5 for five years at the same semi-rural school. She integrates digital technology extensively into her teaching. In her sixth year she moved to a different school and then went on maternity leave.
Nancy	1	Taught in a private school her first year and then moved to the public system. She has always taught at the middle school level, with an emphasis on technology and the arts. She took two years of maternity leave.
Natalie	2	No longer in the study, but still teaching.
Nina (case study in Chapter 8)	1	Before becoming a teacher in her early forties, she did master's and doctoral work in science and had three children of her own. She has taught in the same high needs urban school, mainly in lower elementary.
Nora	2	Taught high school English and then was declared redundant. She was not able to secure another teaching position and is now working in a computer start-up firm.
Paul (case study in Chapter 7)	1	Was an architect for eight years before becoming certified as a teacher. He taught grade 5 for two years and special education for one, in a very high needs school. He then took parental leave for two years, and on his return was placed in a relatively affluent school. He wants to move back to a poorer school.
Rachel	2	Taught French immersion at the upper elementary level at the same school for four years. She then took a maternity leave for a year, and is now teaching kindergarten at another school.
Sandra	2	Has taught in a private school for five years. In her first two years she was part-time and temporary; in year 3 she became permanent but in an assisting role; and in year 4 she taught phys ed on rotary. In her fifth year she got her own class (third grade) for the first time.

(Continued)

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<i>Pseudonym</i>	<i>Cohort</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Serena (case study in Chapter 3)	1	Taught special ed for two years in a high needs school, then moved to an affluent public school where she taught lower elementary for four years. In year 7 she was a math coach for her school district. She then went on maternity leave, planning to return to regular teaching in year 9.
Sophia	1	Worked in advertising for several years prior to becoming a teacher. She taught upper elementary for six years and kindergarten for two, all at the same school. By her ninth year she had taken two maternity leaves.
Tanya (case study in Chapter 2)	1	Has taught grades 1, 2, 3, and 4, initially in an affluent school but since then in a high needs school with a transient population. She is enrolled in a PhD program, has been involved in a research project on teachers, and has presented at international conferences.
Vera	1	Was the only grade 1 teacher at her first school, then in her second year moved to a school where several grade 1 teachers worked closely together. In her seventh year she became a special education resource teacher at the same school, and in her eighth year had a regular grade 3.
Wanda	1	Was in business for 20 years before becoming a teacher. She taught several grades in different schools, but didn't get tenure. After not teaching at all for two years, she has found a half-time position for year 10!
Yvonne	2	Has taught middle elementary at three schools: two extremely high needs urban public schools and, currently, an affluent private school. She has two pre-teen children.