

Editorial

What might professional development look like?

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It is with great pleasure that I welcome you, the reader, to this edition of *Teacher Learning and Professional Development*. As I mentioned in my inaugural editorial, the purpose of this journal is to provide a forum for increasing the scope with which we in the academy tend to talk about teacher learning, professional development, and teacher education. Due to time constraints imposed on me by new roles at the University of Cambridge, I will be focused on producing one issue of this journal per year for the foreseeable future.

This volume of the journal brings together a variety of conceptualisations of professional development, both for K-12 teachers and new teacher educators. Professional development is a good example of one of those ideas for which it is easy to generate shallow consensus: It is difficult to find someone who explicitly rejects the need for more high-quality professional development opportunities, but it is also difficult for those unfamiliar with the vast literature to come to a meaningful decision about what to do next. How else might we explain the preponderance of “one-off,” day-long workshops with dutiful educationalists staring at a PowerPoint from a distance and, occasionally, taking a moment to “quickly” discuss things with the person sitting next to them? First as a teacher and then later as an academic, I often felt/feel that one of the biggest challenges to professional development design is fear; the fear to let those engaged in the process take charge of their own learning. It is as if those who decide professional development must be undertaken are afraid of what might happen if those involved, both the ‘facilitators’ and those in attendance, are left to their own devices. Professional trust goes a long way, in my view, and yet sadly their seems to be an increasing paucity of trust in professionals.

I entreat the reader to consider these remarks alongside the more general question of “What might professional development look like?” as they read the articles in this volume. Britton and Sivia begin the issue by providing a model of professional development for practising teachers grounded in four orientations: reflective practice, inquiry-as-stance, teacher learning communities, and three ways forward. In so doing, they offer a “kaleidoscope of orientations” that encouraged individual teachers to create their own individualised plans for learning within a broader framework. Hill and Seitz argue for an integrated approach to teacher education and professional development, particularly within the context of two teacher educators interested in carefully documenting and analysing their collaboration. Interestingly, they use a co-constructed integrative assignment as a touchstone for considering their practices and challenging their assumptions. Culver, Kraft, and Movall share their findings within the context a large-scale, multi-phase, multi-year, technology-focused approach to professional development in a large school district using the models of

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community of practice and of community of practice and innovation. One important finding from their work is the creation of “a space for the social network and long-term collaboration between educators,” both in terms of the depth of knowledge gained by participants and the kinds of interactions they were able to have with their peers. Finally, Schmid, Schares, Alborn-Yilek, and Huckstadt report on their meetings as relatively new academics who come from long and varied careers in education. Their regular meetings to share stories of the sources of their identities as teacher educators shed some light on the challenges and opportunities faced by those in career transition, in addition to highlighting the ways in which stories can shape a shared language for talking about teaching future teachers.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue of *Teacher Learning and Professional Development*.

Respectfully yours,

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