

2003

Relationship between teacher learning and school culture

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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHER LEARNING AND SCHOOL CULTURE

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree

MASTER OF EDUCATION (HONS)

from

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

by

WENDY BEAN

Faculty of Education

2003

CERTIFICATION

I, Wendy M. Bean, declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Masters of Education (Hons), in the Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

Wendy M. Bean

October 2, 2003

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study was initially made possible through a SPIRT grant involving a partnership between Catholic Schools Office Broken Bay and the University of Wollongong. This grant provided me with a wonderful opportunity for which I am grateful. I would like to thank everyone from the Catholic Schools Office who provided his or her professional assistance, support and encouragement throughout the study.

Particular thanks must go to the teachers and principals from the research schools who cannot be named because of their request to remain anonymous. However, I wish to acknowledge their generosity in inviting me into their schools and classrooms, their trust and most importantly their input.

In addition I would like to give my thanks to my supervisors Dr Jan Turbill and Associate Professor Brian Cambourne for giving their expert guidance, knowledge and time throughout the study. Both were encouraging and made the project a most enjoyable experience.

Finally thanks to all my family who have always supported me in everything that I have done in many different ways. In particular I would like to thank my mother and father for their belief in me throughout the entire project. Thank you for all your encouragement and support.

ABSTRACT

On school culture and teacher learning...

It is a culture with very high expectations from both parents and staff. Where everyone has the belief everyone will achieve ... with this principal the expectations on us are higher now. The accountability is more succinct. It has always been a culture where the staff agrees on the same sort of philosophy. When we talk about how children learn to read etc there is never much disagreement. When there is some disagreement it leads to discussion. I have worked harder here than anywhere but it is all for good. Everything is improving, my teaching and the students' learning.

Teacher School A

Professional development and teacher learning have been areas of great interest for many years. Similarly, school culture has been the subject of many studies.

This research aimed to bring together the information available on school culture and teacher learning and to examine the relationships between these two areas. Specifically it aimed to develop a grounded theory which explained the role that school culture plays in teacher learning.

The study was set within the qualitative research paradigm and involved focused observation, recording, analysis and checking for reliability through the use of credible measures. The research revealed the complex relationships between professional development, teacher learning and school culture.

The findings of this study indicated that the choice of professional development activity, the actual processes and structures within that chosen activity, teacher attributes, that is, attitudes to learning, and the school culture all have a significant impact on the teacher learning that takes place. Further, the grounded theory showed how the school culture could be observed through the lenses of the school community, values and beliefs, processes in place and conditions.

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