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A professional learning partnership (PLP): connecting pre-service and practicing teachers in a technology supported environment

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By

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Abstract

There are concerns about the adequate preparation of pre-service teachers, and the ongoing professional development of teachers in our schools, in relation to the appropriate use of information and communications technologies in the classroom.

The current professional development for practicing teachers and pre-service teachers is generally inadequate, often being in short, unrelated doses, and there is an overlap or duplication of many of these experiences. Both groups need to bridge the various gaps that are created during the preparation and as part of the ongoing professional experience that occurs in schools. These gaps relate to the changing of systems and the various expectations of the structures teachers move into.

This study investigates the design and impact of a “professional learning partnership” (PLP), that was established between pre-service teachers and practicing teachers in our schools. Within the bounds of an established one year teacher education program a small cohort of practicing teachers acted as “online mentors” for pre-service teachers, who, with minimal classroom experience, were challenged with the norms of classroom practice on their school practicums.

Information and communications technologies were used as the catalyst for discussion and set task analysis. A technology-supported environment was created online that linked these evolving groups and allowed both expected and unexpected interactions to occur. The analysis of these interactions has led to a set of recommendations that will help advise key players and teacher preparation institutions who engage in future implementations of similar partnerships. In the current context of determining teaching standards such a learning partnership will also inform the guidelines that may be necessary to allow a teacher’s career to be supported as a professional development continuum.
Declaration

I, Ian W. Olney, declare that this thesis, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor Of Education, in the Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. This document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

Ian W. Olney

January 2007
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Glossary of Terms

CEO - Catholic Education Office
GDE - Graduate Diploma in Education
DET - Department of Education and Training
DETYA - Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs – Commonwealth of Australia.
ICT - Information and Communication Technologies
PST - pre-service teachers
PT - practicing teachers
TILT - Technology in Learning and Teaching

Key of Icons Associated with Terms

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