From a personal theory to a grounded theory of staff development

Jan Turbill
University of Wollongong, jturbill@uow.edu.au

Follow this and additional works at: https://ro.uow.edu.au/theses

Recommended Citation
NOTE

This online version of the thesis may have different page formatting and pagination from the paper copy held in the University of Wollongong Library.

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

COPYRIGHT WARNING

You may print or download ONE copy of this document for the purpose of your own research or study. The University does not authorise you to copy, communicate or otherwise make available electronically to any other person any copyright material contained on this site. You are reminded of the following:

Copyright owners are entitled to take legal action against persons who infringe their copyright. A reproduction of material that is protected by copyright may be a copyright infringement. A court may impose penalties and award damages in relation to offences and infringements relating to copyright material. Higher penalties may apply, and higher damages may be awarded, for offences and infringements involving the conversion of material into digital or electronic form.
FROM A PERSONAL THEORY TO A GROUNDED THEORY
OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT

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

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

from

THE UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

by

JANICE BETINA TURBILL
MEd (Sydney), BA (Macquarie)

FACULTY OF EDUCATION
1993
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As with most studies of this magnitude there are many people who help to make it all possible. In this study these people span two continents. First in the United States of America, the administrators, teachers and children in the school district of Marcus Whitman, in upper New York accepted me as a friend and a colleague as well as a researcher. Their support and willingness to give so much of themselves I will always value highly. It is my hope that my work with them and the outcomes of this study have supported and will continue to support them as they work towards their vision for effective literacy education. In particular, I want to thank Jackie Metz, Gail Langton and Jack McCabe for their faith in a dream and their continued support in realising that dream.

Back on my side of the Pacific, I received a great deal of support from colleagues and fellow students; Bridgit Barton, Phil Fitzsimmons, Lois Leitch, Kylie Pickford and Rosalie Nott. Thanks guys.

I also wish to acknowledge the support of the Women’s Academic Committee, within the University of Wollongong. The financial support gained through the Women’s Academic Scholarships enabled me to have some valuable time for the final writing of the thesis.

To my friends Andrea Butler and Brian Cambourne, I say ‘thanks’. Andrea’s faith in my ability ‘to just do it’ and Brian’s thoughtful, sensitive and expert guidance as my supervisor, saw me through the many hours of confusion, insecurity and growth in my own learning.

Final thanks must be given to my family who have always supported me in all that I have done, but particularly in this endeavour over the last few years.
ABSTRACT

This study set out to develop a grounded theory of staff development for teachers. The aims of the study were:

• to evaluate the impact that a staff development program, called Frameworks, had on teachers beliefs and practices in literacy education
• to evaluate a personally developed staff development theory which underpinned the design and delivery of that program
• as a consequence of the above, to develop a staff development theory which had been formally grounded in the real world of classrooms and schools.

The study employed a naturalistic mode of inquiry, and in particular was framed by the parameters of a responsive constructivist evaluation paradigm. The methods of naturalistic inquiry were employed. In particular there was a strong emphasis on a hermeneutic/dialectic process which takes full advantage, and account, of the observer/observed interaction in order to create a constructed reality that is as informed and sophisticated as it can be made at a particular point in time.

The study comprised four case studies of four class teachers which analyse and describe their experiences as a result of their participation in the eight week program. These four case studies were further analysed into a construction of Frameworks as it was run in the Gorham Middlesex School District (more commonly known as Marcus Whitman Central School District).

A theory of staff development grounded in the data emerged which has been depicted in schematic form and described in detail. Recommendations for the future of staff development, based on the principles emerging from this theory are made. Finally it is argued that effective staff development in the future is contingent upon the adoption of a new paradigm of teacher learning, namely, one that views learning cultures of teachers as social semiotic systems.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS** ........................................................................................................... ii

**ABSTRACT** .......................................................................................................................... iii

**LIST OF FIGURES** ............................................................................................................... xvi

**CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION** ................................................................................................. 1
  - The Purpose and Aims of the Study .................................................................................... 1
  - Rationale for the Study ....................................................................................................... 2
  - Background to the study .................................................................................................... 6
  - Current Socio-political Context of Literacy Education .................................................... 6
  - What is Literacy? ................................................................................................................ 6
  - A New Paradigm in Literacy Education ......................................................................... 8
  - The Challenge of Staff Development ............................................................................ 9

  **A Personal Theory of Staff Development and Teachers’ Learning** ................................. 9
  - Background Information ................................................................................................. 9
  - My Role in Schools as a Staff Developer .................................................................... 11
    - Phase One
      - Practice ..................................................................................................................... 12
    - Phase Two
      - Theory into Practice ................................................................................................. 12
    - Phase Three
      - Theory’s Impact on Teachers’ Beliefs and Practice .............................................. 13
    - Phase Four - An Interactive Model ........................................................................... 15
    - Phase Five
      - The Role of Language in Teacher Learning
      - Facilitating Staff Development ............................................................................ 17
  - What did all this mean for staff development? .............................................................. 25

  **Locus of the Study** ............................................................................................................ 38
  - The Site ............................................................................................................................. 38
  - The Participants ................................................................................................................ 38
    - The Case Study Teachers ............................................................................................. 39
  - The Evaluand - FRAMEWORKS ...................................................................................... 39
    - What is Frameworks? ................................................................................................. 39
    - Aims of Frameworks ................................................................................................. 40
Roles and Responsibility of the Facilitator .............................................42
Roles and Responsibilities of the Participants ........................................42
Broad Themes Running Through Frameworks .......................................43
Conclusion ..........................................................................................43
CHAPTER 2: A FUTURE AGENDA FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT - A LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction ................................................................. 45
Some Definitions .......................................................... 49
An Overview of Effective Staff Development ....................... 52
   The Authoritarian Model .......................................... 53
   The Support or Training Model .................................. 56
   The Individual to Co-operative Model ......................... 60
   The Collaborative Model ......................................... 64
A Future Agenda for Staff Development ............................ 67
The Problem: Why Has Staff Development Worked? .............. 72
An Alternate View to the Problem .................................. 72
Towards a Paradigm Shift in Staff Development .................. 79
School Cultures as Semiotic Systems ................................ 87
   Changing the Roles and Organisers .............................. 87
   The Need for an Explicit Learning Theory ..................... 90
   Role of Language .................................................... 96
Summary: A Future Agenda for Staff Development ............... 98

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY ............................................. 101
Introduction ...................................................................... 101
Methodological Orientation for the Study .......................... 104
The Constructivist Methodology in Action .......................... 106
   Natural Setting ........................................................ 108
   The Human as Instrument ........................................ 109
   Qualitative Methods ................................................. 112
      Observations ......................................................... 112
      Interviews .......................................................... 114
      Surveys .............................................................. 118
      Documents ......................................................... 118
   Tacit Knowledge .................................................... 119
The Hermeneutic Dialectic Process in Action: Data Analysis  120
Activating the Hermeneutic Dialectic Process ...................... 123
Coding the Data Using the Constant Comparative Method ...... 126
   Step 1 .................................................................. 128
   Step 2 .................................................................. 129
   Step 3 .................................................................. 130
   Step 4 .................................................................. 131
Description of Themes and Categories .............................. 133
 CHAPTER 4: RESULTS OF THE STUDY ................................................. 146

Introduction ........................................................................... 146

Part One:

The Learning Culture of Frameworks at Marcus Whitman
Central School District ............................................................ 147

The Socio-Political Context ..................................................... 147

The District ............................................................................ 147

The District's Involvement in Frameworks .............................. 149

The Superintendent's Perspective ........................................... 149

The Principals' Perspective .................................................... 152

The Context Established by The Facilitator ........................... 154

The Physical Setting ............................................................. 154

Professional Background of the Facilitator ......................... 155

Beliefs and Understandings about Staff Development and
Teacher Learning ................................................................. 156

Facilitator Concerns During the Program ......................... 158

Frameworks in Action ........................................................... 160

Making Explicit .................................................................... 161

Making Explicit the Purposes of Activities ............................ 162

The Power of Demonstrations .............................................. 162
Expectations .......................................................... 164
Feedback ............................................................. 164
Responsibility for Learning .................................... 166
Adding Information ................................................. 166
Role of Language ..................................................... 167
Creating a Community of Learners ............................. 167
Summary ..................................................................... 168

Part Two: The Four Case Study Reports ......................... 170
Case Study 1 - Lonnie Gunzalus, Gorham Elementary School ........................................................................ 170
Pre-existing Beliefs, Knowledge and Practices ................. 170
Making Connections - New Knowledge .......................... 171
  Nature of Learning .................................................. 171
  Nature of Teaching ............................................... 172
  Nature of Language ............................................... 173
Making Connections - Implementation of New Practice ...... 173
  Physical and Social Environment .............................. 173
  Strategies ................................................................ 174
  Evaluation ................................................................ 175
  Planning .................................................................. 175
  Resources ................................................................ 175
  Time ...................................................................... 176
  Language Used ....................................................... 176

Process of Change - Intellectual Unrest:
  A Precursor To Change ............................................. 176
    New Knowledge ................................................... 177
  Implementing New Practice ...................................... 178
    Teaching ............................................................. 178
    Time ................................................................... 178
    Evaluation .......................................................... 178

Process of Change
  Enablers in the Process ............................................ 179
Understanding ‘New’ Knowledge .................................. 179
Understanding ‘New’ Knowledge
  Focus on Content ................................................... 179
  Readings ................................................................ 179
  Activities .............................................................. 180
  Input ..................................................................... 181
Understanding ‘New’ Knowledge
  Focus on Process ................................................... 181
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Making Connections - New Knowledge</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of Learning</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of Language</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of Teaching</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of Language in Learning</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making Connections - Implementation of New Practice</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical and Social Environment</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategies</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process of Change Intellectual Unrest, a Precursor to Change</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process of Change: Enablers in the Process</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding 'New' Knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus on Content</strong></td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Input</strong></td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Readings</strong></td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activities</strong></td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding 'New' Knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus on Process</strong></td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group Work</strong></td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language</strong></td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Support</strong></td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Setting</strong></td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing 'New' Practices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus on Students</strong></td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing 'New' Practices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus on Teaching</strong></td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing 'New' Practices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus on Process</strong></td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing 'New' Practices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus on Support</strong></td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process of Change: Inhibitors in the Process</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Learning of 'New' Knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus on Content</strong></td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Readings</strong></td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Input</strong></td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activities</strong></td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Learning of 'New' Knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus on Process</strong></td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time</strong></td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Implementation of 'New' Practice
Focus on Teaching ........................................... 210

Implementation of 'New' Practice
Focus on Process ........................................... 211

Attitude to the Change Process ............................ 211

Insights into the Change Process ......................... 212

Case Study 3 - Ginny Gridley, Gorham Elementary School ............................... 215

Pre-existing Beliefs, Knowledge and Practices ........................................ 215
Beliefs and Knowledge ........................................ 215
Practices ......................................................... 216

Making Connections - New Knowledge .............................. 217
Nature of Learning ............................................. 217
Nature of Language ........................................... 218
Nature of Teaching ........................................... 219
Nature of Evaluation ......................................... 220

Making Connections - Implementation of New Practice ............................ 221
Strategies ......................................................... 221
Integration ....................................................... 222
Physical and Social Environment ............................. 222

Process of Change: Intellectual Unrest, a Precursor to Change ................. 222

Process of Change: Enablers in the process ......................... 224

Understanding New Knowledge
Focus on Content ............................................. 224
Input ........................................................... 224
Readings ......................................................... 225
Activities ......................................................... 225

Understanding New Knowledge
Focus on Process ............................................. 226
Time ........................................................... 226
Group Work ..................................................... 226
Support ........................................................ 227

Implementing New Practices
Focus on Teaching ............................................. 227

Implementing New Practices
Focus on Students ............................................. 228

Implementing New Practices
Focus on Process ............................................. 228

Implementing New Practices
Focus on Support .................................................. 229
Process of Change: Inhibitors of Process ........................ 229

Learning 'New' Knowledge

Focus on Content .................................................. 229
Input .......................................................................... 229
Activities ..................................................................... 230
Readings ...................................................................... 230

Learning 'New' Knowledge

Focus on Process ..................................................... 230
Time ............................................................................. 230
Activities ..................................................................... 231
Support ....................................................................... 231

Implementation of 'New' Practice

Focus on Teaching ..................................................... 231

Implementation of 'New' Practice

Focus on Students ..................................................... 232

Implementation of 'New' Practice

Focus on Process ..................................................... 233
Time ............................................................................. 233
Group Activities ........................................................ 233

Attitude to the Change Process .................................... 233
Insights into the Change Process ................................... 234

Case Study 4 - Gail Burr, Rushville Elementary School ....... 236

Pre-existing Beliefs, Knowledge and Practices ................. 236

Beliefs and Knowledge .................................................. 236
Practices ....................................................................... 237

Making Connections - New Knowledge ......................... 238

Nature of Learning ...................................................... 238
Nature of Language ...................................................... 240
Nature of Teaching ...................................................... 242
Nature of Evaluation ..................................................... 244

Role of Language in Learning ........................................ 245

Making Connections - Implementation of New Practice .... 245

Strategies ..................................................................... 245
Role of Language in Learning ........................................ 247
Physical and Social Environment ................................... 248
Evaluation ..................................................................... 248

Process Of Change: Intellectual Unrest, A Precursor To Change ................................. 248
The Nature of Evaluation ........................................... 278
The Role of Language in Learning .................................. 280
Making Connections - Implementation of New Practice, Overt Teacher Change ..................................................... 281
Strategies ................................................................. 282
Physical and Social Environment .................................. 283
Planning ................................................................. 285
Concluding Comments for Part Three .......................... 285
Part Four - The Nature of Change - How The Theory of Staff Development Works ............................................. 290
  An Overview of How the Staff Development Theory Worked:
    Towards a Grounded Theory ..................................... 291
  Intellectual Unrest - the Precursor of the Change Process .......... 294
  Enablers and Inhibitors in the Change Process .................. 299
    Enablers in the Change Process - Structures .................. 300
    Enablers in the Change Process - Processes .................. 307
    Enablers in the Change Process - Role of
      Language ......................................................... 310
    Enablers in the Change Process - Contexts and
      People ............................................................ 312
    Inhibitors in the Change Process - Structures ............... 316
    Inhibitors in the Change Process - Processes ............... 318
    Inhibitors in the Change Process - Role of
      Language ......................................................... 319
    Inhibitors in the Change Process - People and
      Contexts ........................................................ 320
  Attitude to the Change Process .................................. 322
  Insights into the Change Process ................................ 326
Concluding Remarks .................................................. 328

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS ............................................ 330
  Towards a Grounded Theory in Staff Development ............. 331
  A Theory of Teacher Learning .................................. 334

REFERENCES .................................................................. 352
APPENDIX A .................................................................. 362
APPENDIX B .................................................................. 385
APPENDIX C .................................................................. 398
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Overview of SLIC Process (SLIC Manual, 1989, 6) ...........................................29
Figure 2: Models of Professional Development (Barton, 1992) ...........................................53
Figure 3: A Model of the Process of Teacher Change (Guskey, 1986,7) ..............................58
Figure 4: A Comprehensive Framework for Classroom and School Improvement ..............................80
Figure 5: A Model of Cambourne's Theory of Learning (Turbill, 1993) ..............................92
Figure 6: Doctoral Study in Relation to Frameworks Pilot Evaluation .................................103
Figure 7: Interconnectedness between the Paradigm of the Staff Development Model and the Research Methodology .................................................................106
Figure 8: Diagrammatic View of the Methodology of Constructivist Inquiry ......................107
Figure 9: My Construction of Each Teacher's Interviews ...............................................122
Figure 10: Process of Construction of each Case Report ...............................................122
Figure 11: Final Case Report .........................................................................................123
Figure 13: The Pattern of Themes and Categories Which Emerged from the Analysis of the Case Study Teachers' Data .................................................................133
Figure 14: The Final Case Report Categories ..................................................................140
Figure 15: The Physical Layout of the Room .....................................................................155
Figure 16: An Interactive, Integrative View of Staff Development ........................................289

........................................................................................................................................332
Figure 17: A Model for Developing Personally Empowered Professionals .....................335