

University of Wollongong - Research Online

Thesis Collection

Title: Relationship between teacher learning and school culture

Author: Wendy M Bean

Year: 2003

Repository DOI:

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: This work is copyright. Apart from any use permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part of this work may be reproduced by any process, nor may any other exclusive right be exercised, without the permission of the author. 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.

Unless otherwise indicated, the views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the University of Wollongong.

Research Online is the open access repository for the University of Wollongong. For further information contact the UOW Library: research-pubs@uow.edu.au

2003

Relationship between teacher learning and school culture

Wendy M. Bean
University of Wollongong

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

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: This work is copyright. Apart from any use permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part of this work may be reproduced by any process, nor may any other exclusive right be exercised, without the permission of the author. 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.

Unless otherwise indicated, the views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the University of Wollongong.

Recommended Citation

Bean, Wendy M, Relationship between teacher learning and school culture, M.Ed. thesis, Faculty of Education, University of Wollongong, 2003. <http://ro.uow.edu.au/theses/149>

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.

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.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1 Introduction	1
Purpose of the Study	1
Background to the Study	1
The Broken Bay Diocese.....	4
Professional Development in the Broken Bay Diocese	5
Personal Background in Professional Development	8
Rationale of the Study	11
School Culture.....	13
The Relationship Between Teacher Learning and School Culture.....	17
Locus of Study	19
Conclusion	19
Chapter 2 Literature Review.....	22
Introduction	22
Organisation of the Literature Review	22
Professional Development.....	23
Professional Development: A Definition	23
Effective Professional Development.....	24
Approaches to Professional Development	26
Evaluating Effective Professional Development	33
Teacher Learning and Teacher Change	37
Characteristics of Teacher Learning	39
Teacher Change	43
The School Leader.....	45
School Culture.....	46
Categories of School Culture	47
Organizational Culture.....	49
Professional Culture.....	50
Community and Collegiality in Schools	51
Conclusion	55
Chapter3 Methodology.....	58
Introduction	58
Methodological Orientation of Study	58
Locus of Study	63
The Research Process In Action.....	63
Phase 1. Preparing the Ground.....	64
Phase 2. Preparing the Sites	66

Phase 3. Data Collection.....	68
Phase 4. Data Analysis.....	74
Developing a Grounded Theory.....	76
Trustworthiness of Data Collection and Analysis.....	77
Conclusion	78
Chapter 4 Results.....	80
Introduction	80
Theme One: Teacher and School Demographics	81
Theme Two: Professional Development and Teacher Learning	85
Theme Three: Choice of Professional Development Model and Content.....	93
Theme Four: Inhibitors and Enablers of Teacher Learning	97
Theme Five: Teacher Learning and School Culture.....	101
Conclusion	112
Chapter 5 Interpretation of Results and Conclusion.....	115
Part One of the Model: Choice of Professional Development Model and Content.....	119
Theory in Action in Broken Bay.....	119
Theory in Action.....	121
Part Two of the Model: Professional Development Activity	122
Theory in Action in Broken Bay.....	123
Theory in Action.....	125
Part Three of the Model: Teacher Attributes.....	126
Theory in Action in Broken Bay.....	126
Theory in Action.....	128
Part Four of the Model: School Culture	130
Theory in Action in Broken Bay.....	131
Theory in Action.....	143
Part Five of the Model: Culture Develops.....	145
Theory in Action in Broken Bay.....	145
Theory on Action.....	148
Conclusion	149
References	152
Appendices	158

Table of Figures

<i>Figure 1</i>	<i>A Schematic Representation of the Theory Framing the ‘Teacher Learning’ Project</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Figure 2</i>	<i>Factors Affecting Outcomes from Professional Development</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Figure 3</i>	<i>Factors Affecting the Existing School Culture</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Figure 4</i>	<i>Five Categories of School Culture (Barton, 2000:287)</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Figure 5</i>	<i>Design Elements of a General Model of School Improvement, Hill & Crevola (1998:7)</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>Figure 6</i>	<i>Models of Professional Development (Barton, 1992:25)</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Figure 7</i>	<i>Interactive and Integrative Model of Professional Learning (Turbill, 1994).</i>	<i>33</i>
<i>Figure 8</i>	<i>A Comprehensive Framework for Classroom and School Improvement.....</i>	<i>52</i>
<i>Figure 9</i>	<i>Influencing Factors on School Culture</i>	<i>55</i>
<i>Figure 10</i>	<i>Schematic Representation of the Data Collection Process</i>	<i>64</i>
<i>Figure 11</i>	<i>Representation of Data Collection and Analysis.....</i>	<i>76</i>
<i>Figure 12</i>	<i>Schematic Representation of the Grounded Theory Representing the Recursive Relationship Between Teacher Learning and School Culture</i>	<i>117</i>
<i>Figure 13</i>	<i>School Culture Quadrant</i>	<i>131</i>
<i>Figure 14</i>	<i>School Culture Quadrant and Effects</i>	<i>147</i>

Tables

Table 1	<i>Broken Bay Diocesan primary school enrolments.....</i>	4
Table 2	<i>Comparison of models for evaluating professional development</i>	36
Table 3	<i>Comparison of factors influencing learning.....</i>	42
Table 4	<i>Broad categories of school culture</i>	48
Table 5	<i>Summary of general demographic parameters in 2001</i>	81
Table 6	<i>Distribution of stages taught by survey respondents at each site.</i>	82
Table 7	<i>Distribution of respondents by gender across the schools.....</i>	82
Table 8	<i>Summary of observations recorded in field notes</i>	83
Table 9	<i>Teacher perceptions of selves as literacy teachers and learners.....</i>	84
Table 10	<i>Preferred learning styles nominated by respondents.....</i>	85
Table 11	<i>Frequency and popularity of past professional development</i>	86
Table 12	<i>Breakdown as number of respondents from each school attending the major literacy courses.....</i>	87
Table 13	<i>Summary of teacher descriptors of course highlights.....</i>	87
Table 14	<i>Factors nominated by respondents that make professional development ‘good’ or ‘useful’</i>	88
Table 15	<i>Relevance of professional development offered by Catholic Schools Office</i>	91
Table 16	<i>Teacher comment on changing the teaching of literacy</i>	92
Table 17	<i>Comparison of teacher comments and Catholic Schools Officer comments.....</i>	96
Table 18	<i>Factors perceived by teachers to support their learning.....</i>	98
Table 19	<i>Teacher descriptors of principal support.....</i>	99

Table 20	<i>Factors that hindered implementation of teacher learning</i>	<i>100</i>
Table 21	<i>Actions teachers might have taken to implement learning.....</i>	<i>101</i>
Table 22	<i>Respondents' perceptions of the school as a context for their learning</i>	<i>102</i>
Table 23	<i>Descriptors used by teachers to describe the relationships in the school.....</i>	<i>104</i>
Table 24	<i>Descriptors used by teachers to describe the culture in the school.....</i>	<i>104</i>
Table 25	<i>Descriptors used by principals to describe the relationships in the school.....</i>	<i>105</i>
Table 26	<i>Descriptors used by principals to describe the culture in the school</i>	<i>105</i>
Table 27	<i>Summary of comments on culture from office personnel.....</i>	<i>108</i>
Table 28	<i>Summary of teacher comments on the school, principal and diocesan visions</i>	<i>110</i>
Table 29	<i>Summary of principal comments on their own and the school's vision</i>	<i>111</i>
Table 30	<i>Summary of the teachers' views of the principal's vision.....</i>	<i>111</i>
Table 31	<i>Guiding questions for reflection on the school culture.....</i>	<i>144</i>