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

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A Professional Learning Partnership (PLP): Connecting Pre-Service and Practicing Teachers in a Technology Supported Environment

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

Doctor of Education

from

University of Wollongong

By

Ian Olney

BSc., Dip Ed, MEd.

Faculty of Education

January 2007

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

Acknowledgements

A thesis is a long and lonely road and it has been with the support and encouragement of many people that has got me to the end.

Firstly to my wife Diane, and children Jin Hee and Yong Sam, who have endured my seemingly never ending journey, for their love, support and encouragement in a variety of ways and for keeping me in touch with the important things in our lives.

To my supervisors Professor Barry Harper and Dr Christine Brown for their tireless efforts, getting me through the highs, and especially the lows of this mammoth task. It is due to their patience, advice and positive feedback that helped me maintain my enthusiasm and direction.

I am also grateful to the members of the 2002 Graduate Diploma in Education course at University Of Wollongong and my school colleagues who have allowed me to share their experiences.

A special thank you also to my colleagues at the University of Wollongong for their encouragement and friendship throughout this study.

Thank you all.

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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

	Pre-Service Teacher
	Practicing Teacher
	Online Mentor
	Online posting from PST
	Online posting from OLM
	Online posting from PT

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