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## **TITLE:**

# **MAKING A DIFFERENCE TO PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE: GIVING AND GETTING BACK**

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## **Abstract**

The paper reports on professional experience opportunities experienced by school leaver pre-service primary teachers. It will emphasise the experience of one pre-service teacher (PST) in particular, Anna. Recommendations highlighted could contribute to university preparation of pre-service primary school teachers particularly during professional experience programs. In this research study narrative inquiry a personal knowledge based approach to research was used as a method for understanding the experiences of PSTs. This paper will discuss Anna and her supervising teacher's development of a reciprocal relationship reflecting Noddings notion of Ethics of Care in a classroom where the NSW Quality Teaching Framework was utilised to inform practice. Findings from this study suggest that PSTs approaches to social and professional life opportunities are a consequence of growing up and being schooled during a time of rapid change and this is influencing their approach to developing teacher identity. The paper argues that the hierarchical Expert Model could be altered during professional experience to include what Wenger describes as a Communities of Practice approach. Combining both approaches might better support the professional development of the supervising teacher and PSTs. It has been concluded that current pre-service primary professional experience programs can be improved through recommendations made.

## **Introduction**

There is little doubt the world has dramatically changed over the last twenty-five years. In particular, four key trends have influenced education in myriad ways including economic rationalism, trends in globalisation, changes in gender opportunities and technology (Beare, 2003; Meadmore, 2006). Additionally, approaches to teacher preparation continue to be hotly debated and contested internationally and nationally (Darling-Hammond, 2005,

2002, 1990; McMaugh & Saltmarsh, 2008). This paper hopes to contribute to the literature on pre-service teachers by reporting on the professional experience of school leaver pre-service primary teachers (PSTs). Narrative inquiry, using ethnographic interviews and questionnaires of thirteen Pre-Service Teachers in their final year of study were used in this study. However, for this paper the comments provided by one participant, Anna (a pseudonym) was the focus. In particular, the paper highlights Anna's experiences and how she develops a reciprocal relationship with her supervising teacher during the professional experience practicum, and continues today. This supports notions like a Communities of Practice (Wenger, 2000) and an Ethics of Care (Noddings, 2002). The New South Wales Quality Teaching Framework (NSWQTF) provided a scaffold for both Anna and the supervising teacher's approaches with learning and teaching. Interestingly, Anna's supervising teacher despite having reservations supported Anna's desire to explore innovative approaches specifically with integration of learning and teaching across Key Learning Areas (KLAs) through the use of technology. This paper finds that growing up and being schooled during a period of rapid change is influencing PSTs approaches with developing teacher identity particularly during professional experience opportunities. This paper also argues utilising the Expert Model and a Communities of Practice approach could better support the professional development of the supervising teacher and PSTs. Findings from the research indicate that establishing a mentoring community between more experienced pre-service primary teachers with less experienced primary pre-service teachers and supervising teachers may better support the ongoing construction of teacher identity. Universities could also consider investing more money in the professional experience program, promote communities of practice and foster initiatives that encourage pre-service teachers to experiment with alternative modes of teaching and learning.

## **The research context**

The process to become a quality primary teacher in the twenty-first century is tenuous and more often than not hotly debated between myriad of key stakeholders (Hartsuyker, 2007; McMaugh & Saltmarsh, 2008). Nations like Australia, seek to provide classroom environments that aspire for high intellectual quality whilst valuing and understanding and catering for the differing needs of each student and given community (Hartsuyker, 2007; Hayes, Mills, Christie & Lingard, 2006). Most certainly this task is challenging, for even the most experienced teacher let alone PSTs who struggle with the demands placed upon them by Higher Education Institutions, schools, supervising teachers, parents and the PSTs themselves. Within teacher education the role of professional

experience programs has been identified by the Australian House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training (Hartsuyker, 2007) to play a pivotal role in teacher preparation. This inquiry noted professional experience programs in Australia have some key frailties. In particular, explicitly linking theory into practice mechanisms, inadequate relations between institutions i.e. schools and universities, issues with the quality of supervision and difficulties with finding placements especially in rural and remote areas (Hartsuyker, 2007). For this paper the key focus will be the quality of supervision.

There is little doubt the world has dramatically changed over the last twenty-five years (Beare, 2003; Lovat, 2003; Ramsey, 2000). For education in particular, four key synchronised global trends have and are influencing teacher pre-service preparation and the work of graduate teachers. These trends include the rise of economic rationalism and approaches to policy decision making as influenced by neo-liberal ideology (Wadham, Pudsey & Boyd, 2007). For example, public schools are now facilitators of drivers for efficiency (Meadmore, 2006). In an endeavour to do and get more for less, schools have turned to parents requesting funds based upon the rise of users-pay systems. Requesting parents to pay for more services like school maintenance programs is one example. In addition, public schools are now employing entrepreneurial innovations like image–impression and self-promotion. This includes offering a plethora of extra curricular activities and advertising through various websites. These strategies are specifically designed to compete for a greater share of a perceived marketplace where the currency is student enrolments (Meadmore, 2006; Smyth, 1995; Wadham et al., 2007). An emergence of another trend is a new world ideology often described as global trends. Global trends are often defined as complex and vague notions. For the purpose of this paper the global trend drawn upon will be a sense of global culture and community (Welch, 2002). This approach is about identity and relationships including caring and giving back as noted by Noddings (1999). The third trend includes changes in gender orientation are influencing patterns with life opportunities for westernised females and career pursuits (Beare, 2003; Marks, Fleming, Long & McMillan, 2000). The final trend is the rise of a technological world which; seems to know no boundaries continues to emerge at an inordinate pace (Palfrey & Gasser, 2008; Richardson, 2008). These four significant trends began in the twentieth century and are noteworthy for this paper as the vast majority of school leaver pre-service primary teachers currently preparing to become a primary teacher in Australia are female (Connell, 2007) and were schooled themselves during this time of rapid global change. These trends have influenced their approaches to life both socially and professionally (Beare,

2003; Behrstock & Clifford, 2009; Richardson, 2008). For this reason, it would seem the existing characteristics, attitudes and perceptions to life experiences that school leavers bring with them to professional experience programs may markedly influence their subsequent development of teaching identity (Baguley & Brown, 2007; Onwuegbuzie, Witcher & James, 2002; Watson, 2006).

In addition to these trends, teaching has undergone a period of revitalisation attracting many school leavers to the profession of primary teaching (Behrstock & Clifford, 2009; Low, Lim, Ch'ng & Goh, 2011). Despite this revitalisation the Productivity Commission (2012) notes for Australia in pre-service education there is a surplus of PSTs in primary school programs. Perhaps this revitalisation has come about because of recent successful recruitment programs despite researchers noting other careers offered higher salaries, more agreeable working conditions and clearway pathways for career progression (Watt & Richardson, 2008).

The reality is, since the 1980s for Australia employment opportunity patterns for new graduates teachers suggest contracts are offered as the main way forward with employment (Tromans, Daws, Limerick & Brannock, 2001; Watts & Richardson, 2007). Tromans et al., (2001) have many reservations about the "...casualisation of the teaching profession" (p.26). In particular, for Early Career Teachers (ECTs) and opportunities for professional development, issues with not feeling part of a school community and they often feel their lives are put on hold due to the lack of job security. If an ECT is fortunate to secure a one-year block placement Bullough, Young and Daper (2004) note this is not necessarily beneficial for the profession of teaching as they argue consequences of this approach for the entire profession include reducing the opportunity to stabilise the profession in terms of a combined teacher knowledge base. Most certainly patterns in attrition suggest inadequate support given to ECTs and the neglect of their teacher induction may be a key factor why up to 25% of ECTs leave the profession within the first five years post graduation (Hartsuyker, 2007). The casualisation of the profession has a role to play with professional development opportunities upon graduation for ECTs. This raises queries regarding teacher identity formation and the role universities in particular professional experiences might play.

### **Three Theoretical Perspectives: A way forward towards understanding teacher identity**

The role of reflection has emerged as a dominant feature to inform directions in practice for teachers and PSTs.

Darling-Hammond noted in 1997, "Teachers need to analyse and reflect on their practice to assess the effects of

their teaching and then refine and improve their instruction” (p. 297). Ingvarson, Meiers and Beavis proposed in 2003 how schools run and vary often depend upon, “...what teachers know and can do” (p. 2). Part of knowing what to do as a teacher involves teacher identity. Teacher identity is a multifaceted concept and is described as a process, “...about ‘doing’ ways of being for self and others. Identity only has meaning within a chain of relationships” (Watson, 2006, p. 509). Identifying helpful models and theories that highlight relationships may offer a way forward to develop a greater understanding of the connection between constructing teacher identity and the role professional experience opportunities might play. Three useful relationship oriented approaches, include the NSW Quality Teacher Framework a modified model based upon the Productive Pedagogy Model (Hayes et al., 2007) and two theories known as Communities of Practice (Wenger, 2000) and Ethics of Care (Noddings, 2002).

### Productive Pedagogy Model/NSWQTF

For Australia, core considerations surrounding the journey to become a competent teacher, has seen research filter into the realm of teacher pedagogy in the classroom and the role of professional development. In essence, the Productive Pedagogy Model (PPM) emerged requiring teachers to examine their own practices with the intention to become more effective teachers in any given community (Gore, Griffiths & Ladwig, 2004; Hartsuyker, 2007; Hayes et al., 2007; Lovat, 2003). In recent times we have seen the PPM retract to become a three-dimension model known as the NSWQTF (NSWDET, 2003; NSWDEC, 2012). The three dimensions model is explicitly taught during pre-service preparation in some universities in N.S.W. The NSWQTF offers a framework to support PSTs across units, during lectures, tutorials and in assignments to scaffold scrutinising their own observations of learning and teaching.

Table 1: N.S.W. Quality Teaching Framework (NSWQTF)

<b>Intellectual Quality</b>	<b>Quality Learning Environment</b>	<b>Significance</b>
Deep knowledge	Explicit quality criteria	Background knowledge
Deep understanding	Engagement	Cultural knowledge
High-order thinking	High expectations	Inclusivity
Meta-language	Social support	Connectedness
Substantive		

communication	Student's self regulation Student direction	Narrative
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(NSWDEC, 2012)

## Communities of Practice

Social learning systems are of particular importance with the NSWQTF. Wenger (2000) proposed a theory designed to support social learning systems known as Communities of Practice. This approach involves three modes of belonging particularly engagement, imagination and alignment. According to Wenger (2000) capturing these types of modes of belonging are key to the success with communities of practice. He describes engagement as doing and talking about things together; imagination is about exploring possibilities and alignment is not a one-way process instead processes of mutuality and care are core if practice is to succeed.

## Ethics of Care

Noddings (2005, 2002) argues the principal goal of education is to produce citizens who are caring and trusting. Key to this notion is who makes curriculum and the role schools and teachers can play (Noddings, 2002; Thornton, 2001). This theory includes 'Caring about and Caring for' (Noddings, 2010,1999) others through learning to listen attentively to each other. The 'Caring about' is a more general term, often involving public domains and is significant for society as a whole. The caring about process involves bigger picture view notions. Noddings (2002) suggests this can be achieved through regulating conditions in society designed to establish, maintain and enhance social justice. Although, she warns not to, "see our task as an almost evangelical one—to spread our treasured values over the entire globe." (Noddings 2010, p. 391). She also notes approaching the world through the caring about relational ethics of caring must "...keep in mind that the objective is to ensure that caring actually occurs. Caring-about is empty if it does not culminate in caring relations" (Noddings 2002, p. 23-24). Perhaps more importantly according to Noddings is the notion of 'Caring for'. This often involves a journey of being cared for and once this has happened we learn to care for others. The notions of 'caring about and caring for' involve relationships and experience. Teachers can play a key role with this process for their work is about human experience and caring about and for others (Clandinin & Connelly, 1999, 1993; Noddings, 2010, 1999).

## **The present study**

Thirteen pre-service primary teachers volunteered in response to an announcement made during lectures to attend three interviews lasting between 45-60 minutes. Through the use of the qualitative methodology narrative thematic inquiry (Connelly & Clandinin, 2000,1999; Riessman, 2008,1993) this study sought to focus upon critical events during professional experience programs as identified by the PSTs themselves, which they believed influenced their ideas with the development of reflective practice and teacher identity (Grumet, 1990; Watson, 2006). As a strongly autobiographical and experience approach; narrative inquiry shapes the opportunity for researchers to determine plotlines (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) which can ultimately guide recommendations for innovations in practice with teaching and learning. Riessman (2008) suggests thematic analysis as one way forward with narrative inquiry. This approach is concerned with what is said rather than how, to whom and for what purpose offering a way forward. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) note, “narrative inquiry, is always, multilayered and many stranded” (p. xvii). With these ideas in mind before data collection, it was the researchers intention to explore experiences with literacy by listening to what participants said to tease out their progress with teacher identity an ongoing journey throughout an entire career. However, as discussions developed it became evident just focusing upon literacy resulted in segmentation rather than social collaboration and this limited opportunity for latitude and elaboration (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Consequentially, the participants were encouraged to extend their discussion beyond this single KLA. The researcher designed indicative topics as discussion triggers with the explicit intention to encourage the participants to discuss their own experiences and share dialogue amongst themselves with the purpose to observe the development of teacher identity during a Communities of Practice environment (Baguley & Brown, 2007; Wenger, 2000). For the purpose of this paper one participant’s, Anna, discussion will be highlighted to allow the development of a rich narrative. Anna chose to discuss a recent professional experience program and a subsequent offer to work on a one-year block from the same school. What Anna said indicated to the researcher events, actions and reactions during this experience could support universities better prepare pre-service primary school teachers for classroom practice upon graduation.

## **Analysis and discussion**

In this analysis and discussion section the interview transcripts will be segmented and discussed utilising a thematic narrative inquiry approach (Riessman, 2008) through exact quotes from Anna. The primary attention will be to

report excerpts that have been interspersed throughout the interview and respond to what is said. Drawing upon previous references (Watson, 2006) and research findings will foster interpretation and an ability to move beyond rhetoric (Bell, 2002). In this approach "...the investigator works with a single interview at a time, isolating and ordering relevant episodes into a biographical account" (Riessman, 2008, p.57). A key feature informing this discussion is "temporality" which Clandinin and Connelly (2000) explains is, "... (placing things in the context of time) connects with change and learning" (p.1).

### **Anna's account**

Anna in particular stood out from all the participants in the study. When she walked into the discussion room she had an air of excitement and trepidation. She immediately told the researcher she was about to embark upon a journey of her dreams. All her dreams were about to come true for after four years of study Anna was on the verge of becoming an "actual primary classroom teacher in a bona-fide primary school with my very own class".

Anna was interviewed in her final weeks of pre-service study and was facing an unprecedented time of transition in her life. Accordingly, Anna explained she was finally finishing her teaching degree and was thrilled she had secured a one-year block placement at a school where she completed a professional experience program. Anna believed her initiatives, actions and opportunities offered to her by her supervising teacher during this particular professional experience program were pinnacle with this offer by the school. Currently, Anna and her professional experience supervisory teacher are working together as a team on Stage 2. The teacher is now Anna's supervising teacher and now Anna is an ECT. Anna has reported her supervising teacher is fostering many opportunities to support Anna's development of her teacher identity through notions like facilitating opportunities to attend Professional Development programs and supporting everyday practice. Anna continues to share her expertise with technology with the entire school community including her immediate supervisor. This sharing of her expertise began during her professional experience opportunity.

### **"Leave an everlasting impression!"**

As our discussion developed Anna revealed she was well aware very few primary school teacher graduates in this current climate would secure a classroom position immediately upon graduation, as evidenced in research (Bullough et al., 2004; Hartsuyker, 2007; Tromans et al., 2001). Anna explained she understood embracing every

opportunity she could during the professional experience program might secure a teaching position immediately upon graduation. When asked why she thought she had been offered a year's work on a class before graduating Anna said,

I was very involved with the school community. I assisted whenever and however I could to leave an everlasting impression! I stayed back, attended staff meetings, SRC, excursions and involved in the school Musical. I was always in the staff room chatting with fellow colleagues so everyone got to know me. I always tried to appear confident in all that I did even though sometimes I wasn't!!!

Anna's discussion suggests she had in fact embraced many entrepreneurial opportunities during this professional experience program, with the explicit intention to make her more employable than others upon graduation. This suggests Anna understood the value of being strategically minded and she believed part of this awareness was the influence of her parents and what she described as the 'wog work ethic'. Anna's thoughts echo deliberate practice reflecting neo-liberal ideology. Although, rather than being a top down policy approach Anna instead has capitalised upon this ideology at the grassroots level. In particular, Anna utilised notions like image-impression and self-promotion (Meadmore, 2006) in order to give her a cutting edge. The prize was a greater share of the marketplace. This time the currency was employment and career projection opportunities.

"I feel as if I'm making a difference to their lives..."

Anna came across during the interview as a likeable, bubbly, genuine and principled student. Anna explained why she chose primary teaching. Anna noted,

I decided to become a primary school teacher because I enjoy working with young people. I feel as if I'm making a difference to their lives as they learn so much at that point in their lives! I had great teachers during my entire schooling so I'm hoping to give back that same enthusiasm to my students.

This discussion suggests Anna's supports OECD (2005) findings that many choose to enter teacher for they like children. Perhaps more importantly this discussion reflects Noddings (2002) principal goal with education, to produce citizens who are caring through trusting relationships. Anna's discussion suggests her approaches with developing her own teacher identity has been influenced by her own good childhood relationships with teachers. Now, she intends on paying this forward and she is currently transitioning from being 'Cared for' by others to beginning to 'Caring for' others (Noddings, 2010, 2005, 2002, 1999).

"Students feed off what ever you say..."

When Anna was asked how important was it for her to be a quality teacher, she explained:

A quality teacher is vital! There's nothing worse than a teacher who doesn't relate any of their work to the lives of the students. Students feed off what ever you say and if you release negative emotions and have no enthusiasm towards anything, students will not be part of a quality education where you are maximizing their learning experiences.

Again, Anna's discussion demonstrates a desire to develop teacher identity (Carrillo & Baguley, 2011) and this is predominantly based upon relationships (Noddings, 2002; 1999).

These two excerpts show for Anna a notion of ethics of care has been ever present informing her approaches with life through social and professional opportunities since her childhood supporting research findings on trends with globalisation and the impact upon education and in this case learning to teach (Noddings, 1999; Welch, 2002).

Therefore, by listening to the voice of pre-service teachers like Anna this paper agrees with Grumet (1990) that, "A dynamic, reflective, and finally collaborative version of voice is required if the projects of teacher empowerment and school based management will generate new ways of teaching and schooling" (p. 282).

### **A lesson not easily forgotten**

"They were running around the classroom..."

Successfully planning for a lesson, which was creative and purposeful was Anna's intention before her professional experience program began. More often than not PSTs follow prescriptive planning models for example; lesson plans. Yet, John (2006) and Mutton, Hagger & Burn (2011) contend this model can limit the scope for creativity when developing an innovative lesson. Planning for lessons occurs at different levels depending upon a myriad of factors including issues with time to prepare, accessible resources, the cohort of students and models to scaffold planning such as the PPM (Hayes et al., 2007) or the NSWQTF (NSWDET, 2003). PSTs on professional experience are required to craft detailed lesson plans to fulfil administrative and university requirements. Anna noted the time taken to write these lesson plans became arduous and extremely time consuming and she felt they did not support her ability to plan creatively. Instead, it could be argued Anna's compliance with ensuring lesson plans made it difficult for her and "Intelligent aspects of planning become lost as students are encouraged to conform" (John, 2006, p. 484). Anna felt she did not require lesson plans as a way to guide practice. If anything the tightly formulated model for lesson plans limited Anna as a PST and her ability to innovate with practice with

the integration of Key Learning Areas (KLAs). Instead a way forward could be to plan using what John (2006) describes as an interactional method. Here the key features are not discrete steps and objectives instead the lesson plan is about interaction and taking on a holistic approach fostering innovation and multi-layered approaches with teaching as evidenced in Anna's lesson.

### **Anna described her lesson**

Ok...it Stage 3, same class we had. I did a lesson for art, HSIE and English combined. And they were doing the gold rush, so we did an art lesson with Julian Ashton paintings. So I did it mainly on the interactive white board. So I had a lot of images and things where they could analyse. But then I also had a podcast. So the students found that really interesting because we spoke about what we thought of this ... The Prospector it was called, their painting, and they actually got to hear another perspective. So they really were engaged in that. And then also their actual task was to create their own version of The Prospector. So I didn't just give them a sheet to say, here, go copy that, do your own perspective. But they actually got a tile from each little part of the painting. So they had to work collaboratively and so speak to the people parallel to them, opposite to them. They were running around the classroom nuts, you know how they are? So they were all like running around, they were trying to match up everything evenly. They were a really focused class. So I found that that ... they really enjoyed that and they really ... they're pretty smart as well, so they were really like measuring things to the T, like to the centimetre. (Chuckling) And it turned out really, really well, they enjoyed it. And it's still up in their class to this day.

The lesson Anna noted was purposeful and scaffolded by many elements from NSWQTF (2003). It was deliberately designed to integrate three Key Learning Areas (KLAs) simultaneously namely HSIE, Visual Arts and English. A type of lesson, where even competent teachers with many years of experience, can struggle to prepare for and successfully deliver. For Anna the use of technology was imbedded within all features of this lesson and was not treated, as a separate entity. Further, innovations of practice with the Interactive White Board (IWB) came naturally to Anna supporting research findings by Richardson (2008) who argues school leavers openly and willingly experiment with technology in their professional lives.

“Just a different technique maybe to what the other teacher used...”

Anna explained the inspiration for the lesson came from the current HSIE unit the class had been studying all term titled Gold rush. She could see how three KLAs could be easily built within the lesson. For example for Visual Arts and the work of Julian Ashton's series of paintings in particular the painting titled *The Prospector*. It seems reading was naturally built into the lesson, as students were required to explore a multi-modal approach within the lesson as they critiqued the artwork during whole classroom discussion time. Anna also noted for this lesson she deliberately did not give the students a sheet of paper and asked the students to draw their own version of *The Prospector*. She noted she had observed in previous art lessons where students are more often than not asked to

draw or paint their own version of the painting. Anna deemed this approach to be standard and limited with innovation when teaching Visual Arts. To be innovative Anna, chose to make a jigsaw of the artwork and gave each child a piece to see if they could reform the piece of artwork. In addition, Anna capitalised on her confident use of the IWB, which was far removed from the traditional approaches with IWB utilising Power Points (Adams, 2007). Instead, Anna described the use of technology involved a myriad of online and innovative features of IWB programs. This lesson was by no means "...filled with laissez-faire approaches to technology in the classroom which more often than not disaffect students" (Elstad, 2006, p. 262).

Making a jigsaw puzzle was when mathematics became part of the lesson as the focus became tessellations and patterns. Anna noted, the students were trying to match up everything and all students were engaged. The students' behaviour Anna believed most definitely demonstrated they were engaged and focused despite the noise level one might traditionally argue could suggest they were disengaged. Despite the noise, Anna and her supervising teacher embraced the students' behaviours. Anna believed this lesson offered an innovative approach with learning and teaching for the students and teachers and the winners were student engagement and teacher development with identity. This discussion also indicated to the researcher another dimension existed which Clandinin and Connelly (2000) note often occurs with narrative inquiry research i.e. a multi-layered narrative existed. Upon analysing Anna's discussion, another layer emerged which was a relationship between the supervising teacher and the PST. Anna's supervising teacher actions suggests she trusted Anna to let her lead both her and the students raising questions over who was the expert at this point in time.

Anna's discussion of this lesson suggests ideas proposed by Wenger (2000) known as Communities of Practice were beginning to emerge. Wenger's (2002) three modes of belonging namely; engagement, imagination and alignment became key players in the classroom for both teachers and all the students. Anna was delighted to discover the students and her supervising teacher were really enjoying this lesson suggesting engagement was in practice. It became apparent to Anna the students had never been exposed to a lesson like this in their 7 years at primary school supporting ideas of imagination were in practice. Finally, the lesson offered alignment for a mutual relationship was developing between two teachers. Anna gave reasons why she felt this lesson was so successful. In particular, she noted in regards to the NSWQTF the elements of deep knowledge; high-order thinking and engagement were achieved (NSWDEC, 2012). But, for Anna what seemed more important was she was given an

opportunity to showcase her ability to teach innovatively supporting the notion of image-impression (Meadmore, 2006). This was Anna's chance to "impress" her supervising teacher.

### **A reciprocal relationship is formed**

"She didn't think they would enjoy it so much..."

Interestingly, Anna knew her supervisor was the school computer co-ordinator, which can be concluded the school had identified her as an expert. Anna's supervising teacher could easily have felt threatened by Anna's advanced skill set with technology particularly in terms of the supervisor's own sense of teacher identity (Watson, 2006). Instead Anna's supervising teacher embraced Anna's skill set and this gave one cause to develop a reciprocal relationship. Instead what developed was a relationship based upon trust, giving and getting back through a shared desire to implement quality teaching and technology in the classroom. This is evidenced in Anna's discussion for she noted,

She didn't think they would enjoy it so much but once she saw how collaborative they were being she was very pleased. Obviously my aim was to impress my master teacher because I wanted to do really well in my lessons! It certainly paid off because I got a full time job at the same school for this year (2012) on my own class! She must have been impressed!!

The supervising teacher had trust in Anna and because of this she gave Anna an opportunity to experiment with a particularly complex lesson raising questions why. Anna noted her supervising teaching had a better understanding of the NSWQTF than her. Anna believed this was so for in Anna's supervising teacher's program she noted for each unit of work the elements were displayed and the supervising teacher highlighted which were to be focused upon. Thus, indicating both had something to give and get back. Quite possibly what was in play here was Noddings (2002) value of forming relationships through an ethics of care approach was emerging in a reciprocal manner. For Anna it was a willingness to share her skills with technology. For the supervising teacher it was a willingness to let Anna experiment with innovations in teaching and ultimately help Anna secure of a one-year block on class.

Further, qualities of Communities of Practice (Wenger, 2000) seem apparent in this relationship. Engagement of practice was evident. For example, Anna noted they were constantly talking through things as two professionals. So were opportunities for imagination of practice as the supervising teacher facilitated Anna's opportunity to

experiment with teaching and learning through integration and the use of a common interest in technology. Finally, alignment practices have occurred for this relationship was by no means a one-way process instead it was reciprocal and fostered the notion of giving and getting back.

As discussed previously the Australian House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Vocational Training (Hartsuyker, 2007) noted issues with supervision. Anna and her supervising teacher offer an example demonstrating a shift away from the traditional models of supervision where the classroom teacher is not always the expert (Ferfolja, 2008; Guskey, 2002; Richardson, 1992; Schuck, 2003). This example illustrates a reflective, collaborative and reciprocal approach between two developing professionals. We saw qualities of mutuality and a real sense of community has been generated through mutual engagement suggesting modes of belonging altered and what emerged was a sense of Communities of Practice (Renshaw, 2003; Wenger, 2000). In particular, a process with reciprocity within a professional experience setting revealed a change in the hierarchical model where the classroom teacher is always the expert. Instead what emerged were notions like mutual trust and a willingness to fail on behalf of both parties. Noddings notion of “Giving to” became evident as both teachers developed a level of trust fostering a willingness build upon areas of expertise like the use of technology. In the end, this relationship facilitated opportunities to experiment with pedagogy and innovations in practice. In particular, this is noteworthy for this paper for relationships like this can enhance teacher identity and may ultimately have a flow on effect for students.

## **Recommendations:**

It can be concluded from this study that current pre-service primary professional experience programs can be improved in some areas. This study would make the following recommendations:

- Traditional lesson plans expected of students to follow during pre-service professional experience be reviewed. One way forward could be to have the NSWQTF sub-elements table on the template. Another way forward could be to foster an opportunity with approaches to lesson writing become more interactional (John, 2006). This could include offering two templates for students to utilise during professional experience. Template One: A standard lesson plan format and Template Two: Offering an alternative for lessons which are not supported by standard approaches with writing lesson plans;
- Mentoring programs could be established between more experienced PSTs with less experienced primary PSTs with the one supervising teacher. This could include conducting a professional experience at the

same school to support notions like Wenger's (2000) Communities of Practice and Noddings (2002) Ethics of Care fostering innovations in practice and professional networking;

- In addition, universities could invest more money into professional experience programs so the funding follows the needs of the pre-service teacher. Therefore, the PSTs who are at risk could be offered more supervision from the university during the professional experience program.

## Conclusion

This study sought to understand utilising narrative inquiry the journey travelled by pre-service teachers in their final year of study during professional experience and the opportunities and connections they made with developing teacher identity. This paper has concluded if supervising teachers provide classroom environments, which are more open to innovative lesson delivery particularly with the use of technology the students, and all teacher engagement can be increased. Furthermore, a reciprocal relationship can be formed known as giving and getting back, which can support the professional development of all teachers involved. This paper has made suggestions designed to build upon the limited knowledge on how to best prepare pre-service students during pre-service professional experience. Recommendations made include utilising theories and models including Noddings Ethics of Care, Wenger's Communities of Practice and the NSWQTF. This paper has shown the importance of what combined teamwork between one PST and her supervising teacher can achieve to the benefit of all in the classroom.

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