Studying Teacher Learning

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Misleading theories of teacher learning

1. Good teachers are born not made.

2. If you know your subject, you can teach it.

3. Teacher education prepares people for a career in teaching.

4. In learning to teach, practice is the best teacher.
A messy problem space

How do people learn to teach and get better at teaching over time?
Raising questions

**Normative:** What should teachers learn?

**Empirical:** What are teachers learning?

**Conceptual:** How can we conceptualize teacher learning for purposes of studying it?
What do we mean?

How do teachers develop a professional identity?
How do teachers develop a professional stance?
How do teachers construct a principled practice?
How do teachers learn to think like teachers?
How do teachers acquire a repertoire of skills and strategies?
How do teachers become reflective practitioners?
How do teachers become adaptive experts?
Elements of a theory of teacher learning

1. **WHO** are teachers as learners?
2. **WHAT** do teachers need to learn?
3. **HOW** do teachers learn to teach?
4. **WHERE** and **WHEN** do teachers learn to teach?
Who?

1. What prior beliefs, experiences, understandings do teachers bring to teacher education and teaching?

2. How does that influence their teaching and their learning to teach?

3. What effects does teacher preparation have on teachers’ entering beliefs and assumptions?
What do teachers need to learn?
What are teachers learning?
What are we trying to help teachers learn?
Teaching as the Subject Matter of Teacher Learning

Hawkins; McDonald, Ball & Cohen, Raudenbush, Ball & Cohen)
Defining the “what” of teacher learning

- teaching competencies
- knowledge, skills & dispositions; knowledge base of teaching
- teaching standards
- high leverage (core) instructional practices
# Central Tasks of Teacher Learning Over Time

S. Feiman-Nemser, 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preservice phase</th>
<th>Induction phase</th>
<th>Inservice phase</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Examine prior beliefs; form vision of good teaching</td>
<td>Learn context (students, curriculum, school, etc)</td>
<td>Refine vision of good teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop subject matter knowledge for teaching</td>
<td>Form professional identity</td>
<td>Deepen content &amp; pedagogical content knowledge</td>
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<td>Develop knowledge of learners, learning</td>
<td>Enact vision of classroom community</td>
<td>Assume leadership responsibilities</td>
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<td>Develop a beginning repertoire</td>
<td>Design/enact responsive curriculum</td>
<td>Extend repertoire</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acquire tools to learn in/from teaching</td>
<td>Study &amp; improve teaching</td>
<td>Study &amp; strengthen teaching</td>
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1. How do teachers learn to teach?

2. What kinds of learning opportunities help teachers develop a principled practice (or a professional identity or a culturally responsive pedagogy)?

3. How do different learning opportunities influence teachers’ thinking and practice?
What is our **theory** of how teachers learn?

**Behavioral:** Teachers acquire professional knowledge and skills through formal training and apply them in practice.

**Conceptual change:** Teachers interpret new ideas and practices in light of existing beliefs and understandings.

**Socio-cultural:** Teachers adopt new ideas and practices by participating in authentic tasks of teaching in a professional learning community.
John Dewey’s Theory

Unless a teacher is a student of teaching, he may continue to grow in the mechanics of management, but he cannot grow as a teacher.

The problem of “enactment”

Pedagogies of reflection and analysis

Pedagogies of formation

Pedagogies of enactment
When and where?

1. What do teachers learn over time?

2. How do the different settings of teacher learning influence what and how they learn?
   - formal professional studies
   - clinical experience
   - learning in and from teaching
Models of teacher development

1 – 3 years: Entry level
4 – 6 years: Consolidation
7 – 10 years: Mastery
10+ years: Expertise
Putting it together

• Learning to think like a teacher

• Learning to know like a teacher

• Learning to feel like a teacher

• Learning to act like a teacher

• Putting thinking, knowing, feeling and acting together in teaching