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What Do Beginning English Teachers Want From Professional Development?

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Abstract: This qualitative, interpretive case study allows insights into the reflective emerging teacher practitioner as it explores pre-service and beginning teachers' preparedness to deal with curriculum change and the demands of the classroom and school community. Five beginning teachers were asked what they want from professional development in a period of rapid curriculum change. The study aligns with emerging local and national agendas for teacher professional development and accreditation in Australia.
The data analysis, based on "community of practice" perspectives, shows that new teachers have clear ideas about the professional development they need and want. Professional development is seen as integral to their developing professional identities. The paper has implications for the way leadership teams offer and how new teachers take up professional development opportunities, upon which registration is contingent.

Background

The teaching profession in Australia is experiencing generational change. As a result, professional development (PD) and teacher standards are in the spotlight both here and internationally (Jensen, 2010). The research project informing this paper aimed to document localized knowledge by way of the perceptions of early career secondary English as they reflect on the significance of PD in terms of their capacity to deal with constant curriculum change. This responds to a MCEETYA report (2007) recommending that a "longitudinal study… should follow cohorts of students from selection into courses, through pre-service preparation and into the first five years of teaching" (2007, p. 10). The five English secondary teachers in the study were graduates of the same university education course. The subjects comprised three teachers, who had taught between one and three years, and two pre-service teachers. The latter were interviewed upon completing their degrees and again after their first semester of teaching.

Literature Review: Background and Context

The literature on professional development has been reviewed across three broad areas: why PD is a new priority; what constitutes effective PD; and mentoring as part of the PD and identity of new teachers. Teacher PD has become a national priority in Australia due

to the high attrition rate of beginning teachers as documented by the Committee for the Review of Teaching and Teacher Education. In response to this national concern, the federal government has insisted that teacher registration becomes contingent upon ongoing PD. The link between registration and ongoing PD will no doubt produce resistance, as it represents yet another "professional assault and imposition on teachers' integrity and professional identity" (Moss, 2008, p. 351). It is well documented that even though PD is considered imperative, what is available to teachers is often woefully inadequate (Borko, 2004) and does not necessarily lead to recognition of quality teaching or professional identity in school structures (Jensen, 2010). If PD is constructed as part of being and/or becoming a teacher, this may change teacher perceptions of PD from something to be endured, to quality professional renewal, integral to professional identity. This context prompts the project's central research question; what do teachers want from professional development?

Standards six and seven of the National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPIS), (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011, p. 18), pertinent to this paper, are dedicated to describing how teachers at various stages in their careers might engage in professional learning and reflection and also contribute to their respective schools and professional communities. Of course, standards alone do not ensure stimulation of teacher learning (Jensen, 2010, p. 26). Where professional standards have been used generatively and contextually as a tool to assist teachers' and students' localized needs, however, they were seen to be effective (Mayer, Mitchell, MacDonald, & Bell, 2005).

What then constitutes effective PD? Day (2004) argues that pre-service and in-service educators need to embrace an agenda that recognizes the importance of sustained collaboration, teachers' roles as knowledge producers, their need to manage change, and a mutuality of moral purpose. Evidence suggests that where ongoing collaborative partnerships exist between schools, professional associations and university educators, and where those partnerships value the existing knowledge of beginning teachers, effective PD can occur (Hardy, 2008; Paris, 2010). This is corroborated by research on university-school mentoring partnerships (Boyer, Maney, Kamler, & Comber, 2004), where tertiary educators critiqued traditional out-of-school models of professional development. Their research suggested instead, a reciprocal, collaborative relationship model of PD.

Since much of secondary teaching occurs in isolation, decontextualised "out-of-school" PD was seen to be disenfranchising to the English teachers in their study who had to return from one-off PD days to implement a new initiative they may not have fully understood. Ongoing conversations involving experienced and early career teachers elicited deep self reflection and the marrying of current theoretical perspectives with classroom practice. This mentoring allowed secondary English teachers to become part of the wider teacher-research network, which was found to be an efficacious form of PD (Boyer, et al., 2004).

Other Australian research suggests that teacher mentoring may play a part in invigorating the profession, and in developing professional identity, but that it can be both positive and risky (Martinez, 2004). Various studies (Cochran-Smith, 2005; Heirdsfield, Walker, Walsh, & Wilss, 2008; Oliver, 2009) point out that mentoring can be problematic when the mentor/mentee allocation is enforced by a school or a system of placement, such as on field experience at pre-service level (Hudson & Hudson, 2008; Hudson & Millwater, 2008). Head (2003) also argues that enforced collaboration, either through team teaching or mentoring programs in learning communities such as schools, can produce dysfunctional groups, which do not necessarily support beginning teachers.

Head (2003) argues that communities of practice in workplaces as complex as schools can be romanticised and may be based more on "contrived collegiality" if enforced by administration. Significantly there is sometimes a dearth of administrative mentoring support

for beginning teachers in large, busy, metropolitan schools (Ewing & Langley-Smith). The sense of community outside and within a workplace is also a significant factor in retaining teachers, especially in rural areas (Boylan & McSwan, 1998). Certainly there is evidence to suggest that if a mentoring relationship is destructive or absent, the consequences for the pre-service teachers' sense of worth and identity can be dire (Maynard, 2000). Owen (2005) suggests that effective whole-school-based PD has been shown to emerge from dedicated and adequate funding and when time allocation is provided. Owen's research also demonstrated that PD is most effective where the administration participates in training alongside staff and is strongest at the faculty level where "a sense of evolving learning communities are evident" (Owen, 2005, p. 10).

An effective mentoring program doesn't happen automatically although individual mentoring and professional development can occur informally. Maynard (2000) notes: although pre-service teachers in the UK wanted trust and acceptance from their mentors, they also wanted genuine critical feedback from them. Indeed the affective domain was also important for the mentors and the mentees often had to manage mentors' feelings of vulnerability (Maynard, 2000). Moreover, since school-based mentors can provide a "bridge from theory to practical application in the classroom" both new teachers in their pre-service education and mentors need training to engage effectively (Coombs-Richardson, Glessner, & Tolson, 2007). In the latter study, the mentors were paid via a large grant scheme. In Australia practicum placements are not very financially rewarding for the supervising teachers involved. Once in the paid workplace, mentoring amongst new and more experienced teachers tends to occur in more informal ways, as this paper suggests.

The literature on professional development explains that PD is a new priority due to the increased accountability of teachers in terms of performance. It has been suggested that effective professional development is collaborative, ongoing and useful, and occurs as part of the school community as in-service training. Finally, mentoring is a complex business, but plays an important role in the professional development of new teachers. These three themes provide the scholarly background to this study, which aims to provide localized knowledge to interpret the wider picture of professional development as part of professional identity.

The Participants and Research Design

This paper is based on a small scale exploratory study which examines what beginning teachers want from PD. A case study approach provides a localised examination (Cresswell, 2008) of the qualitative descriptions and reflections (Mertens, 2005) of five beginning English teachers, all now teaching at different schools across both private and state sectors. The aim was to canvas teachers' professional development needs and experiences in a climate of constant curricular change. The analysis draws on the combined perspectives of "the reflective practitioner" (Schon, 1983) and Lave and Wenger's "situated learning" (Lave & Wenger, 2009) where pre-service apprentices become teacher practitioners participating in a community of practice (Wenger, 2008) and whilst doing so, they are reflecting on "action-in-action" in the workplace.

The design of the study involved a general questionnaire to determine years of service, school context, educational background, age and gender followed by semi structured, one-on-one, audio taped interviews to explore the reflections and experiences of beginning teachers of English. The interviewees reflected on the links between university training, their teaching experience, and the PD they had undertaken as pre-service or new teachers. Unlike other studies examining English teacher retention and attrition in Australia, which focus on "at risk" students in remote areas (Manuel, 2003), this study selected "bright" graduates, in

metropolitan areas. All the teachers were active in their professional association ETAQ. The case study participants have been renamed and the schools not named.

At a pre-service level, the new teachers in this study were introduced to the concept of ongoing PD whilst studying for their degrees. Pre-service English teachers at this university are encouraged to attend PD conferences and events, run by the English Teachers' Association of Queensland (ETAQ), which automatically gives them membership in the national PD body (AATE). Some of the pre-service teachers interviewed, had delivered presentations at these events. This participation in the community of practice of teaching professionals indicates a burgeoning sense of PD as part of developing professional identity. In total 14 hours of interviews were transcribed and analysed, coded, and categorised identified according to grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Case Study Findings

Three important topics about formal PD have emerged from the data in this study: curriculum and curriculum change; behaviour management; and the use of ICT. These will be discussed in turn, along with the new teachers' reflections on professional identity and responsibility for professional development.

Coping with constant change in the transition from pre-service education to the workplace

One beginning teacher expressed a PD wish list which was echoed by all the others. She included: "behavioural management, digital technology and induction into recent syllabus and government changes since graduating." It seemed clear that the pre-service years had prepared these new teachers well for curricular content, lesson, unit and work program planning. What was commonly seen as lacking, however, was explicit interpretation of the syllabus; along with explicit instruction on behaviour management. These teachers graduated at a time of multiple syllabus and curriculum transitions. Whilst constant change can be flagged as a way of life in teaching during the pre-service training, it cannot be explicitly taught until the documents come to the curriculum leaders and the change often does not become apparent until it confronts the new teacher at the chalkface.

The policy changes at both state and federal levels affect one another and these trickle down to the school via heads of departments. To illustrate this change, an outcomes-based years one-ten English Syllabus (Queensland Studies Authority, 2005) designed at a state level was recently changed radically to a standards-based one to conform with trends in the Australian Curriculum. "Queensland Essential Learnings" (Queensland Studies Authority, 2006) for English replaced a subject-specific syllabus without the clearly described, unified theory of language underpinning the previous document. The previous English Syllabus 11-12 (Q.B.S.S.S., 2002) implemented in 2005, was recently drafted (Queensland Studies Authority, 2008) and trialed and has since been rewritten (Queensland Studies Authority, 2010), for full implementation in 2012. The Australian "Foundation to Year 10" curriculum is due for implementation in 2012 and schools are now planning for this radical change to curriculum design and content, reporting and assessment. The Australian Curriculum for Senior English (ACARA, 2009) is currently subject to consultation by key stakeholders and is due for implementation across Australia in 2014. New versions appear on the ACARA website portal constantly and the senior years Australian curriculum is under revision during 2011. Teachers have to be chameleons to keep up with this constant change.

Curricular change reflects political agendas beyond the control of the classroom teacher. Every time a change occurs, work programs have to be rewritten in schools, which leave teachers, who regularly manage heavy workloads, with an even heavier burden. In addition to these subject-specific transitions, NAPLAN (Curriculum Corporation, 2008) and QCAR (Queensland Common Assessment and Reporting Framework) introduced in 2006, also impinge on the curriculum in English in the junior years. All the interviewees commented on these changes as they were all beginning their teaching at this transitional time. The most recently graduated pre-service teachers had the benefit of the changes being introduced to them in their course and were aware of the changes, as one of the interviewees mentioned:

> *There's the shift from the 02 [Senior English] syllabus to the open trial 08 syllabus so I wasn't involved in the transfer to that [on prac]...and ...the English Essential Learnings and the Year 10s framing document will have very similar changes too…. I was also aware that they did...QCATS [Queensland Common Assessment Tasks] when I was at school... I was unable to witness these, however, I'm vaguely aware with what they involve and what they set out to achieve.*

When asked what role professional development could play in these shifts, the students suggested it should be through school-based in-service programs. This echoes the current literature on PD reviewed above, suggesting that an ongoing collaborative process is more effective than one-off workshops. One new teacher suggested:

> *Inside the school it needs to be an ongoing process where ...there's more specific training given to a HOD or a person responsible in each department for the introduction of these things… say an experienced year nine teacher for QCATS…. I would love for PD to come from all members of the school.*

ICTs and English

The second topic emerging from the research data was the issue of ICT. The new teachers expressed frustration over the mismatch between policy and practice regarding ICTs and English. The increasing influence of ICTs across the curriculum in all policy documents concerning subject English (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2011; ACARA, 2009; QSA, 2010; QSA, 2006) means that teachers need to be trained for this. Driven by the need to create relevant exciting learning experiences and authentic assessment, these new teachers were very interested in including ICTs in their classes. The pre-service and new teachers, who were of the generation known as "digital natives" (Prensky, 2007)were quite *au fait* with the technology, as the following comments demonstrate. One said:

> *there's got to be something else that you can do with it [technology] … for this generation... that will hold their interest more.*

And another complained "I don't think we do enough of it in schools. It frustrates me that my students are not doing Facebook and more ICT driven assessments." One summed up the others' ideas:

> *I'm interested in using it because I was brought up in the technological generation …I know I would particularly benefit from participating in PD on this because it gives me an idea of what my peers are doing but it also gives me an opportunity to learn about new technology that I would be able to use.*

The policy demand for teachers to implement ICTs across the curriculum is partially being met by PD, for both "digital natives" and digital "asylum seekers," but is not matched by the availability of technology especially in state schools. In spite of their enthusiasm to

implement ICTs in English they were thwarted by the state school's lack of technological equipment. This was expressed in the following comments "I cannot get a computer room in the next four weeks...The school has two interactive whiteboards or smart boards…reserved for maths and science classes."

At another school, a teacher said "In one classroom for the first nine months of the year I had a blackboard and chalk... and a crummy overhead projector.... I was 'ropeable.'" Another pre-service teacher complained "There were only ... three interactive whiteboards ...across a school of over five hundred students. But in addition to that you also had things like broken televisions, broken CD players."

Even though all these new teachers were very motivated to incorporate new technologies into their students' learning, they often met with resistance from colleagues, when returning from PD with new ideas to share in the "one-off" training model of PD. This supports the evidence in existing research of the inefficacy of one-off, decontextualised "out-of-school" models of PD (Boyer, et al., 2004). After a useful PD session on ICTs for English, one new teacher had taken the trouble to share the skills with his colleagues. He was disappointed that their response was "How do I use that tomorrow?" "How does that fit in with my lesson plans?" … "If they can't see the direct immediate benefit, then they'll switch off."

Although recent policy initiatives implore teachers to incorporate ICT, there is neither adequate PD for all staff, nor the technical resourcing needed to implement this in schools. This may mean that beginning teachers take on a mentoring role with their colleagues who are more technophobic. It also begs the question, what happened to the "education revolution" imperative to equip all students with laptops?

Who is responsible for professional development on behaviour management?

All these beginning teachers feared they lacked sufficient behavioural management strategies, which is consistent with the literature (Ewing & Langley-Smith, 2003; Manuel & Brindely, 2002). It is in this aspect of the profession that in-school mentoring plays a very significant role. Most of the new teachers in this study relied on the school's deputy to induct them into this important aspect of their work. All felt they had not had enough undergraduate training in this important aspect of teaching, although many said they were not sure how it could actually be "taught" at pre-service level. One new teacher in a state school summed up the frustration:

> *I know after talking to teachers that the most frazzled they are is over the kids' behaviour. It's not being able to manage that classroom environment... It's like everything is in control and then you can feel it, you can feel it starting to grow, this beast... Where can I go to next without having to read fifty pages because you seriously don't have time, you're busy planning the next semester... Experienced teachers have so much to offer in that regard though.*

The new teachers also agreed that effective PD on behaviour management and ongoing mentoring from experienced teachers within schools is preferable to decontextualised, undergraduate training. As one said:

> *You're not going to remember that chapter in the book when the kid is racing around classroom yelling at you...You're thinking "what do I do?" And I think that comes down to a kind of school-based professional development.*

The new teachers agreed that behavior management training should happen in the school, but mobile leadership teams also challenge the efficacy and consistency of these

school-based programs. One new teacher said she had attended the deputy principal's "weekly amazing sessions with …student teachers. Now that she's gone that's gone by the wayside unfortunately."

The pre-service teachers in the study accessed some behavior management PD whilst on practicum. One praised the deputy, who was "very interested in initiating her [26] prac teachers into the profession." She continued:

> *So there was a lot of support, every week there would be a meeting for all the prac students in the staff room. We would talk about different issues such as child safety, code of conduct, professional responsibilities…[with] someone from the special education unit at EQ… an expert to come in and train us. And ... she was excellent.*

This pre-service teacher had undertaken a previous practicum at a "very rough school" and where there had been no induction. One semester into her first teaching, however, she reported:

> *I don't think anything ... could have prepared me for some of the situations in my first term. I think …a lot of what they focused on wasn't particularly helpful for the school community I am in now because it ... didn't necessarily suit how an all-male classroom learns and respond to best. … Students react to you very favourably if you are prepared to get to know them.*

All the new teachers agreed that the behaviour management induction for pre-service teachers at school level was inconsistent in that some schools offered higher quality programs than others. One new teacher had undertaken field experience at two "quite rough state schools, where behaviour management was priority number one" and yet she had had almost no induction on field experience and it was not well covered in her university course. One semester into her first year teaching at a private girls' school she said:

> *I am in the fortunate position to be in a school with very few behaviour management problems, but there have been instances where I have had behaviour issues within my classroom... My last few pracs and internships took place at a suburban, state school where I did have some practice. I do feel that I need more training, however, and that this could have come from a university based unit as well.*

These new teachers' experiences suggest that professional induction, including behaviour management, needs to be consistent and ongoing to build teachers' identity as professionals. Their communities of practice are not limited to the institution of the school but also extend to wider networks such as professional associations. Although deputies were seen as linchpins to accessing PD within schools, information about out-of-school PD events often came from middle management within schools, such as Heads of Department (HOD). The new teachers all reflected on their own responsibility to seek out mentors, involve themselves in professional associations and to gain access to PD. This suggests that teachers' need to take individual responsibility to reflect on their own practice and mutually engage in communities of practice within schools and wider networks (Wenger, 2008).

Professional Identity and Self Reflection

All the subjects interviewed advocated "reflective teaching**,"** which they said they had also learnt at the pre-service level. Partly it is reflective practice that allowed these beginning teachers to actively seek PD opportunities. They each felt responsible for accessing their own PD. In most cases the new teachers were highly critical of the compulsory PD sessions funded by their respective schools and provided by the governing bodies, Queensland Studies Authority (QSA) and Education Queensland (EQ). One new teacher described these as "badly organized ...and just boring." They each took the initiative to attend their professional associations' events and in so doing, identified themselves as "part of a professional community." Significantly, two new teachers had presented their work at a state-wide English teachers' conference as pre-service teachers. One said that as a result of this she felt she "belonged to a community." Another admitted "I feel supported… and the knowledge that...I am a professional even though I'm a pre-service teacher." This self-perception shows that professional development has the capacity to build professional identity, which was a common theme amongst all the new teachers.

One of the reasons this group was selected is that they were all active in their professional associations at state level. They were encouraged to join as pre-service teachers and all of them continued their membership into their teaching lives. In this way their induction into the profession started early by engaging in PD as part of a community of practice whilst at university. New teachers were very positive about being part of the professional association, as one said "…the networking is invaluable ...it gives you roots you know. It also makes you feel part of a larger community."

> *I want to improve, that's my focus...It recharges your battery, it gives you so much back in return... good, fresh ideas... to go back to the classroom with something new, fresh, different, maybe something exciting. It can also sometimes we're too afraid to try things that we haven't done before... then we're more likely to be courageous out there. But [PD] can give you a new way of viewing the classroom… the student... your role as a teacher... and you can't devalue that.*
>
> *All the professional development I've attended has been very good quality… For ETAQ, I participated in the state conference this year where I attended workshops and I also presented a workshop seminar on using appraisal grammar using drama in English and that was quite helpful in terms of even increasing my own knowledge about the subject area, but also increasing my networking and my contacts and knowledge of the English ... networks in Queensland.*

One beginning teacher had undertaken 52 hours of formal PD, which is well in excess of the 30 hours required for registration. The state school she worked in had provided the required 30 PD hours, including compulsory PD on the new English Syllabus run by the Queensland Studies Authority (QSA), which oversees the curriculum, and Education Queensland (EQ), the state education employment body. The new teacher summed up the experience as "stumbling... dull... and hard to follow." This is alarming as the new Syllabus needed to be presented explicitly, since it underpins planning, design and assessment. This corroborates the literature that compulsory "one-off" PD of this kind is often not useful for new teachers.

This teacher paid for 22 PD hours herself. She said all the voluntary PD she had "over heard about... and not everybody (beginning teachers) went to them." The school provided access to a weekend retreat on resilience, run by the Beginning Teachers' Association, which she described as:

> …fantastic in terms of teaching resilience and you're juggling lots of balls... and one of those balls is more precious than the others... that's the self and the one you can't drop no matter what... In the first nine months I had to sacrifice everything to manage the job, to keep producing creative, interesting lessons.

Regarding access to PD, one new teacher said "there's nothing that I've wanted to do that I have been denied, which is good. But having said that, I don't think I've been aware of every opportunity that's become available." As a mature, new teacher, she realised it was her own responsibility to access PD and she made a list of "things to do" to embed new strategies and ideas into her practice after each session. She became a personal member of the state English and History associations, to ensure that she received the information about available PD "because you can't depend on others." She maintained that "professional development… rejuvenates your spirit, it motivates you all over again... it's critical."

Mentoring and managing up in a teaching community

The theme of "community" came through very strongly across the beginning teachers' talk. They either suffered by not being part of a community, or flourished within one. This reflects the importance of good mentoring, but all the new teachers were effectively "managing up" (Maynard, 2000) by seeking mentors and opportunities to become involved in the school community. The "Top of the Class" MCEETYA report (2007) notes "much in current systems works against beginning teachers being provided with an appropriate level of support as they move from being a provisionally registered teacher to a fully registered teacher … induction experience is highly variable" (MCEETYA, 2007, p. p.84). The report recommends that beginning teachers be provided with support from professionally trained mentors both during the induction year and, importantly, throughout the early years of teaching. In the case of the beginning teachers in this study however, when the mentors were chosen by the school this often presented problems, which the new teachers solved by finding their own collegial mentors, often closer to their own ages:

> *... I was assigned a dynamic mentor, whose personality was more suited to the corporate world. I found I got more help from my HOD who was closer to my own age and was similar to me in terms of personality.*
>
> *I'm a person who takes initiative naturally so I guess I would always approach it by speaking to people, involving myself in projects where assistance and volunteers are required, getting to know faculty, taking initiative with certain students and building networks in order to help me work with those students. And I find that by creating those networks and building those relationships I'm able to discover the people to whom I can best go to for specific advice, for specific mentoring.*

It seems that informal mentoring arrangements can yield effective results, especially when the subject HOD in the staff room was the mentor. Most of the new teachers understood and described the horrendous workloads of their mentors, many of whom were mid career teachers. One said "...mentoring is good but the problem is you have to take the initiative. You have to go and see them and they are busy people too, so you don't want to offload onto them." Another reported "...the man who sits next to me answers every single question that I have...I'm a first year teacher so I have twice as many as everyone else, but he answers teachers' questions the entire day." New teachers reported that many of these busy HODs themselves are close to "teacher burn out" and some found an alternative to the assigned mentor by "buddying" with beginning teacher colleagues. They were, however,

grateful for any support they received as one new teacher put it "…sometimes you feel like a lonely warrior... no one else is in the classroom with you. I reckon teaching would have to be one of the loneliest professions if you were in a school that had no friendship… no support."

Peer mentoring was seen to be desirable both during pre-service practica and in the first year of teaching. Sometimes this was seen as a safer option for pre-service teachers who were being evaluated on their teaching performance. One suggested that pre-service teachers find:

> *... someone close to their experience level to give them peer support... there are certain questions that I wanted to ask my supervising teachers but I never did because I know that they would… maybe hold that against me. And that was me playing the game...but some questions were left unanswered.*

Even though validation from peers was seen as important, one new teacher said of her English HOD mentor's compliments "it's nice but it's not the main thing." Furthermore, some new teachers had become mentors in their own right. One spoke of a recently graduated colleague (her age 22), who had organized a regional conference for other beginning teachers. Another first year teacher had been noticed by his school's administration team as having maturity and reflective skills to mentor the pre-service cohort at the school:

> *... the deputy principal of the school got me as a first year teacher out to speak to them [prac students] . I'd written a blog on my first 100 days as a teacher... I read that out to them. All of a sudden they realised that not only had I gone through what they're going through, but that I was still figuring things out and all of those pre-service teachers ... said "What do you do when this happens?"*

One beginning teacher's wish list for professional development included "funding and/or time opportunities to be involved in formal study...There's meant to be a limit on how many classes a first year teacher teaches, potentially working that into the time set aside for PD."

> *It would be good to see them [ETAQ] do ...a one day seminar for pre-service and beginning teachers.... where you talk about issues like English specific behaviour management, year level specific problems, teacher language, appropriate texts…....a resource swap…. and a beginning teaching forum, because I had a friend of mine who was actually on the forum. People were able to ask questions "what was it like moving out there, what was your biggest challenge as a beginning teacher, what do you think you need more support to do, what would you not do if you were to start your job again"?*

One bright graduate recommended that "students...make [professional] networks." Another wanted PD for "..recognising standards for grades... I'm still off, I'm a harsher marker than my mentor teacher was and she's been in the job for twenty years." This was echoed by a fellow new teacher, whose students thought she "marked too hard." Another new teacher demonstrated her own professional identity and a clear sense of direction by suggesting:

> *A lot of people are leaving their degrees with a clear sense of what they want to specialise in;... counselling... Indigenous education... and single sex environments. There needs to be that professional development... anywhere between the last semester of the degree right through to maybe three or four years out.*

Another pre-service teacher wished retrospectively for "... an ongoing mentorship program which could be initiated from the first time a student starts doing an education program... continuing contact with teaching professionals in a school."

Discussion

What comes through strongly in the data is that whilst beginning teachers' university courses prepared them well for their subject content, they wanted consistent and ongoing in-service PD, specific to beginning teachers, conducted in schools. They thought this was necessary to keep up with the constant curricular change at policy level. They also all expressed the need for professional development to address "real issues" for beginning teachers, such as behavioral management, and the challenge of incorporating ICTs into their subject areas. New teachers in this study saw professional development as their own responsibility. Furthermore they did not limit themselves to PD provided by the school, nor to the 30 hours required for registration. In fact, they suggested that this amount of annual professional development actually falls short of what beginning teachers need. The study, though small in scale, shows how even though the culture in each school is different in terms of accessing mentoring and professional development, it is the individual beginning teacher's responsibility to locate effective mentors as part of their developing professional identity. Finally this study shows that even beginning teachers do reflect critically on their practice (Schon, 1987). Clearly beginning teachers have well defined ideas about the professional development they need. This may inform leadership teams in schools who manage the required professional development of new teachers. Rather than seeing teaching as merely a job, new teachers describe and value schools and professional associations as communities of practice, in which their burgeoning identity as professionals can grow.

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