Conference Presentations and Workshops

Professional Learning and Post-Secondary Teaching: Investigating Faculty's Lived Experiences of Development in Teaching Practice

ABSTRACT

This research study seeks to better understand the experience of mid-career development in teaching practice from the perspective of faculty themselves. This focus addresses several gaps in the current research which include: the lack of empirical research on mid-career post-secondary faculty; the lack of research on the experience of development from the perspective of faculty; the lack of research that views development in teaching practice as a complex professional learning process that involves individual, social, and contextual elements as well as interrelationships between these elements.

To address these gaps, this research study adopts a sociocultural perspective of learning and a phonological approach to the research. A sociocultural perspective views learning as holistic and situated in the context of activity or practice – in this case, teaching practice. A phenomenological approach examines descriptions of experiences of a phenomenon in order to uncover a structure of that experience.

This research study employed a descriptive phenomenological approach using data from 12 interview participants and 21 survey participants. Participants were mid-career college faculty and came from two different institutions. The interview and online survey questions were phenomenological in that they were designed to elicit rich descriptions of the raw experience of development in teaching practice. The data was analyzed using Giorgi’s (2009) descriptive phenomenological approach and from the analysis, a structure of the experience of development in teaching practice emerged.

The findings of this study are related to the multi-phased and multidimensional structure of experience that emerged from the data. This structure includes four phases of the experience – a catalyst phase, an idea development phase, an implementation phase, and an outcomes phase. Each phase involves individual, social, and contextual elements as well as interrelationships between these elements. These interrelationships are examined through the lens of Billett’s (2002) theory of co-participation, a theory that views workplace learning as resulting from an interaction between workplace affordances and individual engagement. This multi-phased and multidimensional structure offers a conceptual basis for deconstructing professional learning related to development in teaching practice for mid-career college faculty.

Academic Record

Doctor of Philosophy – Educational Technology and Learning Design, Simon Fraser University

Dissertation – Professional Learning and Post-Secondary Teaching: Investigating Faculty’s Lived Experiences of Development in Teaching Practice

Master of Adult Education – St. Francis Xavier University

Thesis – Facilitation of Professional Development for Educators, Adopting Online Learning into Teaching Practice

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Awards

2012 Fall Graduate Fellowship
2011 Spring President’s PhD Research Stipend
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