

Developing a professional identity as a teacher



To me, motivation is the first and foremost driven force for a teacher to develop professional identity. If a person does not have the ambition for a profession, it is easy to drop the struggle in vein. Motivation can persist in form of altruistic, intrinsic, extrinsic reasons or combination of all among teachers to choose teaching as a profession. In an explanatory way, “altruistic reasons: deal with seeing teaching as a socially worthwhile and important job, a desire to help children succeed and a desire to help society improve” (Coulthard, 2000, p. 117, as cited in Thomson, Turner, & Nietfeld, 2011). On another hand, intrinsic motivation is “doing an activity for its inherent satisfaction rather than for some separable consequences. In contrast, extrinsic motivation is defined as “doing an activity for the attainment of a separable outcome” (Deci & Ryan, 2000, p. 56, as cited in Thomson, Turner, & Nietfeld, 2011). Vanessa, Early Childhood Teacher concluded that, passion to work with children and inspiration from teachers with whom she had worked or who shaped her educational degrees are the reasons to build an aspiration in her to choose teaching. To build a different bonding with the children and their parents along with an aim to keep the children the way they are have become the eternal visions to make a different difference in teaching sector, according to Vanessa (Vanessa, February, 2015). On another note, Christine, Secondary School Teacher argued that, even though teaching was never a chosen profession beforehand, gradual interaction with learners in special education sector triggered herself to join teaching later on. Even though initially teaching was a platform to expose own creativity through making lesson plans or content structure, on the long way to journey, teaching had become synonymous of love for the students. To her, it is the best to become a mentor to show

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guidance being with them instead of having a superior position over them and this is how a teacher's professional identity must develop by providing a sense of belongingness (Christine, February, 2015). So, visibly through the lens of shared experiences, for Vanessa, altruistic and intrinsic motivation have interplayed successfully where she held a desire to benefit children alongside the self-less affection for teaching, as a profession whereas in Christine, Intrinsic motivation made her heart placed into teaching.

However, followed by motivation in the row second comes 'experience' which is kind of an aspect, never to devalue in anyway. Experience which emends the professional identity of a teacher over time through increased knowledge and practice. It is the proficient journey which enacts professionalism of a person over others in a row. "As a result of experience, teachers seem to have developed rich, well-organized knowledge bases that enable them to draw readily on their past experiences" (Calderhead, 1996, as cited in Beijaard, Verloop, & Vermunt, 1999). In this regard, arising frequent questions, taking risks, listening to the unheard sayings of children, and most importantly developing a relationship with colleagues to learn better are few steps to brighten as a pre-service teacher' Christine (February, 2015). And these precious responses cannot be retrieved from anyone except having a profound professional identity enriched with experiences of trials and errors. This are experiences which help the teacher to realize which teaching methods will be useful or what content should be modified to feed the learners' need efficiently. And also, the perk of experience lies in the fact that anyone can use experiences related to other aspects of life in teaching whenever needed and it is visible when Christine

concluded that she had used problem solving skills of another course into her English teaching lessons. “ Another finding reveals that the experiences the participants had and the people they met during the teaching practice period were vital in shaping the way they valued themselves, including their commitment, motivation and the satisfaction of becoming a trainee teacher”(Khalid, 2014).

Learning theories shape the nature of learning, hence comes teaching. Teachers need to try, practice, and amend different theories of learning to finalize which suits the best for proper learning of the students since profound teaching is theory driven. Vanessa(February, 2015) argues that ‘ Sociocultural’ frame of learning theory has made difference in her teaching because of which she turned out to be more accessible to children’s families than before; such theory complied her understanding of learning which is relational to the background of a student along with several other factors and materials of teaching itself. It had become easier for her to teach when her learners became more aware of their social and cultural existence where they belong to. Likewise, different learning theories may tailor the classroom teaching for another teacher. For example, Christine(February, 2015) points out that ‘ Vygotsky’s theory’ has helped her to recognize her students’ individual goals to assess where they are at present and where they need to be by moving forward. It has given her a wisdom of evaluating her learners along with summative and formative assessment of having personal conversations with them to recognize their skill levels. On a beneficial note, it helped to compare between where the students thought they were and where she thought they were and making further changes accordingly.

Pedagogy is an umbrella term under which factors of different paradigms exist each of which are equally a necessity to develop a professional identity of an educator. It is the ' quality of pedagogy that most directly and most powerfully affects the quality of learning' (Department of Education and Training [NSW] 2003, p. 4, as cited in Moss, 2016, p. 38). It vastly is a combination of how to teach and what to teach to the learners which determines the professional identity of a learner severely. It variably also includes physical and emotional environment in the class, class rules and discourse of the class, structure of groups works or working as groups (Nirenjan, 2017). In this regard, collaborative pedagogy helps to determine class rules which can lead to consistent discipline by providing dignity and respect to everyone to ensure social environment of a class by assuring proper class culture.