



BECOMING A TEACHER EDUCATOR

Student perspectives on navigating
brave spaces in teacher education
and re-shaping professional learning
for professional practices through
complexity

Becoming a Teacher Educator

"Before the session I was feeling VERY nervous. Gyms can be intimidating places at the best of times, so I was relieved at my warm welcome. I left the session absolutely buzzing! Everybody was so nice and I instantly felt welcome. It was a lot to take in but I learned a lot. I know tomorrow I will be in absolute bits. I'm so happy that I had to courage to take part. I wish I had started this sooner....."

Scrapbook entry - 26th January 2026





I also found that repeating key techniques allowed me to ask myself questions, such as 'What happens if I increase the thickness of that ink line before applying a wash?' or 'How does white gouache act upon a darker watercolour paint?' This reminded me of the processes of teaching sprints, or practitioner enquiry, wherein clear questions and structured reflection can help teachers move from vague or scattergun improvements into more meaningful and analytical change.

- Leading Professional Learning (ES course)
- Coaching for success
- Middle leadership & Leadership Matters
 - Beach schools
 - Professional Recognition
- Google and apple awards
- Mandatory courses/modules

PLANNED

FORMAL

- Events within the Local Authority (e.g. literacy moderation)
- conferences and events

Taking on a role as an education consultant opened my eyes to the other side of delivering professional learning and the challenges that come with that. Looking back I was knowledgeable in my field but lacked experience and knowledge of delivery. Having recently read more on this topic I wonder how much of what I shared had any impact on practice at all?

Personal Reflections

My self-study helped me frame myself as a teacher educator and consider the assumptions I make about those I work with. Becoming more critically reflective using the questions raised by Brookfield (2017) I was able to adapt my practice and thus have a positive impact within the team I am currently leading. Sharing these assumptions with the team has also been insightful and helpful to build the team's 'we' identity as well as supporting individuals to reflect upon their own personal identity within a professional learning context. I have purposefully developed my own knowledge and understanding of andragogy to enable me to deliver teacher education to the best of my ability. Reflections on my own PL show that I am driven to be better by personal motivation, not pre-determined teacher standards, living

- Personal Reading
- Reading groups
- World Education Summit webinars

INFORMAL

Working with and learning from others day to day (EY Team)

Qualitative methods of data gathering. The gathering of reflection in a scrapbook has helped me to gather evidence and critically reflect along the way. Trustworthiness as validation - I reflected on my behaviours, attitudes and experiences exploring the nuances and context including the tutors/coaches and other learners, and believe they provide a credible and trustworthy source of information to base my findings on.

Professional Learning Journey

It's all about the journey...

Learning is not linear, it is complex and can be viewed through many different lenses...

"Experiences are rooted in the emotions we feel."
(Brookfield, 2017)

"Effective teacher professional learning is motivated by their need to know rather than someone else's desire to tell."
(Timerley, 2011)

"Feedback and having a critical friend can prove useful in helping to challenge deeply held beliefs."
(Hamilton, 2018)

"Experience must precede understanding."
(Russell, 2007)

"Self-study begins with wonderments about your practice."
(Samaras, 2010)

The authors theorise and consider what a transformative approach to teacher professional learning may look like in the future. They argue that professional learning and development needs to be transformative which can only happen if teachers are viewed through a **complex ecological lens**. They recognise that there is a need for more transformative professional development models that will increase capacity for professional autonomy and teacher agency. They argue that a 'complexity-informed professional learning process' needs to recognise **two main themes as the key to the future**;

Although I had full **autonomy** in my choice of self-study, I became conscious of the lack of **accountability** for my choice of professional learning (PL). I questioned if I had become too used to a particular format or agentive style of professional learning that is time dependent, immediately actionable that leads to certification or results (Keay et al., 2019), when in fact, self-study research and professional inquiry should be the process of identifying a problem or issue, enacting research and assessing/examining the impact of your actions (Samaras, 2011). This lack of accountability and unfamiliar measurement of success although championed by the Standards for Life-long learning (GTCS, 2021) is not necessarily recognisable as the norm. This is acknowledged in the 'Professional Update' study conducted by Brack et al., (2026).

COLLEGIATE ASSESSMENT FORUM

STUDENT VOICE IN APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT

Students submit
portfolio of key
evidence from
self-study

Submission is
discussed with
reference to
learning outcomes
of the course

Roving moderator
moves between
groups

Students attend
collegiate
assessment forum

- Small groups led by tutor
- Time allocated for tutor and peer reading of portfolios

Grading contract
applied and
feedback collated
by tutor



THANK YOU



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Student Participants

- Alan Forrester
- Lorna Henderson
- Laura MacGregor
- Jenny Marr

FURTHER READING

Brandenburg, Robyn, Dawn Garbett, Alan Patrick Ovens, and Lynn Thomas. 'Experienced Teacher Educators Hunting Assumptions to Examine Their Pedagogy: An International Collaborative Study'. *Frontiers in Education* 7 (January 2023): 1036718. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2022.1036718>.

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Davis, Brent, and Dennis J. Sumara. 'Cognition, Complexity, and Teacher Education'. *Harvard Educational Review* (Cambridge, United States) 67, no. 1 (1997): 105–25.

Davis, Brent, and Dennis J. Sumara. 'Challenging Images of Knowing: Complexity Science and Educational Research'. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 18, no. 3 (2005): 305–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518390500082293>.

Garbett, Dawn, and Alan Ovens. 'Being a Teacher Educator: Exploring Issues of Authenticity and Safety Through Self-Study'. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education* 37, no. 3 (2012). <https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2012v37n3.3>.

Garbett, Dawn. 'Horse Riding 101: The Role of Experience in Reframing Teacher Education Practices'. *Studying Teacher Education* 7, no. 1 (2011): 65–75. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17425964.2011.558371>.

