



Eaude, T. (2018). *Developing the expertise of primary and elementary classroom teachers: Professional learning for a changing world.* London: Bloomsbury.

Pp. 222

ISBN 978-1-350-03189-0

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In *Developing the Expertise of Primary and Elementary Classroom Teachers*, Tony Eaude continues examining the complicated work of teaching that he began in previous publications. This book aims to fill a gap he identified earlier by suggesting how expertise in teaching is, and can be, developed. The book is intended to provoke thought and challenge assumptions related to teacher expertise and teacher identity, specifically for primary and elementary teachers. The author cautions that this book is not a manual, primer, or response to policy but is instead a summary of reflections on many pieces of research on the author's and other teachers' experiences. The book is indeed thought provoking and represents a deep and wide view of teaching expertise. The contents are relevant to contemporary education; topics include standardization, loss of teacher autonomy, the emotional work of teaching, and the need for strong professional identity if one is to remain in the profession.

Developing the Expertise of Primary and Elementary Classroom Teachers

Professional Learning for a
Changing World

Tony Eaude

B L O O M S B U R Y

Eaude's book deals mainly with England, but is written for an international audience, as the issues are relevant in many countries. He points out many commonalities that remind the reader that contexts may change, but the issues surrounding teaching are widely shared. Eaude writes from experience as a classroom teacher in two primary schools and as a headmaster of a multicultural first school for nine years. His doctoral work focused on teachers of young children, and his subsequent writings have investigated aspects of teaching. His experiences enrich the book, providing specific examples from the field.

Developing the Expertise of Primary and Elementary Classroom Teachers is divided into three parts. After a foundational introduction, Eaude first sets the scene for the reader by examining the context of primary education and teacher education. Then, he discusses how expertise is developed for a primary classroom teacher. Finally, he discusses how professional identity is developed as a primary classroom teacher. The book includes a helpful appendix, glossary, bibliography, and index.

Taking the readers on a journey through history, Eaude examines how teaching and education have changed over the years. He marks the 1970s and on as the point where teachers began to lose autonomy due to increasing political control. The year 1988 marked the arrival of England's national curriculum and thus an increased focus on data and testing that persists today. He argues that the outcomes expected from schools have increased dramatically, and emphasis on test scores forces teachers to comply with initiatives and mandates. These initiatives and mandates are often given to and enforced in schools by politicians who believe learning is linear. This situation created the current era of constant change with a strong focus on standards and competencies.

Because of this focus on standards and competencies, Eaude argues that teachers today must deal with dilemmas related to

control, curriculum, and the larger society. Finding balance can be exhausting when coupled with a constant need for decision-making sapping energy daily.

The author also examines the emotional work of teaching and reminds the reader that emotion is not just characteristic of a person, but also involves an interaction between persons and their environment. For primary and elementary classroom teachers this means that they must attend to their own emotional needs while constantly making decisions and deferring to power, authority, and mandates. They must also simultaneously attend to their students' emotional well-being, maintaining control of the classroom without taking away a child's sense of agency. Eaude reminds us how very difficult the act of teaching is and how important it is for teachers to be empowered to employ a growing expertise in meaningful ways when teaching young students.

Eaude reminds readers that expertise is developed over thousands of hours and never stops growing. This development is not linear and shifts with new understanding. The development of teacher expertise is learned over time and must be supported as new teachers enter the profession in order for them to feel and be successful.

Eaude cites many sources of research on teacher expertise but cautions readers not to draw simplistic conclusion from the research. He also is not convinced that teachers must engage *in* research but they should engage *with* research and stay up to date with a "critical appreciation and healthy skepticism" (p. 82). Processes to support the development of teacher expertise are highlighted in Part II and several reflective models are presented as lenses for examining the support of growing expertise. He encourages the reader to use different approaches for supporting teachers' growing expertise in a low stakes manner to encourage honest and self-critical ways of thinking.

In a similar vein, Eade discusses methods within inclusive classrooms and the need to challenge teachers' deep-seated beliefs and assumptions as they reflect on their practice and growing expertise. This portion of the book feels very relevant to the current state of education internationally. Inclusivity is recognized as an overarching need in all educational contexts in the current era, and a discussion about teacher expertise without mentioning inclusivity would have been incomplete.

In Part III, Eade presented his concern with the current state of teaching as a profession and teachers as independent professionals. He reminds the reader that teachers must develop a robust, but flexible, sense of personal and professional identity in order to stay the course when tough times arrive. Just as Eade highlighted the growing pressure as standardization produces less autonomy, he examines the delicate balance between a teacher's strong sense of vocation and idealism and the push toward a performance-based movement. If this balance is disrupted, it can harm a primary teacher's sense of identity in their chosen profession.

Developing and supporting a strong and positive self-identity in primary teachers should be a goal for all teacher education and professional mentoring endeavors. This can be accomplished, the author reminds us, through vehicles such as involvement in professional learning communities, mentoring, and continual professional learning in trusting environments.

Eade asserts in his summation that "teacher education must be seen as a continuum, extending the range of teachers' experiences and understanding, in an informed

way, throughout their career, so that they can adapt to changing contexts, rather than just training skills and techniques" (p.184). To address this range, he discusses implications for pre-qualification as well as in-service teacher education.

Eade ends with implications for research and policy. He lists three areas where more specific research would be valuable: longitudinal research for a period of at least seven years that studies how expertise is refined and extended; qualitative studies exploring how primary classroom teachers understand their professional identity; and examinations of teachers with a high level of expertise at different stages in their careers.

As a preservice teacher educator, I was not disappointed by Eade's analysis. It serves as a strong reminder of the importance of developing expertise and strong positive identities in primary teachers and of the importance of continual support and nurturing of in-service teachers as they grow and face professional challenges. The author examines outside factors, like policies and standardization, that threaten a positive self-identity and the growth of expertise..


Developing the Expertise of Primary and Elementary Classroom Teachers contains foundational knowledge presented in an interesting and thought-provoking manner. Enjoyable to read and easily digested, the book's organization allowed for reading in sections and reflecting on content. I especially enjoyed the conclusions and calls for additional research. After reading this book, I felt prompted as a scholar to learn even more about expertise and identity in teachers and the role they play in teacher education and teacher retention.

About the Reviewer

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