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From a personal theory to a grounded theory of staff development

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**FROM A PERSONAL THEORY TO A GROUNDED THEORY
OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of
the requirements for the award of the degree**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

from

THE UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

by

**JANICE BETINA TURBILL
MEd (Sydney), BA (Macquarie)**



**FACULTY OF EDUCATION
1993**

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ABSTRACT

This study set out to develop a grounded theory of staff development for teachers. The aims of the study were:

- to evaluate the impact that a staff development program, called *Frameworks*, had on teachers beliefs and practices in literacy education
- to evaluate a personally developed staff development theory which underpinned the design and delivery of that program
- as a consequence of the above, to develop a staff development theory which had been formally grounded in the real world of classrooms and schools.

The study employed a naturalistic mode of inquiry, and in particular was framed by the parameters of a responsive constructivist evaluation paradigm. The methods of naturalistic inquiry were employed. In particular there was a strong emphasis on a hermeneutic/dialectic process which takes full advantage, and account, of the observer/observed interaction in order to create a constructed reality that is as informed and sophisticated as it can be made at a particular point in time.

The study comprised four case studies of four class teachers which analyse and describe their experiences as a result of their participation in the eight week program. These four case studies were further analysed into a construction of *Frameworks* as it was run in the Gorham Middlesex School District (more commonly known as Marcus Whitman Central School District).

A theory of staff development grounded in the data emerged which has been depicted in schematic form and described in detail. Recommendations for the future of staff development, based on the principles emerging from this theory are made. Finally it is argued that effective staff development in the future is contingent upon the adoption of a new paradigm of teacher learning, namely, one that views learning cultures of teachers as social semiotic systems.

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