



From the

AERA Online Paper Repository

<http://www.aera.net/repository>

Paper Title The Other Side of Teacher Motivation

Author(s) Judith A. MacCallum, Murdoch University; Veronica Morcom, Murdoch University

Session Title Teachers' Motivation and Well-Being From a Career Stage Perspective

Session Type Session Paper

Presentation Date 4/8/2011

Presentation Location New Orleans, Louisiana, USA

Descriptors

Methodology

Unit Division C - Learning and Instruction

Each presenter retains copyright on the full-text paper. Repository users should follow legal and ethical practices in their use of repository material; permission to reuse material must be sought from the presenter, who owns copyright. Users should be aware of the [Ethical Standards of the American Educational Research Association](#).

Citation of a paper in the repository should take the following form:
[Authors.] ([Year, Date of Presentation]). [Paper Title.] Paper presented at the [Year] annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association. Retrieved [Retrieval Date], from the AERA Online Paper Repository.

THE OTHER SIDE OF TEACHER MOTIVATION: ISSUES OF TEACHER SELF-EFFICACY AND WELL-BEING WHEN INNOVATING IN THE CLASSROOM

Judith MacCallum and Veronica Morcom
Murdoch University

Paper presented at the Symposium titled Teachers' Motivation and Well-Being From a Career Stage Perspective, AERA 2011

Abstract

Framed within a sociocultural perspective, this paper examines the motivation of four teachers to develop aspects of their instructional practice in an Australian primary school. One teacher (the second author) had developed a collaborative classroom using a range of strategies (such as social circle, class agreements, weekly class meeting) to engage students in decision-making about their learning. Subsequently she mentored three colleagues (two experienced and one second-year teacher) as they introduced more interactive elements into their classroom practice. The teachers' motivation is examined in terms of their self-efficacy, valuing of the practices and their wellbeing in relation to the contexts in which motivation emerged and changed over time.

INTRODUCTION

Teacher motivation and well-being are paramount concerns in a climate where graduate teachers are leaving the profession after 3-5 years and experienced teachers are suffering fatigue due to constant changes (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Fullan, 2001). The concept of teacher self-efficacy is considered to relate to teachers' perceptions of their ability to bring about change in the classroom with their students, and to affect their willingness to adopt new teaching strategies and persist when there are challenges (Bandura, 1997). Research about teachers' positive self-efficacy and well-being has been linked to teaching students social and emotional skills in the authentic context of the classroom (Deakin Crick, 2002; Walberg, Zins and Weissberg, 2004). This approach requires teachers to use interactive strategies with students in school contexts. When there is disparity between a teacher's pedagogical beliefs and the school context it can have a negative influence on teacher self-efficacy, well-being and motivation, creating undue stress (Hargreaves, 2003; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). These issues need to be addressed to safeguard the future of the teaching profession.

This paper examines the motivation of four teachers in an Australian primary school, at different stages in their careers, as they developed aspects of their instructional practice that provided opportunities for student interaction in authentic classroom contexts to develop social and emotional skills.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Framed within a sociocultural perspective that positions motivation as social in nature (Walker, 2010), this paper explores the complex relationships between the social world and the world of the individual. There is an assumption that individual motivation is embedded in the social context and arises from the social aspects of learning thus it is not separated from it (Vygotsky, 1978). Rogoff (2003) argues that “humans develop through their changing participation in the sociocultural activities of their communities, which also change” (p. 11). Thus teacher motivation arises from the activities of the classroom and school and (in this research) in teachers’ participation in focus group meeting, which is dynamic.

The concept of teacher self-efficacy is used as a starting point to examine teacher motivation as it relates classroom instructional practice. This recognises the social nature of self-efficacy and motivation (Friedman & Kass, 2002; Teemant, Wink & Tyra, 2011). Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) reviewed research showing that teachers with high self-efficacy demonstrate a more enthusiastic attitude and commitment towards student learning and outcomes and are more likely to stay in teaching. However, they argue that self-efficacy is ‘elusive’ due to difficulties with definition and, therefore, measurement of the construct. There is general agreement that ‘personal teaching efficacy’ has to do with one’s feelings of competence as a teacher, but the level of contextual specificity is unclear. In addition, there is lack of consensus on the other factors outside a teacher’s control, which have been called ‘general teaching efficacy’ (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001, p. 792).

Until recently a majority of studies of teacher self-efficacy have focussed exclusively on the classroom context to the exclusion of the institutional aspect of a teacher’s professional work (Friedman & Kass, 2002). To partly address this issue, Friedman and Kass’s (2002) have developed a conceptual model of teacher self-efficacy (CSC) that embraces the Classroom Context and the School Context, which are the two main domains in which a teacher operates. This model recognises that teachers operate at least within two social systems at the institutional and class level. The teacher has to manage relationships both within the classroom with the students and parents, and outside the classroom with work colleagues, principal, and often parents as well. A teacher needs to meet multiple goals in the role of an educator and employee of an educational institution. This links to Fullan’s (2001) assertion that to understand the inner workings of educational reform we need to look at the big and small picture and the perspectives of the administrators, teachers, students and parents as well as consider the organisational and institutional factors.

To further elaborate teacher self-efficacy within a sociocultural perspective, self-efficacy needs to be examined both at a personal level and a collective level. At a personal level the teacher works independently, and with their students in their classrooms, but also teachers work at a collective level with each other (in small focus groups during this research project). Friedman and Kass (2002) argue that collective efficacy is different from their conceptualisation of organisational or school efficacy but may be linked in some way. In line with a sociocultural perspective, Rogoff’s (1995, 2003) analytical planes provide a different framework to identify the features of teacher self-efficacy at the institutional, interpersonal and personal levels. Each plane in turn is foregrounded with the other planes in the background allowing

consideration of the contributions from individuals, their social partners, and historical traditions and materials. Thus teacher interactions with each other, with students, parents and colleagues are important at the interpersonal plane, and school and wider educational issues at the community plane. At the personal plane the teachers relate their experiences that reveal their personal self-efficacy when faced with challenges during the research project.

METHOD

One teacher (the second author who is referred to as the ‘teacher mentor’) had implemented a collaborative classroom research project¹ in the primary school in 2007, and in the following years mentored three colleagues (two very experienced teachers and one second-year teacher) to introduce more interactive elements into their classroom practice. At the conclusion of the 2007 project, a target group of ten students and their families were selected to continue the research into the following Year 4 classrooms (2008). Their Year 4 teachers expressed an interest in learning more about values education and agreed to be mentored as they trialled similar social practices implemented by the teacher mentor, such as negotiating class agreements with students, the daily social circle and the weekly class meetings. The classes of two teachers included students who had been taught by the teacher mentor in previous years and the current class of the mentor teacher included students who were taught by the third teacher in the previous year. This situation provided additional comparative student information to inform the project that could be freely shared amongst the teachers in focus group meetings.

Research taking a sociocultural perspective uses methods that allow documentation of participation in authentic activities, such as the focus group meetings for the teachers and observation in each other’s classrooms. These activities encompass aspects of the personal and interpersonal actions of the participants, as well as interrelations with the broader community or institution. Qualitative methods were used because they are suited to data collected from the naturalistic setting of focus group meetings that can be varied and dynamic (Patton, 2002). The main sources of data for this paper are based on the transcripts of the teacher focus groups, pre and post teacher surveys, teacher reflective logs in emails, and the teacher mentor’s reflective log that provide insights into the issues that underpinned teachers’

¹ The mentor teacher had initially developed a collaborative classroom in 2004 using a range of strategies (such as the social circle, class agreements and weekly class meeting) to engage students in decision-making about their learning (MacCallum & Morcom, 2008; Morcom & MacCallum, 2009). In order to encourage student participation the teacher mentor adopted an approach that focused on negotiation and making explicit the values that underpinned the social practices of the classroom. Taking on a facilitator role the teacher modelled to students how to become leaders in small social groups in the classroom. The potential benefits of student leadership in the classroom to develop mature participation was evident in the earlier project (2004) and became the catalyst for the second project in 2007. When students take responsibility for their behaviour teachers can adopt roles that empower students to solve their social, emotional and academic issues. The results from the projects provided evidence that students developed empathy for each other, ceased bullying behaviours, and became more cooperative, confident, caring and independent in their learning.

motivation to engage in new practices in the classroom.

The participants negotiated the content and direction of the focus group meetings and qualitative methods were flexible enough to accommodate this approach. Transcripts of dialogue and logs were examined for aspects of teacher self-efficacy and documented in relation to the contexts in which they emerged and changed over time. Teacher confidence and self-efficacy is examined to understand how the research teachers developed and sustained their motivation to engage in innovative classroom practices that enhanced student interaction.

RESULTS

The findings are presented using Rogoff's (1995) three planes. Firstly, Rogoff's institutional plane is used to discuss the historical and institutional aspects that provided the school context for research. In particular the issues of ethics clearance processes to meet employer and university requirements, teacher collaboration, teacher employment status and workload are discussed. These issues contributed to the perceived interest and value teachers ascribed to the research project and affected teachers' level of commitment to innovate in the classroom.

The Institutional Plane

In Western Australia (WA) it is not common practice for teachers to conduct classroom-based research, while teaching full time. It is also not common for a teacher/researcher to invite colleagues to participate in projects designed by a classroom teacher. Prior to 2008, in order to gain ethics clearance, it was usual practice for a postgraduate student to gain ethics approval from the affiliated educational institution or university and the principal at the school site where the research was to be conducted. Towards the end of 2007, the Department of Education and Training (DET) in Western Australia established a new research policy, which required additional ethics permission forms that met DET criteria, prior to commencing the process of ethics approval from the university and approaching the school principal. These processes caused delays until the end of Term 1 (2008) which had the potential to derail the project. An additional requirement was that parents and their children had to sign separate forms that were lengthy and had the potential of discouraging participation. Despite these conditions all participants signed the forms which allowed a continuation of the 2007 project with students and parents, and the commencement of the 2008 teacher mentoring project with teachers, which is reported in this paper.

At the school level there was a clearly stated expectation from the principal and parents for all teachers to collaborate to provide uniformity in teaching and assessment at each year level. School organisation of students into two classes at each year level supported this expectation. The classrooms were grouped into three buildings or blocks, the junior (1-3), middle (4-5) and upper (6-7) primary. Teachers needed to find additional time to meet these expectations as part of the normal school operations and priorities. Therefore teachers who agreed to conduct additional research outside these parameters had little time to do so.

Teacher employment status was another consideration for the project. The teacher mentor and the Year 4 teachers were permanently appointed to the school.

When one of the Year 4 teachers decided to pursue another career at the end of Term 1, the remaining teacher Adriana had to establish a new collaborative partnership with the replacement teacher Julie, who was a second year graduate teacher. Julie looked to Adriana for guidance because she had more teaching experience but both teachers were novices in this year level. Both Julie and Karen, the Year 1 teacher, held temporary employment status. They were reliant on the principal's and parents' approval to gain continued employment at the school.

All teachers, including the teacher mentor were establishing 'year level' collaborative partnerships due to commencing in different year levels in 2008, so there was an ongoing workload issue and finding time to collaborate. Fortunately the teacher mentor was involved in a project that provided professional learning opportunities for teachers at the school. This situation alleviated teacher concerns about additional workload because the funding was used to release the teachers from face to face teaching to attend three half day focus group sessions to which the principal agreed.

Due to the delays in gaining ethics approval the teachers established their classroom practices in their usual way but visited the teacher mentor's classroom in Term 1 to prepare for their subsequent implementation of new social practices. Teachers negotiated their class agreements with their students and implemented social practices such as the daily social circle in their classroom during Term 1, with individual teacher support from the teacher/mentor. At the end of Term 2 the Year 4 teachers had trialled weekly class meetings. When the teachers met at the first teacher focus group meeting they reflected on their progress and future direction of the project (3.7.08- Week 10).

At the interpersonal level, establishing collaborative partnerships with peers, students and parents to meet school expectations created constraints in relation to finding extra time to meet to discuss any issues. The teachers' comments in the following extracts from the focus group meetings reported in Rogoff's interpersonal plane contextualise how social and interpersonal issues supported and constrained the research project and affected teacher's self-efficacy and confidence during the project.

The Interpersonal Plane

The model adopted for mentoring was based on building professional partnerships (MacCallum, 2007) which recognised and used the expertise of all the participants. The teacher mentor did not want to promote an 'expert/novice' approach because the research was about empowering teachers to develop their strategies as they adopted and refined new social practices. The teacher mentor had the advantage of an established working relationship and friendship with these teachers prior to the research which facilitated open and honest dialogue. Building trust and a sense of social and emotional support was partly achieved through the use of small focus groups to negotiate the pace and structure of the research and ongoing informal discussion during the school day with all teachers throughout the project.

All participants were practising classroom teachers who had an established collaborative relationship working together on various school committees as well as with colleagues within the same year level, with the exception of Julie who joined the group in Term 2. Each teacher volunteered to be part of the project and demonstrated

a strong work ethic and showed commitment to the project. The school's academic record placed most students above the national benchmarks for literacy and numeracy and there was a strong focus on individual learning in all classrooms. This situation created a context where teachers were encouraged to prepare students for these test conditions that required working independently.

The comments of Adriana, Julie and Karen taken from the transcripts of the focus group meetings and pre and post teacher surveys illustrate the tensions and issues that impacted on the progress of the research project. Referring back to teacher's self-efficacy as delineated by Friedman and Kass (2002), at the classroom and organisational/school level, it is useful to understand how the teacher's ability to perform required tasks in the classroom with students and the organisational tasks that become part of its political and social processes impinge on teachers' time. Teachers need to prioritise their time and may lose motivation with the additional demands of innovating in their classrooms.

During the first focus meeting (3.7.08) Adriana discusses class meetings and reveals underlying issues that needed to be addressed for these teachers to feel successful about their new approach. Adriana and Julie recognised that the 2007 students were more confident and knowledgeable about what to do during class meetings, which provided a good foundation to further develop their skills. They had ongoing issues of resolving timetabling to include time for collaboration for planning and assessment. These issues as well as behaviour management and parental expectations pervaded the discourse for all teachers at these meetings.

Adriana ... when we started late [referring to the late start of the project] still lots of kids knew what to do and were keen to start. The kids came with the background knowledge from the work they had done with you [referring to the teacher mentor] and that's very obvious. Even though we hadn't started and half the cohort had not had the experience so although we didn't start until later in the year they have come with a lot of background knowledge and they have just developed on that. I guess we have had similar experiences but what I find is time to do it ... ummm... and I do have a talking stick that goes around and what we need is one voice at a time consistently. We refer back to our agreements and that's helpful.

Julie adds: I am new to Year 4 and I love working with Adriana but we need time to work out what we need to do and then there is the parents, what they want.

Adriana interjects: It's hard with our timetables. They are so full. I find that with the assessment load we have to keep our heads down and finding the time for this sort of stuff is hard because there isn't room on the timetable.

Teacher mentor: What do mean about the parents Julie?

Julie: Well they want to know what we are doing and some keep insisting on more homework for their child or they say they are 'bored'. It's all pressure.

Karen: I have the same in Year 1! (*Karen laughs*). I haven't done class meetings like the other two. I deal with things incidentally as they crop up with the children. I have started the social circle but I only find time for it once a week because I don't have my class every morning to start the day and I collaborate with the other teacher so I don't think I shouldn't ... *pause*...or I don't want to interfere with what she wants to do. She isn't doing these

sessions so I just do this when I have my class to myself. They love it! I wish I could do it more. (Transcript extracts, 1st focus group meeting, 3rd July, 2008)

These comments reveal the interplay of classroom and organisational efficacy for the teachers. Contextual issues such as maintaining collaborative collegial working relationships with teachers who were not part of the project, as in Karen's case, and parents who made additional homework demands on the Year 4 teachers further impinged on valuable teacher time. Teachers felt pressured to meet multiple expectations for students, their parents, their colleagues and to meet their own desire to innovate in their classroom. One could argue the teachers' comments of feeling 'pressure' from these external sources deeply affected their confidence and self-efficacy. All teachers wanted to find time to allow students to discuss issues that were important to them and valued by their teachers.

The teacher mentor was aware of the need to support the teachers and keep the focus on the benefit for students, which were continually reaffirmed by parents whose children were in the 2007 research project. These benefits were articulated by parents through the formal interviews that took place in 2008 with the target group of students and informally to teachers in the project. One parent whose child was in Adriana's class commented that prior to 2007 her child was educationally at risk, lacked confidence and did not enjoy school. 'My child grew in confidence last year and I am so grateful that she had the chance to be in that class' (Teacher mentor reflection log, 4th September, 2008).

In the next section each teacher's personal attempt to sustain their confidence and self-efficacy throughout the year is examined. Unravelling complex and dynamic situations that occur throughout the school year, some of which may not be anticipated, required commitment and belief in the value of the innovation to sustain personal motivation.

The Personal Plane

Even though there was mounting evidence of teachers' personal success with their classes as they implemented new social practices their self-efficacy did not follow a linear path. Throughout the year teachers expressed concern about workload and 'fitting everything in'. A closer examination of each teacher's journey reveals how they established common ground to support each other and worked within the constraints they identified. Extracts from the teachers' surveys at the beginning of the research reveal that all teachers were motivated to engage in the research because they primarily believed students would benefit (a key aspect of self-efficacy). The final teacher surveys conveyed common frustrations with finding the time to maintain their commitment to changing their practice when it was not a school priority and they perceived their efforts may not be valued by colleagues or the school administration.

Karen

Karen considered that her students were too young to discuss issues as a class group and preferred to deal with problems as they arose, rather than use a formal weekly class meeting. She had considerable success with this approach, which is stated in her comments that follow below. Parent comments made to her and other teachers, and written letters of commendation to the principal throughout the year confirmed parent perceptions of success.

Karen: It is about listening and staying with the child to get to their understanding- that's what you need to do with Year 1s. It's not taking sides but getting to the truth and seeing each other's POV- very hard for Year 1s. I am not sure Years 1s are ready for it as they are too young. (Transcript extract, 2nd focus group meeting, 28th July, 2008)

Karen used the social circle once a week in her class and made the following comments after observing this strategy in the teacher mentor's class.

Karen: ... as I had taught that group of students the previous year it was great to see quiet students expressing their feelings so freely and in a safe environment... (Extract from written reflection, Karen, 27th July, 2008)

Karen's commitment to values education was evidenced during the project not with the use of the suggested social practices but with practical activities that could be linked to students' values, feelings and emotions. In Term 3 she coordinated a collaborative project for six classes to make 'talking sticks' together, organised the materials, sent home notes to parents and set up these artefacts for display on an open night for parents and the community in Term 4, 2008. The children wrote stories about their feelings and important events and people in their lives that linked to the colours of the wool they chose to wrap around their talking sticks. Karen's leadership and organisational skills reflected her years of teaching experience and she volunteered the following year to be part of the National Values in Action Schools Project (Australian Government, DEEWR, 2009) with the teacher mentor who was also the coordinator.

In her final survey Karen's responses underplayed her ability to manage complex situations and reflected a lack of confidence to innovate during the project in her own classroom as she did not have permanent employment status nor in her perception the credibility from parents and the principal to innovate.

Karen: What stops me!!! Administration agenda, parents' views and priorities, collaborative teaching... new ideas are difficult to implement, lack of time... my position in the school and my credibility and the constraints of collaborating with an established teacher. (Transcript extract, 3rd focus group meeting, 10th November, 2008)

After the project finished Karen wrote an extensive reflective email which provided additional insights into the constraints of innovating in classrooms, how fragile teacher confidence can be irrespective of years of service and that innovation takes time.

Karen: Classrooms can be very insular and become stagnant... I like to try out new ideas slowly, make them work for me if seen to be worthwhile... I am in a situation where the program has been set for many years and there is not much time for new approaches... (Email extract, 10th January, 2009)

Julie

After participating in a social circle in the teacher mentor's class Julie

commented that student participation was like ‘glue that keeps the classroom community together’ (Teacher mentor’s reflection log, Term 1, 2008). Julie found when she started to use this strategy the students were eager because they were familiar with the process, which enhanced Julie’s confidence to implement this strategy but she struggled with her perceptions of having to meet parental and collegial expectations. She conducted regular class meetings and often doubted her ability to cope when faced with challenges.

Julie: Well I am new to the school and finding my feet so I think I need to fit in with Adriana. I think class meetings are great and the kids have lots of ideas- your kids (referring to the previous class teacher/mentor) kept asking me when we were going to start, especially Tamara, until I started. Then it is going well. I suppose if I get stuck then I can ask you (referring to the previous class teacher/mentor).

Teacher mentor: When you start off at the beginning your job is to establish that safe, caring environment so that all the children want to speak and when they trust and they feel they are getting some ownership of what’s going on... this is where the participation really changes dramatically.... this is part of the reason I think for me as a teacher it is personally empowering because it allows the children to take responsibility for their behaviour... for the children to know that we trust that they can sort out their problems, with help from us which is great. I don’t have all the answers. I ask the children... (Transcript extracts, 1st focus group meeting, 3rd July, 2008)

In the following extracts the teachers discussed developing confidence with parent communication although it is unclear whether the perceived pressure was related to implementing new social practices or addressing issues such as student homework. Karen suggested involving parents more but Adriana was concerned with where the time would be found. Julie interjected with a focus on the latest developments in her class meetings. The teacher mentor made the link that social practices take time to develop before parents see evidence that there have been changes in their students’ behaviour.

Karen: Maybe involve them more [referring to parents], explain things. I don’t know really.

Adriana: Yes but how and when? Where does the time come from?

[Pause]

Julie: We have just continued on with class meetings and I think we have found, like we discussed last time, that [pause] the ‘items’ have changed from just from the kids just picking little things such as ‘so and so has been calling me names’ –moved from social problems to how to set up the classroom and incorporate more art so kids thinking a bit deeper into their [pause] learning. Yes their learning and things they want to discuss, so that has been a real improvement I think. It has made the class meetings have a lot more depth in them. They are going well. If I forget the children remind me that it’s time for the class meeting. They’re really into it.

Teacher mentor: How are you finding the participation of the children?

Julie: Ummmm... Probably with the items ummm... it’s a lot of the same people, but I find that a lot more participating and giving their opinions to those items even if they don’t have something on the board they’re still putting

their opinion across.

Teacher mentor: So this all reinforces that this is actually a process. I found when I started doing this sort of stuff people...parents didn't really understand but when their children started to change- became happier to be at school, more confident then it got a little easier.

(Transcript extracts, 2nd focus group meeting, 28th July, 2008)

Even though Julie expressed uncertainty about her confidence to implement new social practices she volunteered to continue her learning by joining Karen in the National Values project the following year (Australian Government, DEEWR, 2009).

Adriana

Although Adriana struggled with finding time to conduct class meetings she provided insightful comments about her experiences. At times her statements seemed contradictory, recognising students' developing skills yet not sure if time should be allocated when students demonstrate pro social behaviour.

Adriana: But also they 'talked the talk'. They used the words that I was familiar that you had used with them such as: 'I agree with'; 'I don't agree and so and I think'...Its all about priorities isn't it really. If the kids behave well which most of them do at this school then why do we need to spend time doing this? Having said that there are times when the kids are disrespectful or think they know better than the teacher. (Transcript extract, 1st focus group meeting, 3rd July, 2008)

Adriana: They are not seeing you get hooked into their stuff, are they? You're separating from it and it diffuses the situation more quickly. The teacher listens to that person. (Transcript extract, 2nd focus group meeting, 28th July, 2008)

Adriana: I think it needs to be timetabled in otherwise it goes. Even on a timetable it can get the slip. I think it needs to be strategic, regular...

Julie: I agree with Adriana but it is hard to find the time. (Transcript extracts, 3rd focus group meeting, 10th November, 2008)

The teacher mentor empowered teachers to recognise their skills and expertise by making explicit reference to their progress during focus meetings. In the following extracts Karen's statement reflects her lack of confidence, but Adriana's comments challenged Karen's position.

Karen: You (referring to the teacher mentor) know what you are doing so you know what to say when the children need help.

Adriana: Yep I think you [referring to the teacher mentor] have more experience in this area but I deal with this stuff incidentally too so I have skills too but I still find it hard to find time to do the strategies. (Transcript extracts, 2nd focus group meeting, 28th July, 2008)

Towards the end of the year Adriana had innovated and adapted the process to cater for different groups of students and enthusiastically shared these comments at the last focus meeting.

Adriana: The other thing I was going to say is that we used that process - the boys have issues in the playground with some of their play and we had a 'boys meeting'. We had done that earlier with the girls. Now that worked really well! Because they were able to do the process- because they weren't setting up the process of what was expected- just went straight into it. We had problems- we listed the problems, we listed the solutions and they came up with different ideas.

Teacher mentor: So they were familiar with the process, they took control and they took responsibility.

Adriana: Yes. They used the class meeting to then ... the process of the class meeting to go onto another level. (Transcript extracts, 3rd focus group meeting, 10th November, 2008)

After examining Adriana's participation in the research, it appears she was tentative about innovating due to timetabling issues and other collaborative teaching demands but worked through these challenges beyond the research project. The following year Adriana moved to the senior part of the school and took on a leadership role initiating the negotiation of class agreements and implementing class meetings as evidenced in the following email sent to the teacher mentor.

Adriana: ... At the parent meeting we explained the class agreements v the rules approach, the process the students had come to in coming to the agreements and that the agreements were being used through much of the school... We will start class meetings soon... (Extract from email, Adriana, 21st February, 2009)

The teacher mentor

Establishing credibility for the teacher mentor, one could argue, mediated the focus group teachers' motivation to persist because the teacher mentor was also engaging in similar processes, with new groups of students each year. The difference was that she could also refer to past research, which confirmed the benefits for the teacher and students when classrooms are more interactive (Morcom, 2005; Morcom & MacCallum, 2009).

Teacher mentor: I am not an expert but I do admit this is something I have grown into. I started using these strategies at my last school because it was a difficult school with lots of social problems. Other teachers did not do this and had the usual line up of kids with social problems after recess and lunch and had to deal with them then, which took up class time. For me this was not a good solution and I was frustrated and it made the atmosphere negative for everyone's learning. I knew that I needed to do the class meetings regularly so the children could sort these things out... (Transcript extract, 3rd focus group meeting, 10th November, 2008)

The mentor teacher experienced similar challenges during the project to the teachers but used her previous experiences of conducting classroom based research as the motivating force to continue to innovate. However, she recognised that it took time for the teachers to gather concrete evidence of the changes in students' behaviour, attitude and learning. When teachers valued the processes they prioritised

using the social practices which was evident in the years that followed. Adriana developed confidence in her abilities to work with parents and other teachers to explain her new practices. Julie and Karen worked as partners in conducting major values events with the teacher mentor across three schools with students, parents and other teachers which are documented in the final Values in Action Schools Project (Australian Government, 2010).

DISCUSSION

The teacher case studies can not be explained fully without understanding the broader contextual features that impacted on teachers' perceptions, self-efficacy and confidence. Rogoff's planes illustrate the complexity of social and individual elements at play. Understanding how teacher motivation is constructed can not be realised without considering the social and the individual within the school context.

The timing of ethics approval before a project starts can elicit enthusiasm for the participants and confidence in the project. Constraints such as: starting the project late; one of the participants leaving the research; teacher employment status; teacher workload and finding the time to innovate in an already crowded curriculum could not be easily resolved but these were not the central elements that undermined teacher confidence and self-efficacy. Teachers showed interest and valued learning about the new social processes and they did not withdraw from the project.

When teachers perceive innovating as requiring additional time, effort and commitment beyond the normal classroom duties they need to be highly motivated to sustain their motivation when there are challenges or issues. Perceived parental and administration issues engendered waning self-efficacy and lack of confidence with the teachers, irrespective of the stage in their career. When parents challenged teachers about homework or the teachers were under pressure with individual testing to meet assessment requirements they felt stressed. These issues correspond with those found by Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2010) to be related to lower self-efficacy and job satisfaction and higher emotional exhaustion.

The very nature of being innovative, taking risks and trying new ideas creates the possibilities for things to go wrong but also the potential for creative breakthroughs (Fullan, 2001). The teacher mentor was conscious of building on the established partnerships based on trust with the teachers to alleviate anxiety or stress that occurred when problems arose. The more formal focus group session provided a private forum for teachers to discuss their issues and receive social and emotional support from each other. It also allowed the teacher mentor to gain feedback about the direction of the research. Less informal opportunities during breaks for recess or lunch provided impromptu times for teachers to discuss what was happening in their classrooms on a more regular basis.

In the small focus group sessions and informally all teachers reiterated their concern about parental and principal approval throughout the research and balancing their workload. They needed time to find their way to use these strategies so they felt confident they were doing a good job. They also needed confidence to answer parent queries about class activities that promoted more interaction with peers in cases where parents may not view this situation as desirable. The research shows, however, that the teachers' support of each other, together with the encouragement offered by

students and evidence of the effectiveness of the instructional approach, sustained teacher confidence, self-efficacy and well-being, as time demands and parent expectations changed.

The teacher mentor was interested, self-efficacious and confident to develop her practice, and her motivation was supported by the changing outcomes she observed in the students in the class. While acknowledging the conflicting messages about her instructional approach from the school system and research findings, school principal, some parents and colleagues, she was able to sustain her motivation to continually develop her practice. The other three teachers whom she mentored struggled to change aspects of their practice in the early stages of the project. They were interested in doing so for the benefit of their students and valued the approach modelled, but had difficulty maintaining self-efficacy as they negotiated the expectations of the principal, parents and their peers. Their motivation to develop their practice in particular ways can't be explained fully by considering the individuals or the context alone.

CONCLUSION

Enhancing teacher motivation and well-being has important implications for teacher and student learning. The teacher mentor conducted research in previous years that supported the benefits to students for the approach taken in the classroom which strengthened her resolve to sustain commitment to developing her ideas. This research has shown that even though teachers volunteered to be part of the research project because they were interested and valued the opportunity to change aspects of their teaching practice they experienced similar contextual factors that constrained the extent to which they innovated. It is important to consider teacher self-efficacy at classroom and school levels (Friedman & Kass, 2002), and the relationships inherent in these contexts need to be teased out. Underlying issues of employment status and pleasing others to gain continued employment one could argue became constraining factors. For three out of the four teachers their years of teaching experience were not necessarily an affordance that ensured commitment to change when challenged. All teachers experienced difficulty sustaining their motivation to change their practice and struggled with their self-efficacy when confronted with issues of behaviour management, and the expectations of others outside the project.

This study contributes to our understanding of the complex and dynamic nature of teacher motivation situated in the school context as illustrated using Rogoff's analytical planes. The conditions for innovation need to be met on all planes to support change and build resiliency for teachers to cope when challenges arise. Knowledge alone does not build commitment to changing practice. Perceived emotional support at all levels (part of collective efficacy) may be the key to sustaining innovation because at the heart of the innovation are the teachers' relationships with each other and their confidence to try new ideas, explain them to parents and peers as well as meet the expectations of the school administration.

Even though the teacher mentor was sensitive to the contextual issues at play and attempted to create the conditions for social and emotional support during focus group meetings, teachers' self-efficacy was strongly linked to their need for acceptance by the wider school community for a variety of reasons. As with other

research conducted to examine the motivational aspects of teachers' professional learning this study confirms that to understand what is happening when teachers innovate the personal, social and contextual factors need to be examined to provide a holistic picture (Beltman, 2009; Fullan, 2001). However the extent of the success of an innovation may not be fully evident at the time of the research as in the case of the teachers in this research.

REFERENCES

- Australian Government. (2009). Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). *Values for Australian schooling. Building values across the whole school. Professional learning program*. Melbourne, Australia: Curriculum Corporation.
- Australian Government. (2010). Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). *Giving Voice to the Impacts of Values Education – The Final Report of the Values in Action Schools Project*, October 2010. Melbourne, Australia: Education Services Australia (formally The Curriculum Corporation).
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York: W.H. Freeman and Co.
- Beltman, S. (2009). Educators' motivation for continuing professional learning. *Issues in Educational Research*, 19, 193.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2003). Keeping good teachers: Why it matters, what leaders can do. *Educational Leadership*, 60, 6-13.
- Deakin Crick, R. (2002). *Transforming visions: managing values in schools*. London: Middlesex University Press.
- Friedman, I.A., & Kass, E. (2002). Teacher self-efficacy: a classroom-organisation conceptualisation. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 18, 675-686.
- Fullan, M. (2001). *The new meaning of educational change*. Third edition. New York: Teacher's College Press.
- Hargreaves, A. (2003). *Teaching in a knowledge society*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- MacCallum, J. (2007). Mentoring and teachers: The implications of reconceptualising Mentoring. *The International Journal of Learning*, 14, 133-140.
- MacCallum, J., & Morcom, V. (2008). Making classroom social practices explicit: Developing motivation through participation in collaborative leadership opportunities. In D. McInerney & S. Van Etten (Series Eds.) & D. McInerney & A. D. Liem (Vol. Eds.), *Research on sociocultural influences on motivation and learning: Vol. 8. Teaching and learning: International best practice* (pp. 191-221). Charlotte, NC: Information Age.
- Morcom, V. (2005). *Mediating classroom culture based on democratic values: An exploration of a teacher's facilitative role*. Master of Education dissertation, Murdoch University. [verified 27 Feb, 2010]
<http://wwwlib.murdoch.edu.au/adt/browse/view/adt-MU20060502.153604>
- Morcom V.E., & MacCallum, J.A. (2007). *Improving interaction and participation: Leadership development in the collaborative classroom. Paper presentation at AARE Conference, Notre Dame University, Fremantle, Western Australia*.
- Morcom, V., & MacCallum, J. (2009). 'Motivation in action' in a collaborative primary school classroom: Developing and sustaining teacher motivation. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 34, 23-40.

- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. California: Sage Publications.
- Rogoff, B. (1995). Observing sociocultural activity on three planes: participatory appropriation, guided participation, and apprenticeship In J. Wertsch, P. Del Rio, A. Alvarez (Eds.), *Sociocultural studies of mind* (pp. 139-164). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Rogoff, B. (2003). *The cultural nature of human development*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Skaalvik, E. M., & Skaalvik, S. (2010). Teacher self-efficacy and teacher burnout: A study of relations. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 26, 1059-1069.
- Teemant, A., Wink, J., & Tyra S. (2011). Effects of coaching on teacher use of sociocultural instructional practices. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 27, 683-693.
- Tschannen-Moran, M., & Hoy, A.W. (2001). Teacher efficacy: Capturing an elusive construct. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 17, 783-805.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: the development of higher psychological process*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Walberg, H.J., Zins, J.E., & Weissberg, R.P. (2004). Recommendations and conclusions: Implications for practice, training, research and policy. In J.E. Zins, R.P. Weissberg, M.C. Wang & H.J. Walberg (Eds.), *Building academic success on social and emotional learning: what does the research say?* New York: Teachers College Press.
- Walker, R. A. (2010). Sociocultural issues in motivation. In P. Peterson, E. Baker & B. McGaw (Ed.), *International Encyclopedia of Education* (3rd ed., Vol. 6, pp. 712–717), Oxford: Elsevier.