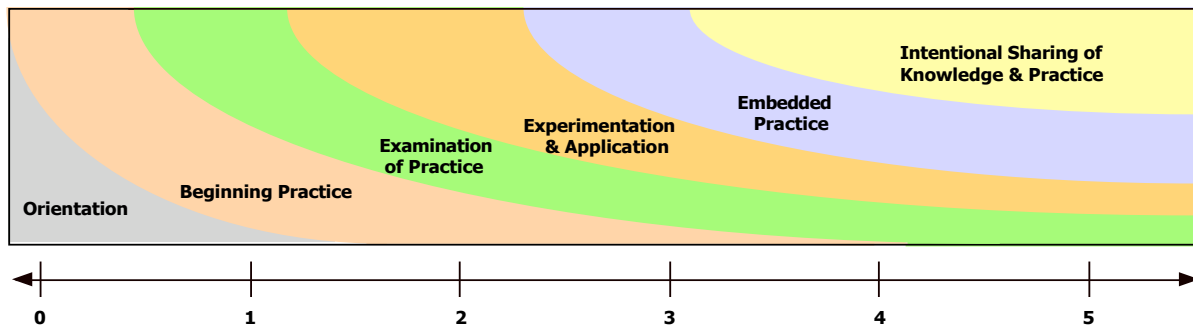


CONTINUUM OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING & GROWTH



Orientation

Well before assuming a teaching position, a Beginning Teacher has begun to form a personal conception of what teaching means to them. Often this conception is based upon prior personal experiences as a learner in the school system. Modeling at the Faculty of Education by both host teachers and faculty instructors may refine, reinforce, or even alter this idea of what being a teacher is all about. After assuming a teaching position in a school, multiple models of mentorship can aid in the personal and professional orientation of a Beginning Teacher by providing a valuable introduction to school culture, logistics, and curriculum.

Beginning Practice

No matter how thorough the preparation for teaching is at the Faculty, the experience of inheriting an established classroom culture as a student teacher is very different than the experience of creating a caring, inclusive, and learning-focused classroom environment for the very first time. Put another way, these initial classroom experiences represent quite a leap for a Beginning Teacher in both the context and practice of teaching and learning. Issues may often appear magnified in scale when they are being encountered for the first time. Ongoing job-embedded support of principals, mentors, other teachers, and school staff can play a defining role for in how these initial experiences of beginning practice are perceived by a Beginning Teacher.

Examination of Practice

Specific teaching challenges (e.g., Classroom Management, Assessment & Evaluation and Diversity of Learners) may provide the impetus for reflection on practice and a purposeful seeking out of both formal and informal supports for professional learning. Often the focus of examination of practice is around what isn't working. A challenge to also reflect upon and acknowledge the practices that are contributing to the success of students. While skillful de-briefing and coaching can assist in self-reflection and the identification of areas for professional growth, it is critical that ownership of this process resides with the Beginning Teacher. Opportunities for both formal and informal observation of colleagues can assist in this personal examination of practice.

Experimentation & Application

Both formal and informal learning experiences may provide motivation for a Beginning Teacher to experiment with a variety of approaches to classroom practice. Classroom strategies are adapted and adopted (and in some cases discarded) in order to suit the diverse learning needs of students. Classroom application is also based upon whether these practices align with a Beginning Teacher's emerging beliefs about teaching and learning. Continued job-embedded opportunities to share and refine professional practice can assist a Beginning Teacher in their development of personal values about what effective practice looks like, sounds like, and feels like in their classroom.

Embedded Practice

At its core embedded practice reflects the unique answer of each educator to the question "who am I as a teacher?" This personal voice reflects deep beliefs about teaching and learning and is embedded in all aspects of the classroom environment. Classroom practice reflects identity as a teacher and a personal vision for the human development and learning of students. Opportunities for continued professional learning in a variety of contexts and settings may deepen understandings or even alter classroom application of embedded beliefs.

Intentional Sharing of Knowledge & Practice

Classroom practice is de-privatized and opportunities for intentional sharing of knowledge and practice with colleagues are provided through job-embedded learning structures. These teacher leadership experiences broaden perspective beyond the classroom and provide informal and formal mentorship opportunities, not just for Beginning Teachers, but also for all members of a school community. Ongoing consulting, collaborating and coaching opportunities model examples of effective learning-focused environments for both teachers and students and stimulate a desire for continued personal and professional growth.

