Teachers’ professional learning goals
What do teachers (still) like to learn?

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Background

• ICLON Leiden university graduate school of teaching

• Collaborating with Prof. Klaas van Veen, Prof. Jan van Driel & dr. Jacobiene Meirink
Teachers’ professional learning

Constraints for successful teacher learning

• Experiencing a gap between theory & practice
• No match in PD and individual learning preferences
• “Teachers are not heard” when designing PD

-> focus on articulation of teachers’ learning preferences
Framing teacher learning

• Professional Learning Preferences
  • Preferences for features of Professional Development (PD)
  • Learning activities (how?)
  • Learning goals (what?)

• Learning goal
  Determined, planned action to change cognition, behavior, and beliefs
Research question

What is the relationship between secondary school teachers’ professional learning goals and their years of teaching experience?
Teaching experience

Teachers at the beginning of their career

Teachers at the end of their career

-> focus on teaching experience
Professional Life Cycle

“The hypothesis is fairly obvious: Teachers have different aims and different dilemmas at various moments in their professional cycle, and their desires to reach out for more information, knowledge, expertise and technical competence will vary accordingly.

A core assumption here is that there will be commonalities among teachers in the sequencing of their professional lives and that one particular form of professional development may be appropriate to these shared sequences”

(Huberman, 1995, p. 193)
0 – 3 years

4 – 7 years

8 – 15 years

16 – 29 years

30 + years

Induction

Competency building

Growth

Stability

Exit

(Day et al., 2007; Fessler & Christensen, 1992; Huberman, 1993)
Theoretical Framing

• Notion of Professional Life Cycle
  (Day et al., 2007; Fessler & Christensen, 1992; Huberman, 1993)

• Notion of teacher expertise development
  (Berliner, 2004; Genberg, 1992)
Methodology

Observing teachers in their classrooms and during meetings

Selecting teachers
- teaching experience
- subject area
- gender

Interviews with 31 selected teachers from 2 secondary schools

Interview question: What do you like to learn?
## Results – Learning domains

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| A. Communication and classroom organization | - Classroom management  
- Improve interaction with students |
| B. Curriculum and instruction | - Broaden repertoire of instructional strategies  
- Activating students during class  
- Differentiating between students  
- Curriculum development  
- Efficiency in assessment |
| C. Socialisation | - Learning school rules |
| D. (technological) Innovation | - Use of IT applications in classroom  
- Learn to use hardware/software |
| E. Extra-curricular tasks | - Becoming a manager  
- Developing as coach for beginning teachers |
| F. Teacher as professional | - To organize my work better  
- To behave more professionally in classroom |
Results – descriptives

- 92 learning goals in total
- 2.97 goals on average per teacher
- Number of goals per teacher decrease over phases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years</td>
<td>0-3</td>
<td>4-7</td>
<td>8-15</td>
<td>16-29</td>
<td>30+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N teachers</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7 [8]</td>
<td>3 [4]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean # goals</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>1.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results – descriptives

- 92 learning goals in total
- 2.97 goals on average per teacher
- Number of goals per teacher decrease over phases

- Communication & classroom organization (12%)
- Curriculum & instruction (48%)
- Socialization (3%)
- Innovation (7%)
- Extra-curricular task (9%)
- Professional (21%)
Results per phase 0 – 3 years

Learning goals per domain

Percentage

C & C  C & I  Soc  Innov  Extra  Prof

N = 6
M = 4.5
Results per phase 4 – 7 years

Learning goals per domain

- **C & C**
- **C & I**
- **Soc**
- **Innov**
- **Extra**
- **Prof**

Percentage

- **0 - 3 years**
- **4 - 7 years**

N = 5
M = 3.8
Results per phase 8 – 15 years

Learning goals per domain

- C & C
- C & I
- Soc
- Innov
- Extra
- Prof

N = 8
M = 3.25
Results per phase 16 – 29 years

Learning goals per domain

- C & C
- C & I
- Soc
- Innov
- Extra
- Prof

Percentage

N = 7
M = 2.29
Summary results

Learning goals per domain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
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</table>
Digging deeper – curriculum & instruction

*How did they formulate their learning goals?*

- Differentiated instruction
- Motivating and engaging students
- Curriculum development
Digging deeper – curriculum & instruction

How did they formulate their learning goals?

- Differentiated instruction
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Quote Ryan (0-3 years, school 1)

bending towards the students, for my HAVO 3 class that is really difficult for me, but I don’t have lesson materials, I haven’t received any tools to explain at that level, sometimes my language is too difficult, sometimes my language is too visual, while they just want really concrete explanations
Digging deeper – curriculum & instruction

How did they formulate their learning goals?

- Differentiated instruction

- Motivating and engaging students

- Curriculum development

Quote Sara (4-7 years, school 1)

*During the teacher education program I’ve created my own rule of thumb which is ‘let them do the work’ and that’s something that I’m still working on, that I want to use more activating instructional strategies in my classes, because I think that students learn more when they produce language*
Digging deeper – curriculum & instruction

How did they formulate their learning goals?

- Differentiated instruction

- Motivating and engaging students

- Curriculum development

Quote Richard (16 - 29, school 1)

I’ve been appointed to adapt that curriculum to new standards from the ministry and I can see growth in that and that also connects directly with the content of my lessons
Digging deeper – example phase 2

Relating learning goals and professional life phases

Sara (school 1)
- Classroom management
- Instructional strategies to activate students
- Deal with lack of time
- Assessment of students’ skills
- Curriculum development
- Control emotions
- Content knowledge for teaching literature

John (school 2)
- Time to improve content knowledge
- Time to try out instructional strategies
- Time to differentiate between students
- Learn to say ‘no’ to requests
Digging deeper - articulation

How did they formulate their learning goals?

Preliminary findings

Varying ways of articulating learning
- Deficit <> Growth
- Long-term <> Daily
- Classroom practice-related <> Career-related
Conclusions

• Curriculum & instruction learning goals are salient to all teachers
• Different emphasizes across other learning domains
• Teaching experience important indicator to show patterns in teachers’ learning goals
• Articulating learning goals differs (deficit <> growth)
Implications

- Tailoring PD to teachers’ individual learning preferences

- Balancing what ‘needs’ or ‘ought’ to be learnt & what’s ‘preferred’

- The role of the school organization in teacher’s learning
Teachers’ professional learning

Teachers at the beginning of their career

Teachers at the end of their career
Thank you for your attention

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Discussion & questions?
Discussion

Returning to theoretical notions
- Professional life cycle
  - Different preferences per phase
  - Integrating teachers’ lives in framework on teachers’ learning

- Teacher expertise development
  - Learning particular skills in a particular order?
Discussion questions

1. In many cases of PD, teachers are required to join and don't participate voluntary. Would starting from teachers' own learning preferences make PD more effective?
2. How would workplace conditions look like for effective school-based PD?
3. Phase-based learning curriculum. Do early-career teachers profit from PD focused only on curriculum & instruction? And what kind of PD would fit with mid- and late-career teachers (15+ years)?
Literature references


