

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.26529/cepsj.2076>

Maria Impedovo, Karen Ferreira-Meyers, and Noriyuki Inoue, *Creating a Teacher Collective: Professional Development Within the Group, the Community, and the Network*, Rowman & Littlefield, 2023; 184 pp.: ISBN: 978-1-4758-6936-1

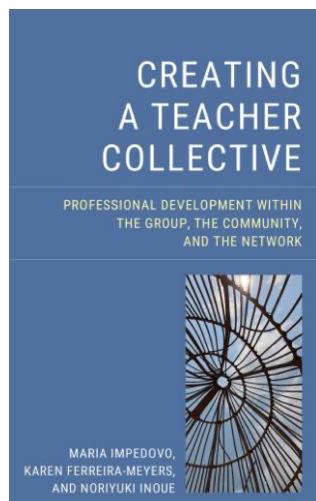
Reviewed by MARIA IMPEDOVO¹

This timely publication delves into the establishment and maintenance of teacher communities or collectives. Teacher collectives are pivotal in driving educational change, fostering school improvement, and ultimately enhancing student learning outcomes. The book explores how the intersections of group dynamics, community building, and networking contribute to teacher interaction for both learning and professional growth. It aims to answer the question of how to foster and sustain such a community, particularly for practitioners.

While existing literature offers a wealth of insights into theoretical frameworks, success factors, and obstacles to participation in teacher communities, this book fills a crucial gap by providing a practical, step-by-step guide. It offers valuable suggestions tailored to individuals seeking to initiate and support a community of educators, starting from its inception, and emphasising the role of educational technology in facilitating these interactions.

This text emerged from a serendipitous collaboration among three researchers situated in three distinct corners of the globe: France, Japan, and Eswatini. Additionally, contributions from colleagues hailing from Greece, Iran, India, and Hong Kong further enriched the collaborative endeavour.

All the authors of this book are united by a common topic, passion, and interest, fostered through chance encounters during conferences or primarily via social media channels. Their collaboration has formed an embryonic learning collective driven by a shared mission to challenge conventional



¹ ADEF Laboratory, Aix-Marseille University, Marseille, France; maria.impedovo@univ-amu.fr

understandings of teacher professional development and learning.

This book underscores the inherent strength and fragility of all teachers' collectives. Despite facing barriers and challenges—both internal, such as motivation and communication, and external, such as lack of support and funding—collectives can persevere and thrive. The perspectives of group, community, and network are dynamic constructs that require active participation and shaping by their members. Indeed, collectives are in a constant state of creation and transformation, facilitated by technology, which enables the expression of individuality and collective action in various forms.

Structured into two parts (Sections A and B), the book initially concentrates on guiding practitioners in creating and sustaining teacher collectives. The second part offers concrete examples illustrating the application of concepts, technologies, and potentialities.

Throughout its chapters in Section A, the handbook delves into various aspects of promoting teacher interaction for both learning and professional development, centring around three key concepts: the group, the community, and the network.

The book *Creating a Teacher Collective: Professional Development Within the Group, the Community, and the Network* encourages readers to establish and organise connections, correlations, and potential dialogues between various concepts and metaphors to delve into the complexity of teacher learning and professional development. Each chapter aims to contextualise the intricate landscape of teaching by referencing a conceptual framework, a technological aspect, and a metaphor.

The structure of each chapter consists of two parts: the first links the collective aspect to the concepts of group, community, and network, while the second explores practical applications through concepts, technology, and metaphors, facilitating reflection, application, and implementation of collaboration.

In the initial section of each chapter, the focus is on fostering active engagement within the collective. Three modalities are analysed for this purpose: resources, attitudes, and knowledge. These lenses help shape the organisation of activities and shed light on the potential role of each participant. Understanding these perspectives equips teachers with tools to observe, model, and influence learning dynamics.

The latter part of each chapter introduces practical concepts, technological tools, and metaphors to offer a tangible perspective on teacher professional development (TPD).

The following is a brief summary of each chapter in Section A.

Chapter 1: Creating a Teacher Collective

This chapter sets the foundation for understanding teacher collectives by exploring three key perspectives: Group, Community, and Network. It introduces fundamental concepts and provides insights into how these perspectives shape the dynamics of collective professional development.

Chapter 2: Entering into a Teacher Collective

Focused on the process of joining a teacher collective, this chapter examines the themes of Belonging, Participation, and Fluidity. It delves into the importance of identity-based learning and offers practical strategies for setting the script to facilitate smooth integration into the collective.

Chapter 3: Socializing and Learning in a Teacher Collective

Exploring the social aspects of teacher collectives, this chapter examines Behaviour, Practice, and Connection. It emphasises the role of personal meaning-making and offers insights into the role-taking process to facilitate effective socialisation within the collective.

Chapter 4: Developing in a Teacher Collective

This chapter focuses on professional growth within teacher collectives, exploring themes of Growth, Cycle, and Translation. It introduces the concept of susurration and offers scripts based on a trialogical learning approach to support the process of professional development.

Chapter 5: Connecting in a Teacher Collective

Examining the connections within and outside the collective, this chapter explores themes of Resources, Repertoires, and Lines. It introduces the concept of extended cognition and discusses virtual exchange as a means of connecting with external teacher communities.

Chapter 6: Expanding in a Teacher Collective

Focused on the expansion and evolution of teacher collectives, this chapter explores themes of Status, Engagement, and Multi-experience. It introduces the concept of externality and discusses the zone of possibility as a means of facilitating expansion within the collective.

Chapter 7: Moving out of a Teacher Collective

This final chapter examines the process of transitioning out of a teacher collective, exploring themes of Exit, Transformation, and Disconnection. It introduces the concept of diffractive learning and discusses the role of affectivity in facilitating a smooth transition out of the collective.

To summarise, central to the establishment and evolution of teacher collectives are four key factors:

- Passion: The enthusiasm, commitment, and dedication of individuals involved in the collective towards their shared goals and objectives.
- Action: The proactive engagement and implementation of strategies,

initiatives, and projects aimed at addressing challenges and advancing professional growth within the collective.

- **Collaboration:** The effective cooperation, communication, and teamwork among members of the collective to exchange ideas, share resources, and support each other's development.
- **Reflection:** The process of critically examining experiences, practices, and outcomes within the collective context to inform continuous learning, improvement, and innovation.

These factors serve as foundational elements influencing the formation, functioning, and sustainability of teacher collectives, shaping their capacity to drive positive change and promote professional development within educational settings.

In conclusion, Section A deals with how fusion and interplay of passion, action, collaboration, and reflection are essential ingredients for fostering the sustainable and strategic development of teacher collectives. As these elements interact and reinforce each other, they contribute to the collective's ability to manage innovation and navigate the challenges presented by a dynamic and complex educational landscape.

In Section B of the book, guest chapters provide concrete illustrations of how to apply concepts, technologies, and opportunities discussed earlier. This multi-level approach offers insight into the adaptability required to establish a teacher community for professional development across various scales, including the group, community, and network.

The following is a brief summary of each chapter in Section B.

Chapter 1: 'Teacher Education in the Global South and Open-Source Hardware'

Authored by Amit Dhakulhar and Karen Ferreira-Meyers, this chapter explores the intersection of teacher education and open-source hardware, particularly in the context of the Global South. It examines how innovative approaches to technology integration can enhance teacher training and professional development, with a focus on accessibility and sustainability.

Chapter 2: 'A Boat on the River: The Case of Teacher Autonomy, Professional Development, and Online Communities'

Written by Mandana Arfa and Karen Ferreira-Meyers, this chapter presents a case study on the relationship between teacher autonomy, professional development, and online communities. It delves into how online platforms can empower teachers to take ownership of their professional growth and create supportive communities of practice.

Chapter 3: 'Community Facilitation for Social Justice Education'

Authored by Aspasia Dania, this chapter examines the role of community facilitation in promoting social justice education. It explores strategies for creating inclusive learning environments and fostering critical dialogue among educators to address issues of inequality and injustice in education.

Each of these chapters offers unique insights and perspectives on teacher education and professional development, demonstrating the diverse ways in which technology and community engagement can support and enhance learning outcomes.

In the end, Impedovo, Ferreira-Meyers, and Inoue, as well as all the guest authors, advocate for a complex learning design that integrates elements such as objects, tasks, and individuals within the dynamics of a group, community, and network. However, it acknowledges the potential challenge highlighted by Goodyear, Carvalho, and Dohn (2014): the risk of overwhelming interdependencies when everything is interconnected.

The book is designed to be a thematic map; the authors acknowledge that it does not cover every aspect exhaustively. It is important to note the authors' stance on the dynamic and evolving nature of teacher professional development: they offer directional guidance and reflections that readers can use as a foundation for their own transformative endeavours.

To address this, the authors' approach advocates for a multi-level design strategy grounded in the creation of lived learning experiences. This entails sustaining an environment of actions and possibilities validated by tangible configurations and feasible conditions. Thus, the concept of 'Learning Environments' transcends mere online or hybrid solutions, encompassing the entire material, affective, and social context within which the group, community, and network operate and interact.

Ultimately, the authors encourage readers to cultivate their own signature pedagogies—a term coined by Shulman (2005)—which represent critical elements for thinking, performing, and acting with integrity in professional practice. Through engagement with teacher collectives, the authors aim for these pedagogies to evolve and enhance the three fundamental dimensions of professional work.

In conclusion, offering intriguing insights into collective professional development practices, the publication *Creating a Teacher Collective: Professional Development Within the Group, the Community, and the Network* critically examines learning environments, particularly within the framework of technology-enhanced collective learning. In a digital landscape often centred around individual presence, this perspective on the potential of teacher collectives

underscores the significance of human connection and social interaction.

References

Goodyear, P., Carvalho, L., & Dohn, N. B. (2014). Design for networked learning: framing relations between participants' activities and the physical setting. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Networked Learning*, 9, 137–144. <https://doi.org/10.5437/nc.v9.8980>

Shulman, L. S. (2005). Signature pedagogies in the professions. *Daedalus*, 134(3), 52–59.