

**Enacting the vision of teacher education  
by establishing a context of mentorship**

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This collaborative self-study explores the co-construction of professional teacher education knowledge through mentoring, framed within the notion of working in an interpretive zone. The study is set in a learning community established in a college of education where Ilana was the head of the elementary department and Edith served as a new clinical supervisor. Using data collected from electronic correspondence, this self-study illustrates the co-construction of our knowledge of practice in two ways:

- (1) the development of our personal perceptions through self-study of reciprocal relationships, conversations, and active attempts to improve our teacher education practices;
- (2) the impact of working collaboratively in the interpretive zone as a source of expanding learning, changing the curriculum, and initiating new activities.

The development of our professional self-understanding occurred by reframing knowledge of practice as conflicts, using them to evaluate and reconstruct experience, and performing transitional actions on the boundaries between dominant and new activities.

**Implications:**

Analysis of the change process led us to realize that transforming conceptions and basic assumptions is complex and involves going forward and backward; one step of progress may lead to two steps of retreat. Experiencing the innovations and modeling them at all levels was a fundamental element in sustaining learning and teaching in a community of practice and in the transformation of non-dominant activities into dominant ones.

After four years in the elementary department, we were prompted to adopt ecological theory as a conceptual framework that stressed the interconnectedness and mutual influence of all the components of our community of practice. This was a consequence of the constant dialogue between us and among the members of the

professional community while experiencing non-dominant new activities in addition to the theoretical learning that accompanied practice. During this phase, we understood that a radical change could not take place in only one department, so we initiated an experimental four-year program for the entire college.