

## Building an Evidence-Based to Support Teacher Growth A Career-Long Perspective (Phase I)

Low Ee Ling and Tan Shi Yah Jocelyn

### KEY IMPLICATIONS

#### Implications for planning, school workplace and professional development

Policymakers and school leaders should focus on the professional growth of teachers and enhance their professional relationships in order to retain and develop teachers. The findings from the project provide National Institute of Education (NIE), Academy of Singapore Teachers (AST) and Academy of Principals (APS) with insights into how to plan effective programmes in order to meet teachers and school leaders' professional development needs.

#### Implications for teacher engagement

This study has produced some recommendations which Ministry of Education (MOE) and school leaders could look into. These recommendations are categorised into six areas (Jewell & Reznik, 2014), namely (1) Growth; (2) Relationships; (3) Autonomy; (4) Fairness; (5) Well-being; and (6) Security.

### BACKGROUND

Building on and extending the team's earlier work on ITE and early career teacher learning, this project intends to characterise the impact

of experience – both cumulative and episodic – on career-long development and sustainability of Singaporean teachers. Understanding teacher career development and sustainability beyond the early career phase will become more important as the age of Singapore's teaching force increases, in line with the nation's demographic trends. This project aims to contribute to the chain of evidence linking Initial Teacher Education (ITE) with subsequent within-career experience to understand whether and why teachers' professional identity, competence, and commitment change over time.

### FOCUS OF STUDY

The objectives of the present study include the following:

- To investigate whether teachers' professional identity, competence, and commitment change over time;
- To identify factors that lead to changes, if any, in teachers' professional identity, competence, and commitment;
- To understand what keeps teachers committed to their careers;
- To investigate factors that will develop and retain teachers career-long.

## KEY FINDINGS

Successful work experiences have a positive long-term impact on the career growth and development of teachers. The findings of the study emphasise the importance of positive relationships and continual professional growth and development in helping to retain teachers in the profession. The participants across the six career stages reported that positive relationships and professional growth were the two most important intrinsic elements that kept them fulfilled in their career.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF FINDINGS

Based on the findings of this project and the PI's earlier suite of projects, we conclude that passion leads teachers into the profession (Low, Lim, Ch'ng, & Goh, 2011) and that purpose such as contribution to their students' growth keeps them committed. However, it is the people that will keep them inspired or drive them to leave the profession. The findings of this study stress the importance of positive relationships and continual professional growth in order to sustain teachers in the profession career-long. The study also helps inform MOE about the policies and practices necessary to effectively engage teachers at different stages in their career and keep them committed.

## PARTICIPANTS

Thirty-five primary school teachers from 16 primary schools were involved in this study.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design involves in-depth face-to-face individual interviews with primary school teachers (teaching English, Mathematics, and Science) on the teaching track across six career stages.

## REFERENCES

- Jewell, F., & Reznik, T. (2014). *Engagement and Change: Taking the Pulse of Your Stakeholders* (Fall, 2014). The Jabbian Journal. [https://journal.jabbian.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Fall14\\_JJ\\_Engagement\\_and\\_Change.pdf](https://journal.jabbian.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Fall14_JJ_Engagement_and_Change.pdf)
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This brief was based on the project OER 08/18 LEL: Building an Evidence-Based to Support Teacher Growth: A Career-Long Perspective (Phase I).

## How to cite this publication

Low, E. L., & Tan, S. Y. J. (2020). *Building an Evidence-Based to Support Teacher Growth: A Career-Long Perspective (Phase I)* (NIE Research Brief Series No. 20-028). Singapore: National Institute of Education.

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