Review of Maguire, Moira, Harding, Nuala, Noonan, Gina andTamara O'Connor, Tamara, Editors, (2017) *Teachers as Learners: Exploring the impact of accredited professional development on learning and assessment in Irish Higher Education*. Maynooth, AISHE*

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This book sets out to explore the impact accredited professional development (APD) has, and can have, on assessment and learning in higher education. It offers a clear context and overview of the sector in respect of APD and the need to attend to a recognised gap in evidence of the impact of APD on assessment and learning in the Irish Higher Education sector.

Those of us teaching, learning and supporting learning in higher education are doing so against a backdrop of continuous change in the Irish higher education sector that is responding to a reviving economy as well as other social, cultural, technological and other influences. One of the most influential changes in respect of teaching, learning and assessment has been the initiation of the *National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (National Forum)*, its focus on *Assessment for, of and as Learning* as a theme and its launch of the *Professional Development Framework for all those who Teach in Higher Education in Ireland*.

This book, influenced by these changes, sets out to explore the impact accredited professional development (APD) has, and can have, on assessment and learning in higher education. Its aims are clearly laid out in the introductory paper from the editors which offers a clear context and overview of the sector in respect of APD and the need to attend to a recognised gap in evidence of the impact of APD on assessment and learning in the Irish Higher Education sector.

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*Book Review. URL: http://ojs.aishe.org/index.php/aishe-j/article/view/[342]

The introduction also brings the value of the various papers together through exploration of key themes arising from the collective stories from practice across the book, allowing the reader to consider and reflect on these themes whilst reading the various papers that follow. Two key

themes noted by the editors are reflective practice and authentic assessment both referred to by the editors as acting as 'enablers' for change in the various projects and case studies outlined by contributors.

It is clear when reading these that the use of reflection on practice, as well as engaging in the authentic assessment approaches of the programmes they have participated in, have further developed in their practice and in some cases positively impacted on the practice of their colleagues, departments and disciplines.

The book itself is clearly set out in sections that allow the reader to explore it from different perspectives. These sections tell the story of the impact of APD from the point of view of different stakeholders, each giving weight to a greater evidential story of the positive influences APD has and can have on learning and assessment.

Section 1 consists of a paper from Donnelly *et al.* that explores the gaps in evidence of the far reaching impact of APD on learning and assessment. It discusses issues around the definitions and measurement of impact itself and explores a range of evaluation models and tools typically used to evaluate APD programmes. It identifies a recognised need to reconsider these in order to capture evidence of the far reaching influences of APD that can be found at the departmental, institutional and disciplinary level.

The authors of this paper acknowledge the difficulty in truly knowing the impact of APD due to the wide variety of contexts and stakeholders involved. They offer a new framework that addresses gaps and can measure 'perceived' impact intended as a guide for programme teams. This is a useful tool for those involved in curriculum development and design of APD programmes and is further enhanced by the demonstrated example of its use given in the paper. It is useful also in the discourse of assessment practice for those teaching and learning on APD programmes.

This first section acts as a useful precursor to Section 2 and the many examples from graduates of APD programmes of how authentic assessment has developed beyond the programme in their own practice and influenced beyond it.

The collection of case studies and stories in Section 2 emerge from the page to give real life, reflective examples from APD programme graduates across a range of disciplines. Each demonstrates how their authentic assessment has led to research and evidenced-based projects that positively impact the quality of assessment, feedback and learning in their own teaching contexts. Paper topics include: driving learning through assessment in a series of tutorials for

undergrad students; the impact of engaging in action research on assessment and learning; measuring the impact of undertaking an APD programme on student learning; and the use of videos as planned assessment for learning.

These case studies offer creative and practical approaches in teaching, learning and assessment that resolve local issues but can be transferred to other contexts. The scholarly and practical level at which they are written means they have potential for use collectively in the discourse of the value and approach to assessment for, of and as learning. The individual case studies could also be used as APD programme resources and further ideas for programme design and delivery are set out in the papers of Section 3 of the book authored by programme providers.

Section 3 tells the story from the perspective of those who design and deliver APD programmes and activities. The papers in this section, as well as evidencing emerging sectoral themes in respect of impact, also offer rich, evidence-based guidelines, case studies and ideas of great potential value to those interested in developing APD activities or programmes.

Topics in this section include: the potential for influencing quality assurance at a department/institutional level through an APD module on assessment and programme design; exploring the impact of APD through use of the Ako Aotearoa Evaluation Framework; the development of an accredited module for postgraduate tutors and demonstrators; and the impact of APD and structured mentoring on assessment and learning.

Section 4 summarises the book well with a concluding paper from Gina Wisker of Brighton University who responds to the various papers and gives interesting insights into the benefits of dialogue, feedback and scholarship in APD programmes as well as touching on themes such as authentic assessment, curriculum alignment and threshold concepts.

In conclusion, this book tells the story of the impact of APD on assessment and learning from the perspective of both programme providers and graduates and in doing so gives written testament of the positive impact APD activities can have on assessment and learning. Practical examples are provided which come to life through the written testimony and reflections of graduates and programme teams. These examples offer guidance, models, instruction and experience against a background of well-researched literature.

While there is much evidence of the positive impact of APD from the contributors, the book also pays due attention to documenting the challenges of evidencing the impact of APD. The value of it as a collective piece is that it allows all those who teach in higher education in Ireland, as well as those engaged in policy making and quality assurance, to consider the value and positive impact APD can have, not only on those taking part in APD programmes, but also on those who listen to their stories and share in their learning and successes to initiate positive change.

As an education developer involved in designing and delivering APD programmes, as well as considering my own professional development through the National Forum's Professional Development Framework, this book allows me new ways to reflect on my work from both a programme delivery perspective and the perspective of the learning of programme participants. It offers creative ideas, case studies and further reading as potential resources and I would recommend it as a positive addition to the reading list and resources of existing and future APD programmes and modules.

Keywords: Accredited professional development, professional development framework, higher education, reflective practice, authentic assessment