

THE WORK OF TEACHER EDUCATION

Prior Research – Phase 1.

Institutional conceptualisations of teacher education as academic work in England

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Through an analysis of job advertisements and further particulars, and research interviews with heads of Education departments, this research showed how the higher education-based teacher educator in England is produced in language as a category of academic worker. Variations in conceptualisations were noticed both within and between institutions, with the teacher educator categorised as a hybrid or exceptional type of academic worker. Often, these variations are produced around specific institutional (rather than sectoral) understandings of research and researcher development.

Phase 2.

Rationale

Building on Phase 1, this next phase also extends to the Scottish context in order to gain an understanding of the material conditions of teacher educators' work, to make cross-cultural comparisons and to reveal the historical evolution of the different teacher education systems and their potentials for development, particularly in terms of student teachers' learning.

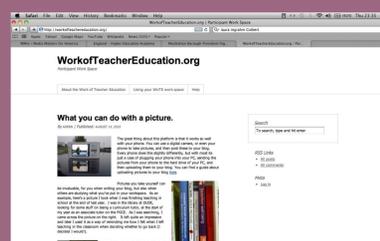
Research Questions

- 1: What do advertisements, job descriptions and person specifications for university-based teacher education positions in Scotland reveal about how teacher education work is conceptualised at the institutional level?
- 2: Do institutional conceptualisations of teacher education work vary between Scotland and England and, if so, how?
- 3: What are the daily practical activities of a small sample of teacher educators and how do they talk about their work?
- 4: How do material artefacts mediate these practical activities and shape the interactions between teacher educators and students?
- 5: Within the sample, what differences are apparent in the kinds of learning possible for students in the various settings studied?

The on-line research tool:

Teacher educators upload images and representations of their practice.

Workofteachereducation.org



Research Methodology and Strategy

A range of qualitative methodologies are employed. Theoretically, this work is informed by sociocultural and CHAT perspectives that seek to understand the relationship between language and thinking, the role of artefacts in the mediation of human activity and the emergence of individual development within cultural and historical channels of social practice.

A small but representative sample of 15 university-based teacher educators was recruited across both national contexts.

Timeline

April – August 2010	A set of advertisements and job descriptions collated representing all vacancies for university-based teacher educators in Scotland for an initial period in 2010. The results of this discourse analysis will be compared with the results of an analysis of an English sample collated during Phase 1.
May 2010	Telephone interviews with each participant at the outset to elicit daily activities and to reveal conceptualisations of their work.
May & October 2010	Participants complete a work diary for one week at two different stages of the academic year.
May - October 2010	Each participant generates data by uploading visual images, sound files and written text or representations of material artefacts onto on-line research tool (Workofteachereducation.org).
October 2010	Work-shadowing of each participant for a day and face-to-face interviews with each participants at the end of the observation visit.
September - December 2010	Data analysis and researchers' meetings.
January - February 2011	Participatory research conferences using elements of DWR and dissemination.

The combination of close analysis of spoken and written discourse with systematic observation of practical activities and interpretation of material and semiotic artefacts potentially enable us to develop a multi-faceted understanding of the research problem.

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