



ESCalate Developing Pedagogy and Practice 2010/11 Grant Project Interim Report

Date submitted 16 November 2011

Project Title Teacher Educators' experience and use of reflection in the Lifelong Learning Sector

Project Leader Liz McKenzie

Institution University of Plymouth

Project Start date 1 March 2011

Project End date 31 December 2011

Teacher Educators' experience and use of reflection in the Lifelong Learning Sector.

Dr Liz McKenzie,

School of Education,

Faculty of Health, Education and Society,

Plymouth University

Plymouth

PL4 8AA

Interim report.

Project aims and objectives

The project aims to investigate teacher educators' experience and use of reflection and how they introduce and support reflection with trainee teachers. It explores the theoretical models which teacher educators personally find most useful, and how they customarily engage in reflection eg. through personal introspection, by keeping a journal, through discussion with colleagues. The project also explores how teacher educators introduce reflection to trainee teachers, the theories and models they teach and the techniques they use to support the trainees' reflection eg. reflective journals, interactive journals, peer/mentor discussion. It will consider whether the techniques in use are maximizing the trainees' engagement with reflection, both during their training and beyond.

Progress to date

Ethical approval was granted in May, slightly later than anticipated. The first available staff development session at the University for teacher educators working on Post-compulsory sector programmes was in July. I was able to give out questionnaires to all those present (22) and a further two were completed and returned electronically. The timing of the staff development day meant that most

partner college staff were about to go on annual leave, so the arrangements for interviews had to be delayed until the Autumn Term.

Since the staff development day I have analysed the questionnaires, which has generated useful data about people's experience in teacher education and their use of reflection. I have questionnaire data from people with a range of experience in teacher education, from 2 – 22 years across a range of provision including City & Guilds PTLLS, CTLLS, DTLLS and the University's Cert Ed/PGCE programmes. For over half the sample their experience of reflection began with taking a teaching qualification themselves (58%), though for others it came via their degree or other study (13%) counselling (8%), nursing (4%), social work (4%) management (4%) or other workplace experiences. Brookfield was the theorist most frequently mentioned as the one teacher educators found most useful (54%), while Schön was a close second (46%), with Gibbs (25%) and Kolb (17%) also featuring. The majority (63%) do not use a reflective journal, although a couple say they do 'sometimes' (8%) or that they used to (8%).

Most teacher educators aim to introduce reflection as soon as possible, with several referring to 'at interview' or induction, although it may not be formally introduced until later in the course. They aim to offer their students a range of different theories, with Kolb, Brookfield and Schön being most frequently mentioned (38%), followed by Gibbs (29%), though the questionnaire data doesn't tell the whole story since some respondents didn't specify, just saying 'all of them' or putting a couple of names and then 'etc.', so the interviews may give a clearer picture here.

I am in the process of interviewing teacher educators with a minimum of 5 years experience, who will have taught on programmes through all the recent changes within the Lifelong Learning Sector. I have selected a sample which includes representatives from across the partner colleges as well as from the University

I was not in a position this year to present at the local conferences I identified in my application. However I did attend a TEAN conference and present a workshop on reflection. I am giving a present on 'Reflective journals: Who are they for?' at the national LSRN conference in London in November, which will include data from this project on teacher educators' use of reflective journals and their views on assessing reflection. I will be presenting a paper at the Society for Research in Higher Education (SRHE) Annual conference in December which will include findings from this project.

The project is running behind my original schedule, due to the later than intended start and I realise that I still have a lot to do to complete this project by December, with interviews still to conduct and the interview analysis to do. However it is well under way and the target of the conference presentations will keep me on track.

Expenditure to date:

Submitted to ESCalate

Liz McKenzie

October 2011.