Researching ‘with’ Lifelong Learning Teacher Educators in England and their In-Service Student Teachers: an action research study on the use of modelling

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Researching “with” Lifelong Learning Teacher Educators in England and their In-Service Student Teachers: an action research study on the use of modelling within a course.

David Powell
d.powell@hud.ac.uk
Aim of the research

• To work collaboratively with a team of teacher educators from a further education college to explore the use of modelling in their practice

Four research questions

• How do teacher educators from the further education sector use modelling with their student teachers?
• What factors affect the use of modelling by teacher educators from further education colleges?
• What happens when teacher educators work collaboratively to improve the pedagogy of teacher education?
• What are student teachers’ perceptions of the use of modelling by their teacher educators?
Teacher education in Lifelong Learning...

- “De-regulated” as a result of Lingfield Report in 2012;
- Curriculum has been described as “factorised to a set of standards and constructed as a programme of strictly controlled and managed teacher training, with an emphasis on assessment, measurement and accountability” (Lawy and Tedder, 2009, p.53)
What is modelling?

• “the practice of intentionally displaying certain teaching behaviour with the aim of promoting student teachers’ professional learning (cf. Gallimore & Tharp, 1992).” (Lunenberg et al., 2007, p.589);

• Lunenberg et al. (2007, p.597) “a powerful instrument” that can shape and influence changes in student teachers’ practice…little or no recognition of modelling as a teaching method in teacher education”;

Inspiring tomorrow’s professionals
My research methodology

• **Critical participatory action research** (Kemmis et al., 2014b)
• **Using a second-person approach** (Chandler and Torbert, 2003, p.142);
• Research “with” rather than “on” people…” (p.143);
• Conceptual and analytical framework is Kemmis et al.’s (2014b) twin notions of ecologies of practices and practice architectures
• Using **stimulated recall interview** (with teacher), **semi-structured interview** (with teacher), **focus group** (with teachers’ students), materials from filmed classes and “teacher talk and conversations” (Hardy, 2010, p.131);
• Seeking to capture the “messy texts” of teacher education and make “visible the complexity of narrating an “untidy” world (Lather, 1997)” (Segall, 2002, p.170).
The Education complex and the theory of ecologies of practices

Professional development/learning

Educational leadership and administration

Students’ academic and social practices (learning)

Educational research and evaluation

Teachers’ classroom educational practice (teaching)

(Kemmis et al., 2014a, p.52)
The sayings, doings and relatings of a practice hang together in the project of the practice

- Sayings are concerned with “the language and discourses used in and about these practices” (p.32) and how student teachers understand the key ideas of their ITE course;
- Doings are the activities that take place within the classroom and what enables them to happen;
- Relatings are the student-teacher relationships that exist and how these foster and contribute towards learning

(Kemmis et al., 2014a, p.33)
The second cycle...

- 3 participants in the first cycle: one withdrew, the other two were not teaching on the programme at the site;
- New teacher educator had joined the team...
- Proposal for new teacher educator to co-teach a session with their mentor, who is an experienced teacher educator, the Team Leader and had been involved in the first-cycle;
- Project bid to secure additional resource for in the words of the Teacher C (also the Team Leader): “in terms of team teaching, we’re not really = well it’s economic considerations, isn’t it? I know that our Dean wouldn’t allow it.”
- Discussed Loughran and Berry’s (2005) paper as a prelude to the planning of a lesson for a group of first year students.
“Hearing and heeding” (Campbell, 2011, p.266) student teachers’ “voices”

- “I think a lot of it is copying from you” (St1)
- “Like I said in the corridor: we pick a bit of you and take it into ourselves” (St2)
- “Do you want to write them down because I’ve already forgotten them?” St2 referring to the 4 types of modelling
- “I liked the implicit one but then without the explicit – one of the explicit ones afterwards – there was no point in doing that.” (St3)
- “She did a bit of all of them.” (St 5)
- “I like that we use them all but I like the implicit because I felt like I were understanding it and then it were kind of confirmed rather //” (St1)
More student “voices”

- Asked about the use of a de-brief: “I thought it was very interesting because obviously we are learning from Teacher D’s teaching as well. Sometimes you could not realise something that we have done but the fact that you have pointed it out or maybe somebody commenting on it helping us to realise that //” (St4)

- “....when you speak sometimes you use such long words that they go completely over the top of my head and I haven’t understood a word that you’ve said...” (St2)

- “I agree like some of this is over my head but when there were words that I understood I felt clever because I understood them and I quite like that.” (St1)
Research “with” other teacher educators is ‘messy’ (Adamson and Walker, 2011)

- “Messiness...refers to complexity, unpredictability, difficulties and dilemmas” (Adamson and Walker, 2011, p.29);

- “It’s a very tight structure and I’m also a bit anxious about making sure that they [the students] are getting value for money, as it were. So whatever we do needs to be making sure that it involves them in genuine development of their thinking and skills and so on.” (Teacher A who was not able to be involved because of the time constraints of her curriculum)

- “significant tensions” (Murray, 2012, p.19) exist between the pedagogic and research roles of teacher educators;
More examples of the “messiness” within this research...

- Relationship between researcher and teacher educators and between them and their students is significant. “...what you get back from your trainees perhaps in talking about your **modelling depends on the power balance within your relationship**...”(VE, p.1)

- Complexity of modelling. Focus on task of teaching vs meta-commentary on teaching. “Oh they must see it (Teacher C, SRI p.4)... I’m sure they’ll understand that and they’ll see (Teacher C, SRI p.6)” so we assume there is no need to explain it. “There are things that you’ve picked up on that I have just taken for granted or I don’t think they are worthy of comment” (Teacher D, SRI, p.13)

- **Whose work is this?** My EdD, our research, their practice?

- **Time** to meet up, plan the project and review the data with the participants creates **dilemmas and tensions**
“...it felt like a bit of a **peer observation to start off** with but actually then Teacher C came to the front and led on the discussion and the analysis. I think the **students felt** that then it was **about them and their discussion** about it all.” (Teacher D);

“...it was really strange that they had actually picked up on things that they maybe never would have voiced...This project, perhaps, has **given the students a language to articulate what is latent**.” (Teacher C);

De-brief **modelled** to the student teachers **“respectful and critical dialogue between two professionals”** (Kluth and Straut, 2003, p.237).
Concluding thoughts

• Teacher collaboration is ‘messy’ (Adamson and Walker, 2011), ‘beset by dilemmas’ (Winter, 1982, p.168) and requires “creative thinking about the use of time and space” (Kluth and Straut, 2003, p.237);
• “a person can only imitate that which is within her developmental level” (Vygotsky, 1978, p.34);
• The use of modelling assumes that student teachers already possess the required language, what Freire (1996) calls the ‘dominant syntax’, and theoretical knowledge to engage with a teacher educator as they ‘unpack’ their practice (Loughran and Berry, 2005), and this can either ‘sustain or suffocate’ its use as a teaching strategy (Kemmis, 2014a, p.50).
• This type of collaboration and its findings might contribute to “the research base and theorization of the pedagogic practices in relation to the sector” (Loo, 2014, p.338).


