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Original Citation

Powell, David (2013) Dilemmas, Tensions And Complexity: How College Based Teacher Educators Use Modelling In Their Practice With Their Student Teachers. In: The European Conference on Educational Research, ECER 2013, 10th-13th September 2013, Bahçeşehir University, Istanbul.

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Dilemmas, Tensions And Complexity: How College Based Teacher Educators Use Modelling in Their Practice With Their Student Teachers

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- Short introduction to research on teacher education and modelling
- Explanation of my methodological approach
- Considering some of the initial findings: how modelling is used and the dilemmas, tensions and complexity that surround its use
- What next?

One definition of modelling is...

- “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).

What authors say about it...

- Korthagen et al. (2005, p.111) suggest that “through their own teaching, model the role of the teacher”.
- demonstration of “exemplary behaviour” (Lunenberg et al., 2007, p.592)
- “...introduces an enquiry based approach to professional learning” (Boyd, 2011, p.3)
- 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” (Lunenberg et al., 2007,p.597).

Lunenberg et al.'s (2007) 4 forms of modelling

- Implicit modelling;
- Explicit modelling;
- Explicit modelling and facilitating the translation to the student teachers' own practice;
- Connecting exemplary behaviour with theory;

Loughran and Berry (2005, p.194) on modelling

- “However, even though it may be desirable, it is complex and difficult to do and is particularly difficult to develop alone.”



Part of the complexity is...

a teacher educator's session normally has 3 constituent parts:

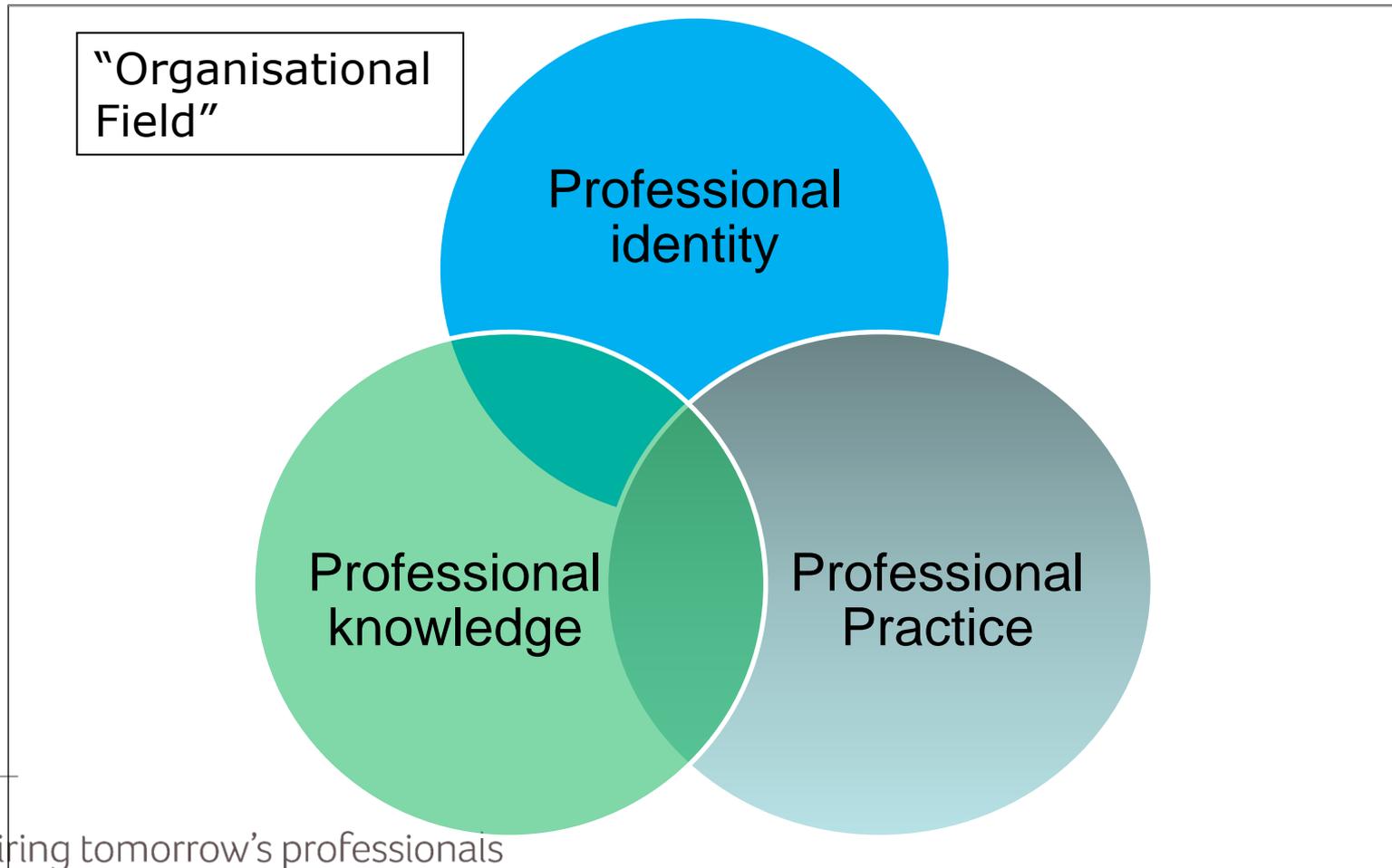
- content
- teaching method(s)
- 'pedagogy of teacher education'

(Loughran, 2006, pp3-4)

Existing research on teacher educators' use of modelling

- Self-study. For example, Loughran and Berry (2005), Wood and Geddis (1999)
- Case studies. For example, Lunenberg et al. (2007)
- Supported. For example, Swennen et al.(2008)

Four dimensions for investigation?



- “[B]eing a teacher educator is often difficult...in most places, there is **no culture** in which it is common for teacher education staff to **collaboratively work on the question of how to improve the pedagogy of teacher education.**”

Aim of the research

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

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?

My research methodology

- Action research
- Second-person approach (Chandler and Torbert, 2003, p.142)
- Working collaboratively with a group of teacher educators based at one further education college
- Using **stimulated recall interview** (with teacher), **semi-structured interview** (with teacher) and **focus group** (with teachers' students)
- Through “craftmanship” (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p.260) of my research to have a “**professional conversation**” (p.2) with each participant about their use of modelling

Features of second-person practice (Chandler and Torbert, 2003)

- “...two or more people interact face to face, verbally or non-verbally, around issues of mutual concern” (p.142).
- “...carried out between rather than within a person” (p.142).
- “...easier to describe and report second-person research on second-person practice...” (p.143).
- “Research “with” rather than “on” people...” (p.143)

Seeking out collaborators...

- 4 initial volunteers from one partner institution, now 3
- Partner institution approval
- Additional visits to partner to recruit more participants
- Concerns around surveillance..fears about being observed
- Performativity and Managerialism

- an alternative “method for summarizing (sic) interview data” (Winter, 1982, p.166)
- aims to provide an ‘objective’ account of the research that can be agreed by the different participants, a situation which he calls “parallel rationalities” (p.167)
- Recognises that the “formulation of practical action is unendingly beset by dilemmas” (p.168)
- foregrounds “the systematic complexity of the situations within which those concerned have to adopt (provisionally at least) a strategy” (p.168)

- Using all four forms of modelling, though **implicit is the form that predominates**...then explicit
- Explicit modelling of writing of learning outcomes, questioning, differentiation, **the minimum core (by a subject specialist)**, jigsaw activity, praxis approach to curriculum design, academic skills such as reading activities, sequencing activity, managing time for activities, use of humour, creating safe and supportive learning environments, values

- Implicit modelling included working with learning support assistants supporting a hearing impaired student, use of theory, diverse learning materials, group work, active learning of a theoretical subject, listening skills, monitoring group work, providing student support, managing discussions, behaviours such as body language, student-centred learning
- “If you’d asked me this before I would probably have said that Year 1 is all about the technical stuff and you can model that. Again, the technical side of it lends itself to overt modelling, doesn’t it? **But I think I’ve realised that you can also model curriculum and professionalism because you are talking about boundaries and we can talk about what I do or don’t do”.**

(Teacher C)

- Referring to explicit modelling and translating it to practice “I think this one is the one that I want to work further on...because it will make the greatest difference” .(Teacher B)
- Teacher A said they found modelling challenging behaviour difficult because they had limited experience of it
- Asked about balancing content and how to teach: “Well it depends a lot on the students’ meta-cognitive awareness...it depends on their ability to see what you’re doing and to interpret that...and I think I’m over relying on that”. (Teacher A)
- Seemed to be no signposting of modelling at the start of the session in terms of an explanation or aims? Is that something that needs to be explicit?

Professional knowledge

- Initially rely on their tacit knowledge as they build their theoretical knowledge...then begin to connect theory to practice. (Teachers B and C)
- Pedagogical knowledge is something 2 of the 3 said they were least confident about. (Teachers B and C)
- Limited opportunities for peer observation...and seen as not critical enough. “There wasn’t much meta-pedagogical content to the peer review”. (Teacher A)
- Adding, “Do we have the language to articulate it? You know, how do we frame and articulate things?”. (Teacher A) (Links to Swennen et al., 2008)
- “Having gone into the teacher educator role so quickly I didn’t have the analogies and anecdotes from the past to make classroom commentary more meaningful”. (Teacher A)

- Two appointed, one an Advanced Practitioner and invited.
- Induction seems to concentrate on content rather than methods and pedagogy of teacher education...trusted to get on with it. (Teachers B, C and S)
- “...But nothing quite prepares you for the complexity of it”. (Teacher A)
- Mentoring included suggesting books to read (Teacher B)

- **Vulnerability** (links to Lunenberg et al., 2007) (Teachers A and B)
- Asked about teaching colleagues: “Well that was one of the things that filled me with trepidation when I first started to be a teacher trainer because, as I say, it’s a big responsibility.” (Teacher A)
- I’ve been rewriting all of my materials and it’s simply because...**each year I do rewrite some stuff but I’m finding that whatever I’ve done the previous year’s is not good enough**”. (Teacher B)
- Dual identity: teacher educator and teacher of her subject (Teacher C)

- “I’m also **aware of my time limits** because there is so much for students to learn in year one and it almost feels like there isn’t enough time...So I think there is a question of around how much time we allocate to this”. (Teacher B)
- “I could have said, ‘Why have I done’ = but there are so many different points within what you could have... **It’s very difficult...It’s professional judgement about which bits to do it with’... It’s very difficult to get the balance right**” (Teacher B)
- “But also I’m trying to get better at...knowing what content’s most important because there is just so much of it .” (Teacher B)
- **Range of teaching means that when teachers pick up new subjects they have to concentrate on new content at the expense of the how to teach.** (Teacher B)

- CPD seems to involve attending University or internal events. Two internal CPD events were dedicated to modelling use of ICT and modelling expansive practice (Teacher A)
- “...making opportunities for **my own professional development seems a luxury**, you know, it’s a luxury to go to a conference, to go to a seminar but we really want to make that a part of what we do in the college.” (Teacher A)
- Asked about team teaching: “**It wouldn’t be something that we could formally timetable because we wouldn’t be given hours for it.**” (Teacher A)

- “Share ideas at meetings...but...majority of it is through looking at each other’s materials...I do talk to them but we are all time limited.” (Teacher B). It seems there is no joint planning because “the time we get to spend together is slightly restricted”. (Teacher A)
- Year 1 tutor might not teach group again in Year 2 (Teacher B). How is modelling developed within a programme?
- One person not involved in peer observation because of dual roles (Teacher C)

What next?

- Meeting held last week to ask co-collaborators how they would like the study to progress. They proposed:
- Third research question: what happens when teacher educators work collaboratively to improve the pedagogy of teacher education?
- Students rather than myself to film the session (that is then discussed in the Stimulated Recall Interview with me);
- They, not me, hold the focus group with their students to explore the perceptions of the teacher educator's use of modelling and its value to their own teaching;
- I suggested we apply for funding to support some team teaching and other development activities.

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