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The pedagogy of teacher educators: revealing practical wisdom through explicit modelling

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To learn more about 'explicit modelling':
A pedagogy in teacher education
The education of (student) teachers (curriculum and practice of teacher educators) is in line with the principles that are preached.

Swennen, Korthagen & Lunenberg, 2004, p. 17
Explicit modelling

Two levels:

• “Doing” in practice that which TEors expect students to do

• Offer students access to the pedagogical reasoning, feelings, thoughts and action accompanying the practice of teacher educators

Loughran & Berry, 2004, p. 194
Definition for this research

Explicit modelling: a pedagogy whereby the teacher educator unpacks her practice and the related reasoning for the benefit of student teachers or peers.
Why use modelling?

- Moral obligation
- Professional responsibility for improving teaching
- Experiencing teaching complexity in our own practice

(Zeichner, 2012)
A model for explicit modelling

**LEVEL 1:** Implicit modelling: exemplary teaching as teacher educator without explaining

**LEVEL 2:** Explicit modelling by critical reflection on practice

**LEVEL 2a:** Building from explicit modelling, the teacher educator considers how their practical wisdom relates to public knowledge

**LEVEL 2b:** Building from explicit modelling, the teacher educator encourages reconstruction by student teachers
Participants and context

Jane secondary education - part of University of Applied Sciences - subject Dutch
Mary: primary education - part of University of Applied Sciences - subject visual arts
Martin: primary education - post 1992 university - subject mathematics
Gary: primary education - post 1992 university - special needs and inclusion

All between 10 and 20 years of experience as teacher and at least 8 years experience working in higher education
Method

Videotaping teacher education taught sessions

Video process recall interviews with the teacher educator as they view and select incidents or themes from the video of their session
Differences between the teacher educators

**Apparent role**
- Jane: subject teacher
- Martin: teacher educator and subject teacher
- Mary and Gary: subject teacher and teacher educator

**Addressing their students**
- Jane: as experienced teachers lacking subject knowledge
- Gary as student teachers who need to develop specific aspects of their practice
- Mary and Martin: as novice teachers lacking pedagogical knowledge and subject knowledge

**Using school practice during classes**
- Jane: emphasis on what pupils must learn
- Mary: emphasis on how pupils may learn
- Martin and Gary: emphasis shared between what and how pupils may learn
LEVEL 1: implicit modelling using congruent teaching

Jane: playing out examples, addressing students perceived needs, practice during class, teaching to the test.

Mary: pedagogical model as lesson content explained with the help of examples from practice. Process aspects are emphasised complementing school’s attention on products. Methods used are also useful at school.

Martin: students complete and discuss learning activities also used in school classrooms

Gary: seems alert to the impact his own teaching behaviours can have in shaping and influencing his student teachers
LEVEL 2: explicit modelling of critical reflection on practice

Jane: hardly at all, insights during interview

Mary: explaining and some deliberate reflection on lesson enactment. Explicit modelling mainly in individual or small group conversations. Expert knowledge from outside is deliberately brought into the classroom

Martin: no evidence in this session of explicit modelling but claims to have explained the approach to student teachers at start of module

Gary: is seeking to model good teaching but holds back from critically reflecting on his own teaching
Teacher educators often use congruent teaching but in varied and complex ways...

Teacher educators have varied and often restricted views and practices of explicit modelling...

The quality assurance context of teacher educators may influence their modelling...
Discussion questions

• Is it feasible and useful to differentiate between congruent teaching and explicit modelling in research and in practice?

• To what extent are teacher educators able to model the processes, thoughts and knowledge of experienced teachers?

• How might we develop our research project most usefully from this initial stage?
