University of Huddersfield Repository

Dixon, Liz, Jennings, Anne, Orr, Kevin and Tummons, Jonathan

Dominant discourses of pre-service teacher education and the exigencies of the workplace: an ethnographic study from English further education

Original Citation

Dixon, Liz, Jennings, Anne, Orr, Kevin and Tummons, Jonathan (2010) Dominant discourses of pre-service teacher education and the exigencies of the workplace: an ethnographic study from English further education. Journal of vocational education and training, 62 (4). pp. 381-393. ISSN 1363-6820

This version is available at https://eprints.hud.ac.uk/id/eprint/9400/

The University Repository is a digital collection of the research output of the University, available on Open Access. Copyright and Moral Rights for the items on this site are retained by the individual author and/or other copyright owners. Users may access full items free of charge; copies of full text items generally can be reproduced, displayed or performed and given to third parties in any format or medium for personal research or study, educational or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge, provided:

- The authors, title and full bibliographic details is credited in any copy;
- A hyperlink and/or URL is included for the original metadata page; and
- The content is not changed in any way.

For more information, including our policy and submission procedure, please contact the Repository Team at: E.mailbox@hud.ac.uk.

http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/

Dominant discourses of pre-service teacher education and the exigencies of the workplace: an ethnographic study from English further education

Liz Dixon, Ann Jennings, Kevin Orr,
University of Huddersfield

Jonathan Tummons
University of Teeside

Abstract

For teacher-trainees on pre-service Further Education (FE) initial teacher training (ITT) courses, the placement in colleges is a crucially formative experience. From 2005 to 2008, a research project at the University of Huddersfield researched these placements in four colleges in the north of England and the relationships that were formed between the trainees, their mentors, other staff and students. Where the trainees were placed and who they taught were often a matter of expedience, and their individual circumstances were contingent upon diverse, often local, factors. As such, the picture that emerged of the lived experience of placement defied simple classification and explanation.

Drawing on data gathered during the project this paper argues that the experience of placements is characterised by confusion, insecurity and marginalisation on the one hand and integration, enthusiasm and development on the other. However, regardless of their individual experience there is evidence that the trainees learnt to cope and even that messiness may be useful preparation for the unstable FE workplace. This questions what constitutes a successful placement.

Introduction

The post-compulsory education and training (PCET) sector in England is where the majority of vocational education takes place as well as academic study between the age of 16 and 19 and the government stipulates that all teacher-trainees within this sector must complete a minimum of 150 hours of teaching practice in order to qualify. From 2005 to 2008 a project at the University of Huddersfield called *The College Experience: work-based learning and pre-service trainee-teachers* researched what occurred during the placements on a full-time one year pre-service PCET teacher-training course and how trainee-teachers were enculturated. Placements have "a quality similar to an indelible imprint" (Thies-Sprinthall 1986, 14 in: Avila de Lima 2003, 198) and the teacher trainees studied identified their period of placement as the most formative and significant element of their training, however positive or otherwise they found it.

This research project focussed on trainees placed in four Further Education (FE) colleges in the north of England and looked at the specific contexts for their placements as well as the relationships trainees formed with their mentors, other staff and students. Trainees attended the university for two days per week for taught sessions and from late October until May they also spent two to three days per week in a single institution, where they each had a designated mentor. The circumstances of the trainees' individual experiences

were contingent upon diverse, fluid and often highly localised factors and the picture that emerged of placement in an FE college defies simple classification or explanation. Paradoxically, however, what trainees learn from this shifting complexity may be useful preparation for the unstable FE workplace. This led the research team to question what the trainees learnt through participating in their placement college and so what constitutes a successful placement. **needs more of an argument**

The literature that relates to the formation of teacher identities within FE is relatively limited compared to that of schools (Jephcote *et al* 2008: 163) though there is a growing body of work that relates to pre-service teacher training courses; in particular Avis and Bathmaker have written extensively on this topic (see *inter alia* Avis & Bathmaker 2004 and 2006). They found little integration between existing staff and trainee teachers, which chimes with the findings of this project, and quote one trainee who said, "[s]ometimes I feel like I am sneaking around" (Bathmaker & Avis 2005: 54-55). Like Wallace (2002), Avis and Bathmaker also found a divergence between the hopes and expectations of trainees and what they found on their placements (Avis et al 2003) which can alienate some trainees from their initial commitment and altruism (Avis & Bathmaker 2009). This signals the importance of the trainees' own lived experience in influencing the decision to become FE teachers in the first place (Bathmaker & Avis 2005) and in the formation of expectations of what the role entails (Avis *et al* 2002). Within our study this latter element was most apparent in the dominant discourses of education relating to traditional images of school, which this paper explores.

Amongst others, Viskovic and Robson (2001) and Viskovic (2005) Tummons (2008)have considered FE teacher training from a situated learning perspective: specifically, drawing on theories of learning as being situated within communities of practice. This theoretical perspective, also used in this paper, provides a conceptual framework that includes the trainees' individual situation and the extent to which they participate within communities of practice during their placement. By this we mean that the extent of the trainees' participation may be more or less central to the community, which will have a direct impact on the learning that takes place (Wenger 1998). This paper analyses placements in relation to three aspects: the trainees' experience of placement; the relationships that trainees form on placement; and what trainees learn about teaching and learning on placement; before discussing what constitutes a successful placement.

Data were gathered between 2005 and 2007 in four colleges in the north of England through a series of semi-structured interviews with both teacher-trainees and their mentors, and the narratives produced have been conceptualised both as a form of retrospective meaning-making, and also as a form of presentation of the narrator's (that is to say, the interviewee's) point of view (Chase, 2005; Silverman, 2005). As far as practicable, a representative sample was sought from the trainee body as a whole, although to some extent sampling was opportunistic, depending on positive responses to requests for participation. Other data were collected from the information on the procedures and practices surrounding teaching placement provided to trainees at the university, and through documentary analysis of a range of sources including course handbooks and module specifications.

In gathering this data the researchers noticed the widely differing, idiosyncratic nature of the work-based experience and at the same time felt that the research approach used was not capturing the detail and complexity of the trainee experience. Moreover, the researchers were aware of issues of perceived power and influence within the process of gathering data due to the researchers' own position as teacher-trainers. In response to this, a means was sought by which the trainees could create their own thick description (Geertz 1973) of their context, relationships and activities on placement. Therefore methods were employed which could shift the locus of control towards the respondent and which were more likely to result in detailed responses. Trainees were asked to complete diaries, take photographs of their placements, create free writing about their placement experience and use building bricks to create and then talk about metaphorical models representative of their work-based experience.

Placement Experience

All of the trainees had the same full-day introduction to the placement element of their course in the first week at the university, initially as a full cohort, and then when divided into their on-going subject-specialist groups. The trainees were generally positive during this briefing; when one subject specialist group was asked to describe in one word their attitude towards the placement, only three of twenty-two used a word describing negativity or anxiety. However, the trainees were frequently warned of the exigencies of the FE workplace; in a buyers' market, where the colleges were the buyers, the trainees were informed by their tutor of the "need to sell [themselves]". Arranging a placement was a

complex process and great importance was laid on the placement request form that had to be completed and then sent to prospective colleges. Expediency was explicit; they were repeatedly told that they would have to be flexible in where they applied for their placement and what they would teach there.

> *Don't expect a close match between your degree and what you are going to teach.*

> *You're not just there to teach [but to do] lots of other things beside.*

Though the trainees were assured that everyone would eventually be placed at a college, how long this would take was indeterminate and some started sooner than others, which caused anxiety for some trainees because successful completion of the course rests in part on the successful completion of the placement. Already apparent was the disconcerting uncertainty, which was a common perception of the placement. Also apparent was the dissonance between the dominant discourse of placement employed by the tutors, which stressed the need for flexibility in professional practice, pragmatism and restricted expectations, and the vernacular discourse of placement employed by the trainees, who focused on their subject specialist areas, anticipated working with FE students who had chosen to be there, and had unrestricted expectations (Gee, 1996). This dissonance was euphemistically referred to in the course handbook that the university supplied to trainees:

> You should keep the usual class tutors informed of what you are planning to teach, and ask their advice if appropriate. However, it is important to remember that your colleagues are under pressure and your needs may not be their first priority. Some tutors are very keen to know what you have planned – others are prepared to give you a relatively free hand. Try to ascertain this during early discussions with them.

Initial Responses to Placement

The immediate impression of placement quickly exposed the differences in circumstances and perception amongst trainees.

Immediately after I arrived in the department, the first greeting was tea: would you like tea or coffee?…Very friendly.

It's really good. You've got like space to breathe…and everybody's friendly ...and very cooperative. […] I've been sort of [laugh] given a desk and a computer…. I mean everybody has access to the computer but they are quite good because if I'm working at that desk they tend not to disturb [me], they go and use other computers which is brilliant [because] I am a student....but they have really valued me and I don't feel like a student sometimes. Sometimes I forget […] mean I know what I'm here for but I forget that I'm here from Huddersfield university. I actually feel as if I work here.

Whilst a positive and constructive welcome might seem to be an undeniable prerequisite for a successful placement, the reality of some trainees' experiences would seem to suggest the need for something more lasting:

[Staff] are all positive as well. They are always approachable and they are willing to like assist me. I have never found anyone wanting. They talk to me they listen to me so that's quite important to respond to my needs so I don't see a problem with them at the moment. […] I'm really becoming confident and I think I am in the right field. [The placement] is giving me a footing into what I want to do in life. I am really beginning to know my own worth […] I am really happy.

This trainee dropped out of the placement a month later, citing severe problems relating to staff at the college. Other trainees reported less than positive experiences:

Well first of all, we went into the department. The manager wasn't there so it was a case of, oh, you know, everyone looking up and staring at you, and the first greeting was "bring your own tea, you bring your own coffee. You don't touch anyone else's. You can't sit anywhere that's anyone else's seat. You won't have a seat of your own.

Relationships

The research team focussed on three key relationships formed by the trainees during the placement: with mentors; with other teachers; and with students. Once again, the diversity of responses around these issues was significant. Respondents who had reported a positive introduction to the FE workplace tended to also report positive relations with mentors and other teachers:

> *[My mentor is] great, she's really good. I feel I've got the best mentor from the whole group. When everybody's talking about their experiences with their mentors, they're having a lot of problems and I'm just trying not to tell them anything about [my] college because I feel bad. […] And she's done [teacher training] at [the university] as well so she knows all the tutors.*
>
> *I have had lots of help and support. All of the staff have listened to any ideas I have put forward and supported it if they felt it was a good idea. In fact they have even stolen some of my activities.*

Whereas other trainees found relationships with their mentors to be less constructive:

> *My mentor was of 'old school' and [said] 'I don't do lesson plans. You'll find out. I don't do all this.' […] What that means is 'Yeah, I know all these new fangled people tell you to do lesson plans but I don't, because I don't need to because I've been doing it 30 years and if I don't do it now, well...' […] I just thought, they don't want me here, this person doesn't do what the uni[versity] says they're supposed to do, but I've got to try and fit it in and I can't fight with them because they're my mentor.*
>
> *My mentor is actually Lord Lucan. I'm lucky to find him and when I do he's always so busy that I get the impression that he forgot he was supposed to meet me until I'm there….I bet I could probably be here for the rest of the year and he wouldn't chase up my progress because he won't remember who I am. I can understand from his point of view that I'm probably just an unwanted inconvenience*. [Work diary entry]
>
> *Ohhh, I was so close! I thought it was so close I could taste it. In I went on Wednesday morning to the faculty office, hoping to find my mentor, hoping he'd*

sorted out my timetable. Alas, he wasn't there, and hasn't been all week. He's on sick now. I mean I know I can be a nuisance at times but I didn't think I had ***that*** *effect on people*. [Work diary entry, subsequent week]

On the whole, trainees reported more positive responses from the students with whom they worked, notwithstanding their trainee teacher status:

The lovely thing is, they've been actually saying thank you and stuff like that and I've been thinking, "wow", because I don't expect that from students, them actually valuing you, your teaching methods and your style and the way you are and that time you're in the class with them. It means a lot, and, you know, the way they talk to you. […] I didn't expect this.

Such positive responses occurred across institutions, and across student groups as well. Although there was a recognition that their status as trainees had an impact on some aspects of classroom behaviour, those respondents who commented on such issues managed this impact with relatively little difficulty, drawing on the experiences of mentors and other tutors where able to do so, and also on their own experiences of being students.

Some trainees were used to plug gaps in the college's timetable and so took on additional responsibility, which exposed the duality of how some trainees were perceived; as members of staff when they were of use, but like any other student when they were looking for support.

They are very happy to land [extra work] on my plate which if you weren't strong enough you could easily go under rather than say 'No'.

I think that boundary isn't set and it moves – sometimes when it's helpful like when people ask us to cover we become staff and other times, when we're asking for things, saying, 'could we sort this out?' it goes back to that student mode.

Where the trainee was perceived as a student by college staff, the trainees described corresponding feelings of exclusion and not having access to resources and information to enable them to function in the teaching role. Whilst these perceptions were not common across the cohort, neither were they unique or unusual.

Learning About Teaching

Differences in experience within and between institutions were similarly prevalent within actual teaching practice. Whilst the trainees had, in their placement request form, expressed which areas of the curriculum they would wish or were able to teach, the opportunities available to them were sometimes rather different. Some trainees found that they were able to follow their subject specialist interests, but many found themselves working with students in disparate age groups or working in curriculum areas with which they were unfamiliar. At the same time, many trainees displayed a degree of self-awareness and reflexivity regarding these variations in the context of their teaching practice:

> *I've got one group which I teach two different subjects to and have them four times a week but it's the same group and then I have another group. […] Yes, one's fully of sixteen year old boys and there's eighteen of them and the other group mature ladies and there's only about six of them so they are very different.*

> *I think from a teaching point of view [covering other subjects is] quite developmental because you're bound to be in that situation every now and then whether you're covering for someone or even if it's within your subject area you may not know a particular topic, you know, so I didn't find it disconcerting for that reason but to have to go through that process is a sort of panic. [It] was quite sort of disconcerting.*

While trainees' responses to the contexts of their teaching practice were diverse, their responses to issues around pedagogy were more uniform. In the majority of interviews, discussion around pedagogy tended to focus on both classroom practice and on preconceptions of teaching and learning based on the trainees' own prior experiences of education. When discussing classroom practice, some trainees made explicit reference to what they had studied at the university prior to their placement, although responses to these experiences were mixed:

[I] did not enjoy [the first study module], I didn't understand, I didn't see the point of it, but now that I'm into placement I can see why things are said and quite a few times the teacher, he kept going on about gender issues and race issues and I just thought he was pinpointing me out because I was the only Asian person in the class. Well now when I'm here I've realised he wasn't pinpointing me out, he was telling me that it's an issue that I need to be aware of.

We learned about the theory behind teaching and learned how to plan a lesson. We had to plan a lesson and teach the first twenty minutes of the lesson you'd be teaching to the rest of the group. I think with that it's one of those tricky areas because you're doing it to your group, you're doing it to your peers, you're doing it to other people who are training to be teachers so it's not realistic to some extent. You know you haven't got the pupils there and everyone's well behaved and we know that isn't the case in a classroom environment, that doesn't happen.

Irrespective of initial preparation by the university, trainees' practice often reverted to that experienced during their own educational, especially where this matched practice within their work-based placement. This may have been due to lack of confidence or lack of knowledge about alternatives, as well as a desire to be seen as competent, all of which mitigate towards the likelihood of reverting to a previous embedded understanding of what teaching is, which very often related to the vernacular discourse of traditional school or college teaching.

Technical issues relating to lesson planning, use of technology such as interactive whiteboards and the design of teaching and learning resources were also frequently commented on. Trainees talked about drawing up lesson plans and schemes of work, generally in terms of the time that the process took and they talked about the kinds of activities that they had used with their own students: icebreakers, quizzes, and crosswords, often referring to learning styles theory as they did so. However, such references tended to be general and uncritical, often couched in the language of inclusive practice or differentiation to explain or support understandings of teaching that were formed prior to the ITT course, but with little critical appreciation or deconstruction of the terms. Such theoretical content that they had studied at the university was met, on the whole, indifferently:

I think the five weeks in the [preparatory module] they should stop concentrating on psychology and start concentrating on different types of students, class, gender, learning styles and needs, plus the segregation… It's really important that the tutors know all the different aspects of working with students.

One of the trainees, Asif explained how he approached his teaching early on in his placement and the influence of his own experience along with what we have termed the vernacular discourse of education:

I modelled it [teaching] on past experience from what my A level teachers did and what happened at university. ..five years ago and there it was just lectures. At college it was a lot easier but even then it was just lectures. The teacher just stood up and like nearly the whole two hours just writing on the board and then maybe half way through just giving you some questions to do. … So I modelled it exactly on how I was taught… so it was just natural that I picked that up.

Later in his placement Asif described his experience:

I found it very difficult to go from that [transmission model of teaching] 'cause I'm very reserved. It takes me time to get used to people and for me to actually, you know, transform to that different type of [student-centred] teaching was very hard and I just had to do it gradually.

Initially when I started it was just me standing up there giving them all the info but I don't know, as time goes on they get used to you. You just need that time… once that time has passed then eventually they open up and you open up 'cause the first few weeks it was like hell 'cause there was that big barrier there; like you have your stuff… but then as time went on I could just move around freely, get talking to some of them and even have a laugh with them, and they enjoyed it.

Another trainee, Charlotte, had experienced FE before she started her course. She was shocked by the changes in practice and policy she discovered in her placement college, which initially unsettled her.

Yeh, I'd been to a college myself but that was in like 1996 and that's when I did philosophy, I did Women's Studies you know so that sort of political curriculum that was available then, I had no idea it had been so heavily amputated in that period, so i'ts been quite a revelation, really, to me just how much has been changed. What it seems teachers were doing when I was at college, how active they could be, not political in a sort of bias sense, but just how far they could push students and obviously that's just not the case now.

Winograd (2005) explored the notion of teacher identity and suggests that certain aspects are core, including personality, biography and educational history. Those aspects of a teacher's identity that are more directly socially constructed by the community the teacher is part of and which can compete with the core, may change. Winograd (2005, 261) viewed teacher identity as complex and fluctuating, likening it to a chameleon which changes colour in response to its surroundings.

Identities are contingent and temporary, dependent on changing situations, including my own evolving knowledge of teaching.

In other words, changes in environment, the students, the staff one works with, the culture of the college, government policy can impact on the individual trainee's identity. Additionally a trainee's developing teaching skills, their mood, the weather, the time of day are likely to impact on their evolving professional identity. Winograd offered the metaphor of the tightrope walker. A teacher's identity needs to shift and change to respond to different circumstances; stepping between teacher and student-centred activities or varying one's teaching style, for example. However, there will be core values and beliefs which stabilise the trainees' identity which might in turn prompt them to resist or challenge. The tightrope walker uses the rope as a base structure to keep from falling into the abyss, so that while there is continuous movement back and forth among different positions and perspectives with much wobbling, the body always tilts back towards the middle.

For many of our sample the experience of their own education and the traditional relationships involved was dominant in their perception of their role as teacher, and consequently in their own practice.

What constitutes a successful placement?

When asked to describe how an ideal placement should be, many trainees stressed an incremental exposure to teaching:

> *I think definitely the idea of being exposed to the placement in small chunks, progressively increasing the amount to work you have to do is a good idea…Certainly, maybe building up the amount of hours or days progressively and having something set so everybody's got a level of consistency. I think one of the things about a profession is about bringing new people into that profession and ensuring everybody gets the same treatment and has the same sort of opportunities and experiences.*

But this is not how it was on placement:

> *my own uncertainties to do with, like planning, classroom issues are not stuff I can ever see being resolved during this period because there just isn't that room for 'let's sit down and what issues are you having this week?'*

One trainee described a successful placement thus:

> *Having footsteps to follow in and learn from somebody in a safe environment. I think there should be challenges at your placement but they should be incremental. You should be prepared for it and given the opportunity to say, 'Right, I'm ready for this', given the challenge.*
>
> *I think the other important thing about the placement is you've got to be bold and be ready to dive in there and have the confidence to do that.'*

There was a wide discrepancy between what students would like from their placement, and what they experience: when this same trainee spoke about his actual experience of placement, he had been left largely unsupported and had been given responsibility for delivering a new programme, unsupervised. Nevertheless, significantly, he came to relish this autonomy as he began to see it, and felt he had had a positive placement experience. This account and others which were similar raise the question of how a placement should prepare for a career in PCET which is characterised by flux and uncertainty. There is much

to suggest from our evidence that trainees absorb and learn a great deal in the workplace but this is often unplanned, unsupervised and not incremental. What can be seen both in the experiences trainees chose to discuss and the language they used in recounting those experiences, was how coping or survival assumed prominence, even during an apparently successful placement.

> *Well, I suppose it has been in that pure 'in at the deep end way', [which] moved me on a bit, whereas in that microteach I could never imagine how I could stand up in front of people where now I do it without thinking.*

> *So there's stuff like that really has moved me on but, you know, my developmental curve is being judged by nothing terrible's happened. Whether that means I'm doing it right – nobody's had a riot in my classroom, nobody's said to me you're absolutely awful. That is my only measuring stick.*

So, even when they described that they were progressing, trainees were learning to assimilate and to manage in what can be disconcerting or even dysfunctional circumstances. This may get ready trainees for work in an FE college, but whether it constitutes an adequate preparation for teaching is moot.

Conclusions

At this time, some discrete themes can be seen to be emerging from the data that has been gathered including the organisation of teaching placements; the content of teaching placements and the learning that takes place during teaching placements.

Despite a strong procedural script derived from the systems and procedures laid down by the university, which the placement colleges agreed to be bound to, the lived realities of the placements were extremely diverse and so defied generalisation. The trainee's entry to the FE college can be seen as being on a continuum ranging from a carefully structured induction, where college systems and procedures were correctly introduced so the trainee can spend their first days or weeks in a shadowing or supporting role, to a point where the trainee is thrown 'in at the deep end' and given sometimes large groups of students to teach with little preparation or even forewarning. In the structured environments, mentor roles and the potential support available from other tutors were clearly defined, although these varied widely between institutions. In some, mentors followed a highly structured

series of procedures with regular meetings yet in others, equally approachable mentors maintained a more distant position, with the trainee always aware of their presence and availability. In unstructured environments, trainees sometimes struggled to receive any help due sometimes to the systemic failings of the FE college itself; for example, those colleges that were described by trainees as “unhappy places” with poor management or leadership within departments. Sometimes the lack of help available to trainees was due to the attitude and inadequacies of the mentor assigned to them. Consequently, in some cases trainees took it upon themselves to find and adopt a second, ‘unofficial’ mentor.

Following warnings during the process of applying for a teaching placement, trainees tended to be phlegmatic about the sometimes diverse curricula that they found themselves teaching on. The majority of trainees taught within their broad areas of expertise (defined as being those areas which reflected their qualifications and/or industrial, trade or craft experience), although occasionally at a distance greater than anticipated (for example, an English language graduate who taught Basic Skills). The need to be flexible was explicitly recognised by all of the trainees who took part in the research.

One of the most complex analytical strands to have emerged from the research is the nature of learning that occurs during a placement and clearly that is of paramount importance to the teacher training course as a whole. In common with other UK higher education courses that prepare people for a particular profession, this course rests in part on notions of work-based learning. That is, the successful completion of the course requires learning that can only happen in the workplace (the FE college), in addition to the learning that takes place at the university. Much of the work done by trainees in their placements (teaching sessions, drawing up lesson plans, creating handouts or using technologies in the classroom) became objects for formal assessment against centrally stipulated criteria (Beaty 2003; Brown 1999; Gray 2001). Written reflections on practice were a central component of this assessment process throughout, drawing together the learning that accrues from experience, the tacit knowledge of the students, and the theoretical, propositional knowledge that was taught during the course (Taylor 1997). Certainly, trainees did learn on their placement and the data provided many examples of trainees developing their confidence, and successfully managing challenging situations. However, often trainees learnt to be isolated or to just comply.

Though our data is diverse and points to the messy idiosyncrasy of the FE workplace, one thread that emerges is the pervasive influence of a shared cultural idea of what teaching is, based upon a traditional view of schools, which arguably has also formed the government policies that determine the shape of the PCET course. However, this shared idea can conflict with the diverse situation in many FE colleges. Moreover, work-based learning is the traditional model used to train other professionals such as doctors, nurses and school teachers, and in those cases the training of new entrants to the profession is well established and since training is a prerequisite, trainees will be a common feature of the workplace. Conversely, PCET historically does not have a requirement for formal teacher training. Workplaces in PCET and FE in particular are unstable, reactive and lack an established culture of in-service training that is associated with, for example, schools and hospitals. Therefore, FE may not be conducive to successful, developmental work-based learning despite the introduction of new statutory standards for FE teachers in 2006 and more recent requirements for initial qualifications and CPD. Within the institutions where this work-based learning should take place, professional training and development are far removed from the day-to-day activity for managers and teaching staff who are striving to meet constantly fluctuating targets and priorities. Arguably then, the peculiarity and history of FE does not support the anticipated model of work-based training since opportunities for the meaningful participation of trainees in work are inherently limited in many FE workplaces. Paradoxically, however, a smooth, problem-free and incrementally introduced placement may be a false preparation for the erratic and frenetic culture of FE. Yet, as trainees learn to comply with that culture rather than challenging it, the conditions that can be so unsatisfactory for initial teacher training placements perpetuate.

References

Avila de Lima, J. (2003) Trained for Isolation: the impact of departmental cultures on student teachers' views and practices of collaboration. *Journal of Education for Teaching* 29 (3) pp197-215.

Avis, J. (2002) Developing Staff in Further Education: discourse, learners and practice. *Research in Post-Compulsory Education* 7(3) 339-352.

Avis, J. (2005) Beyond performativity: reflections on activist professionalism and the labour process in further education. *Journal of Education Policy* 20(2) 209-222.

Avis, J. and Bathmaker, A-M. (2004) The politics of care: emotional labour and trainee further education lecturers. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training* 56(1) 5-20.

Avis, J. Bathmaker, A-M. and Parsons, J. (2002) Communities of practice and the construction of learners in post-compulsory education and training. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training* 54(1) 27-50.

Bathmaker, A-M. and Avis, J. (2005) Is that 'tingling feeling' enough? Constructions of teaching and learning in further education. *Educational Review* 57(1) 3-20.

Beaty, L. (2003) Supporting learning from experience. In Fry, H., Ketteridge, S. and Marshall, S. (eds.) *A Handbook for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*. Second edition. London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Brown, S. (1999a) Assessing practice. In Brown, S. and Glasner, A. (eds.) *Assessment Matters in Higher Education: choosing and using diverse approaches.* Buckingham: Open University Press/Society for Research into Higher Education.

Chase, S. E. (2005) Narrative inquiry: multiple lenses, approaches, voices. In Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Third edition. London: Sage.

Christians, C. (2005) Ethics and politics in qualitative research. In Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Y. (eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Third edition. London: Sage.

Gee, J. (1996) *Social Linguistics and Literacies: Ideology in Discourses*. Second edition. London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Geertz,C. (1973) *The Interpretation of Cultures* New York: Basic Books

Gleeson, D., Davies, J. and Wheeler, E. (2005) On the making and taking of professionalism in the further education workplace. *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 26(4) 445-460.

Gray, D. (2001) *A Briefing on Work-Based Learning*. York: Learning and Teaching Support Network.

Robson, J. (1998) A profession in crisis: status, culture and identity in the further education college. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training* 50(4) 585-607.

Shain, F. and Gleeson, D. (1999) Under new management: changing conceptions of teacher professionalism and policy in the further education sector. *Journal of Education Policy* 14(4) 445-462.

Silverman, D. (2005) *Doing Qualitative Research*. Second edition. London: Sage.

Tummons, J. (2008) Assessment, and the literacy practices of trainee PCET teachers. *International Journal of Educational Research* 47(3) 184-191.

Viskovic, A. (2005) 'Community of Practice' as a Framework for Supporting Tertiary Teachers' Informal Workplace Learning. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training* 57(3) 389-410.

Wallace, S. (2002) No good surprises: intending lecturers' preconceptions and initial experiences of further education. *British Educational Research Journal* 28(1) 79-93.

Winograd,K.*(*2005) *Good Day, Bad Day, Teaching as a High-Wire Act,* Oxford Scarecrow Education