PEDAGOGIES OF DEVELOPING TEACHER IDENTITY

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ABSTRACT

This chapter explores the notion of teacher identity and how teacher education might help to create a strong and clear vision for what it means to be a professional teacher. Within the organizational features and structures of teacher education, the pedagogy that students of teaching experience is crucial in shaping their understanding of their sense of identity. Teacher education needs to acknowledge and respond to the needs, issues, and concerns students of teaching have and create expectations that push beyond the personal and strive for the professional. This chapter suggests that in recognizing the importance of pedagogical reasoning and understanding learning about teaching through an inquiry stance, that students of teaching might begin to not only recognize the importance of knowledge of practice but also begin to see how to create knowledge from practice. A vision for their professional identity is then borne of a need to see value in “noticing” through practice in order to become more informed about teaching and learning. In doing so, the importance of pedagogy as a relationship between teaching and learning and the teacher’s role in mediating that
relationship can support the development of an identity as a professional teacher.

**Keywords:** Teaching; student teacher; teacher identity; knowledge of practice; learning about teaching; pedagogical reasoning

It is important at the outset to explain what is meant by *pedagogies of developing teacher identity*; especially so in a book that places pedagogy at the forefront in considerations of the work of teacher education. In the way that this chapter is constructed and the arguments that will be made, pedagogies of teacher identity refers to that which a teacher educator does to help student teachers develop their identity as a teacher. In doing so, pedagogy itself needs to be understood in terms of the teaching—learning—teaching relationship that is so crucial to not seeing pedagogy itself as simply a synonym for teaching (Loughran, 2013). Pedagogies of developing teacher identity then is not about a teaching strategy or procedure but rather the conditions created to ensure that teaching and learning genuinely exist in a synergistic relationship, that is, where teaching purposefully influences learning and learning purposefully influences teaching.

In the context of teacher education, conceptualizing and enacting practices of teaching and learning about teaching comprise the specialist knowledge of teachers of teaching described by many as a pedagogy of teacher education (Crowe & Berry, 2007; Heaton & Lampert, 1993; Korthagen & Kessels, 1999; Loughran, 2006; Ritter, 2007; Russell, 2007). Therefore, pedagogies of developing teacher identity comprises the practices that underpin ways in which a teacher educator works to create the conditions for, and enacts practices that are designed to influence the manner in which students of teaching come to develop their identity as teachers.

In working with students of teaching, I aim to develop them as thoughtful, purposeful, and reflective professionals who see teaching as more than the development of an armoury of useful “teaching tips and tricks.” I want my students of teaching to

- have a vision for practice whereby their professional learning centers on understanding the place of pedagogical reasoning so that the what, how and why of what they do is directly linked to their hopes and expectations for their students’ learning;
- see teaching as more than the delivery of information and I want them to move beyond the simplicity and sub-conscious comfort of transmissive practice (Barnes, 1976, 1992);
- think carefully about what they do with their students so that their practice is reasoned, thoughtful, and intentional; and
- situate inquiry at the heart of their learning about teaching.

With those aspirations, my hope is that they will see value in developing their professional knowledge of practice and that they will understand that knowledge is to be educative and dynamic. Overall then, the intention is to help them conceptualize teachers’ professional knowledge of practice as something that informs their growth as pedagogues and encourages them to be articulate about teaching and learning in ways that highlight genuine expertise. Yet with all that students of teaching are confronted by in learning to teach, fulfilling that vision is clearly easier said than done.

**LEARNING ABOUT TEACHING: EXPECTATIONS AND DEMANDS**

Northfield and Gunstone (1997) described a number of assumptions that they viewed as significant when thinking about how to create a coherent and meaningful teacher preparation program. Their ideas were based on the notion that an important purpose of teacher education is to make explicit the ways in which teacher knowledge might be articulated and developed. Their assumptions continue to resonate despite the changing times because they carry meaning in light of the expectations and demands on students of teaching, teacher educators, and teachers through the institutional organization that is teacher education. Their assumptions are as follows:

- Teacher education programs should model the teaching and learning approaches being advocated and promote the vision of the profession for which they are preparing teachers.
- Teacher education must be based on a recognition of the prior and current experiences of teachers and encourage respect for teacher knowledge and understanding.
- Teacher educators should maintain close connections with schools and the teaching profession. They need to be advocates for the profession and supporters of teachers’ attempts to understand and improve teaching and learning opportunities for their students.
Learning about teaching is a collaborative activity, and teacher education is best conducted in small groups and networks with ideas and experiences being shared and discussed.

Teacher education involves personal development, social development as well as professional development of teachers (Northfield & Gunstone, 1997, p. 49).

These assumptions form a thought-provoking base from which to consider what teacher education is, what it is reasonable to expect it to be able to do, and to begin to focus attention on what it means to be fully involved in the enterprise of teaching and learning about teaching. When viewed from the perspective of students of teaching, these assumptions become all the more important because in their learning about teaching, they are confronted by two competing demands. Russell (1997) described these competing demands as the content turn and the pedagogical turn. As the names suggest, the content turn is about the knowledge underpinning the content, which is being taught and the pedagogical turn is the manner in which that teaching is conducted. For students of teaching then, they must simultaneously pay attention to both turns in order to purposefully reflect upon and learn about not only what is being taught, how, and why, but also what those learning experiences might mean for their own views about their developing practice—which also has obvious implications for teacher educators’ approaches to their teaching of teaching.

Despite the prior knowledge of teaching and learning that students of teaching bring with them to their teacher education experience, their own learning role is multifaceted as they are consistently learning, teaching, re-learning, revising, and through ongoing development, building up on their understandings of, and approaches to, practice; learning about teaching is clearly complex and demanding work. However, beyond these demands, learning about teaching can also be confusing and contradictory. Therefore, some form of framework to guide and inform the journey of development is crucial to shaping what students of teaching consider they are trying to do as learners of teaching and to be increasingly responsible for directing that learning at a personal level.

Developing teachers’ professional knowledge of practice is one way of assisting students of teaching to plot a course for their journey and to create a vision for their ongoing professional learning as teachers. Thinking about teaching in such a way is then fundamental to developing an identity as a teacher; an identity forged in learning about, and enacting, professional knowledge of teaching through one’s own practice.
Palmer (1998) stated that, “good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher” (p. 10); a point well made. Yet it is equally the case that students of teaching may well yearn for technique as a crutch to support their developing competence in the classroom. Technique can offer them something concrete and create a sense of safety, or security, as they embark on their journey of pedagogical development — something that is neither simple nor linear despite sometimes unconsciously carrying a false hope to the contrary.

Haggarty and Postlethwaite (2012), in their study of the transition from student to teacher, drew attention to the difficulties that students of teaching and newly qualified teachers (NQTs) are confronted by as they move from the university classroom to the school classroom. Through their study, they found that rather than their participants developing further the knowledge and skills they had gained during their teacher preparation program, they tended to fail to “interrogate this knowledge base in any systematic way. Thus, progressive filtering … meant that some ideas had already been lost; problems with boundary crossing meant that others had been detached from their original meanings; and the need to fit in with existing school practices meant that others had been distorted” (p. 258).

Unfortunately, as their study suggests, for many students of teaching, the notion that teaching might be underpinned by a useful and meaningful knowledge base of professional practice is far from evident, much less explicitly valued. Being socialized into teaching can dominate (an issue long recognized within teaching, see, Zeichner & Gore, 1990) and so the vision of what teaching “might be” can become quite limited, and the very nature of professional knowledge can simply be reduced to teaching tips and tricks that have immediate practical application. A likely outcome of such a situation is that how teachers might come to envisage their role; how their teacher identity begins to be shaped will be impacted because they:

... are keen to be seen as “proper” teachers, yet the idea of what it means to be a “proper teacher” needs to be considered. In an expansive learning environment, being a proper teacher is one in which teachers engage in enquiry on and about their practice; where classrooms are sites for professional learning as well as pupil learning. However, in more restricted environments it seems to be seen as one of not needing help beyond superficial tips; of failing to recognise that learning and developing as a teacher need to continue; and, that learning is merely learning to fit in. In order to learn and develop as a “proper teacher,” at least initially, it seems important that those working with the NQT [and students of teaching], if not the whole school, model what it means to enquire about practice and strive for improvement in that practice. (Haggarty & Postlethwaite, 2012, p. 260).
Understanding and responding to these issues is important if a teacher education program is to make a difference for students of teaching. Challenging the status quo of socialization and creating a vision for professional learning that extends beyond limited views of what it means to be a teacher matter. That also means that a teacher educator’s practice must be such that any invitation to students of teaching to begin to see teaching anew requires the pedagogical purpose to be clear and explicit. Or to draw on the insights of Posner, Strike, Hewson, and Gertzog (1982) in relation to their work on conceptual change, that which is offered must be intelligible, plausible, and fruitful: intelligible — that it makes sense; plausible — that it could be reasonably be applied in practice; and fruitful — that when used, the results should give value for the effort.

A focus on teachers’ professional knowledge of practice is, for me, important in creating a vision for what it means to be a teacher, a vision that can be recognized and realized in, and through, teacher education as students of teaching begin to develop and refine their identity as teachers.

**FORMING AN IDENTITY**

... identity might be thought of as a tendency toward the good, a quiet desire. ... Education is always indirect and its results unpredictable. But in unpredictability resides hope — the possibility that something impossibly wonderful might happen, the miracle of learning, of a student accepting our invitation to engagement and becoming over time more interesting, more centred, better grounded .... (Bullough, 2005, p. 256)

The notion of identity has consistently attracted attention in the research literature (i.e., Connelly & Clandinin, 1999; Sachs, 2005). However, a major reason for paying attention to identity is not so much in terms of what it is, but more so in relation to what it might lead to; hence, the importance of knowledge of practice as a way of envisioning what it means to be a teacher.

In forming an identity as a teacher, the shift from being a student of teaching to a teacher throws up multiple challenges, all of which are influenced by the nature of those experiences and the ways in which the learning and insights gained are interpreted and acted upon. Seeing into those experiences in ways that might lead to insights into a knowledge of practice can be very helpful for a student of teaching. The following anecdote by a student of teaching illustrates how the thinking about practice in practice can be so important in the understandings of practice and, as a consequence, future
action. In doing so, the link to knowledge of practice can become tangible and meaningful.

“OH NO! THEY KNOW I DON’T KNOW”

Like an eagle circling, waiting to swoop on its prey she would watch me. She always sat in the front; right in the centre. Her eyes would follow me as I moved, waiting, waiting for the mistake that would catapult her hand into the air. “But Miss ... how ... why?” So far her attacks had been fended off with tenuous links and dubious explanations that had managed to satisfy her curiosity, but I was beginning to think it was only a matter of time.

Today’s class was about Antarctica and I was halfway through an explanation about the freezing and melting of Antarctica with the seasons, when out of the corner of my eye I saw that hand shoot into the air. I started to move to the back of the room in the hope that my travelling time with my back to her would be enough to see her give up, but, alas, when I turned around, the hand was still in the air. I had no choice.

“Mary.” I began, “Do you have a question?”

“Miss, how can Antarctica be 100% fresh water if it melts and freezes? When it refreezes, wouldn’t the surrounding salt water be added?”

I think I tuned out half way through the question when I realised that my time had come. My teaching career was over before it had even begun. I was a complete phoney, standing in front of a class pretending to know it all while being shown up by a 14 year old. I was still standing at the back of the room when I felt the other 24 pairs of eyes turn around in judgement of me. Some even worsened my plight with cries of “yeah, yeah.” I racked my brain for an answer as the sweat started to pour down the back of my neck. I felt like a convicted criminal, about to face the firing squad. She had finally caught me. I stuttered enough to alert the entire class to my plight and they seemed to lean forward in eager anticipation of my downfall. I took a deep breath, faced the jury and said it.

“I don’t know.”

I waited for the explosion, for the cries of disgust as they realised that I was no teacher. Would they throw things at me like a disappointed crowd at a concert or would it just be a verbal barrage? I guess that it was lucky that my supervisor was here as she could just take over the lesson straight away while the principal led me off the grounds. Would I have a chance to collect my things? Oh well, it had been fun while it lasted and there were other things that I was good at. Maybe I could pursue a career in hospitality or I could re-enter the exciting world of fast food full time. This wouldn’t be the end of me completely. That would be a bit of an overreaction to the situation surely!

After what seemed like an eternity, I managed to calm down the noises in my head and I realised that the class was in fact silent and, as I glanced around, many were in fact looking as if they were deep in thought about this question. A girl actually called out
her answer which led a few others to put forward their ideas. As the ideas continued to bounce around the room I regained consciousness and realised that my inability to answer the question had apparently gone completely unnoticed.

The discussion continued as I began to regain the feeling in my body and when the bell rang I was lucid enough to be able to thank the students for their participation and to dismiss them in an orderly fashion.

I walked over to my supervisor to receive my sentence. She looked up at me with a smile.

“Fantastic, great to see a student teacher who isn’t afraid to say that she doesn’t know and uses it to draw out such thoughtful discussion. Well done!” (Loughran, 2004, pp. 213–214)

In this anecdote, the student of teaching experienced a situation that clearly catalyzed her thinking about practice. In many ways, it would have been easy for her to have viewed the situation as ending in a “lucky escape.” However, the fact that she reflected on her learning and wrote the aforementioned anecdote, which clearly suggests that insights into teaching emerged for her, illustrates how linking that experience to the development of knowledge of practice might be facilitated. The writing of the anecdote was an element of an approach to encouraging students of teaching to reflect on their practice by revisiting critical incidents (Tripp, 1993) in an organized and structured manner. In doing so, attention is focused on the value of “unpacking” practice at an individual level, then using that process as a starting point for group discussion with their peers in order to attempt to abstract that learning from the specific to the general; both for the author of the anecdote and for the peers with whom that anecdote is shared and unpacked.

As a student of teaching, Olmstead (2007) recognized the value in paying careful attention to how he approached his learning about teaching, “learning to teach is not about learning how to mimic … learning to teach is about learning to reframe one’s own practices based on professional conversations” (p. 148). Taking Olmstead’s perspective into account, it is not difficult to see how structuring thoughtful professional conversations based on real life experiences that have already been carefully considered (through the development of an anecdote for example) can lead to reframing. As a consequence, under appropriate conditions purposely created by a teacher educator, linking experience, learning and knowledge of practice can offer a way of scaffolding pedagogical development that goes beyond a series of individual situations and allows for a holistic view of what it might mean to be a professional pedagogue. Therefore, the more that such
professional conversations are underpinned by an explication of teachers’
professional knowledge of practice, the more valuable they might become
in shaping not only what is done in teaching, but also how and why;
it offers ways of tapping into the pedagogical reasoning that is often so
private, personal, and tacit, and as a consequence, so hidden from view in
learning about teaching.

Considering the issues in the anecdote, at one level, not knowing an
answer could be personally challenging for a student of teaching.
However, at a deeper level, learning how to create genuine opportunities
for their students to explore ideas, engage in hypothesizing and testing of
those ideas, and fostering curiosity and creativity, are more likely when
“direct and control” of student learning is relinquished and conditions for
inviting engagement in learning are created. Through the anecdote
(above), the student of teaching appears to be hinting at such an approach
to learning as an outcome of the experience for her own practice. It is
therefore not difficult to see how powerful a professional conversation
based on “unpacking” her anecdote in a productive learning about teach-
ing environment could be not only for herself, but also her peers. Imagine
also how valuable such a professional conversation could be if the
“unpacking” was of the shared teaching and learning about teaching situa-
tions experienced by students of teaching with their teacher educator. The
ability (and value) of tapping into the rich resource of a teacher educator’s
pedagogical reasoning during teaching, in concert with the perceptions of
learning of students of teaching from their shared pedagogical episodes,
offers powerful links to professional knowledge of practice through the
active scaffolding of such learning. In that way, the tacit can become expli-
cit, reflection on experience can lead to learning, and creation of knowl-
edge can become concrete, meaningful, and useful. That would indeed be
a vision of professional learning as a teacher leading to the development
of an identity worth forging. So what might that look in in a teacher edu-
cation program?

BRINGING PEDAGOGICAL REASONING TO THE
SURFACE IN LEARNING ABOUT TEACHING

I have been fortunate to have worked with some wonderful mentors and
colleagues. There is little doubt that the deep thinking by Jeff Northfield
about teaching has influenced my development as a teacher educator and
certainly impacted my thinking about the need for an ongoing and close relationship between teaching and researching teaching in teacher education at a personal level (e.g., Baird & Northfield, 1992; Gunstone, Slattery, Baird, & Northfield, 1993; Northfield, 1988, 1996; Northfield & Gunstone, 1997). In addition to that, I have also had the privilege of working closely with an exceptional colleague at Monash University. Amanda Berry pushed the boundaries of our learning about teaching teaching together as we sought to create meaningful links between knowledge and practice with our students of teaching through our common interest in self-study (Hamilton, 2004; Hamilton, Pinnegar, Russell, Loughran, & LaBoskey, 1998).

One way to understand our work together is through the notion of thinking aloud in teaching about teaching which I had been exploring for some time. Thinking aloud about pedagogy was:

... an attempt to give students immediate access to the thoughts, ideas and concerns which shape my teaching ... I would attempt to demonstrate my thinking about previous lessons, my intention for the upcoming lesson, and what I anticipated for the following lessons, and that these are all linked in a holistic manner ... how it occurs and its impact on my teaching needs to be made available to my students if they are to understand my perspective on my teaching and our learning ... my view [is that] this thinking during teaching is overtly demonstrated for my students if they are to fully appreciate the complex nature of learning about teaching; even more so if they are to seriously consider [it in relation to] their own practice. (Loughran, 1996, pp. 28–29)

Team teaching with Mandi took the ideas of think aloud to a different level. Working together encouraged us to examine our common concerns about teacher education practices and created a new dynamic in teaching and researching teaching and learning about teaching in ways that may not have been sustainable as individuals. We placed pedagogical reasoning and the development of knowledge of practice to the fore and, in doing so, became better informed about our approach to, and learning from, our teaching about teaching.

Having a trusted colleague close at hand meant that different aspects of our pedagogy of teacher education were continually being reviewed and refined as we worked in the role of critical friend for one another (Schuck & Russell, 2005). The value of ongoing collaboration was evident in many things, not least that our learning together comprised much more than the sum of the parts, but also because it gave us the courage to pursue risk taking in teaching that would not have been possible alone. Bringing our pedagogical reasoning to the surface for our students...
of teaching led to many unscripted experiences that became increasingly important to us as teacher educators as we began to explore meaningful ways of creating conditions for learning about teaching that made a difference for our students of teaching (i.e., Berry, 2004a, 2004b, 2007; Berry & Loughran, 2002, 2005).

As we came to see, linking reasoning, practice, and knowledge in explicit ways helps to raise what “thinking like a teacher” (Crowe & Berry, 2007) might mean for students of teaching when they begin to purposefully construct their identities as teachers. However, doing so requires a serious commitment on the behalf of teacher educators, to create conditions that invite students of teaching to learn through their shared experiences of teaching and learning about teaching; as opposed to lecturing them on what they should know and telling them why it is important. Therefore, if “a teacher educator needs to be capable of, and actively pursue, making the tacit nature of practice explicit so that the teaching–learning relationship is able to be seen, experienced, and inquired into rather than superficially viewed as a simple set of routines and/or procedures” (Loughran, 2013, p. 130), then it is essential that teacher educators trust their students of teaching as independent and active learners. Creating such an expectation requires a genuine belief in:

... the capacity and motivation of students to take responsibility for making their own meaning and progress in learning about teaching ... that is a process facilitated by teacher educator encouragement and support ... it means guiding students’ learning while at the same time being respectful of each learner’s right to direct his or her own self-development. (Berry, 2007, p. 163)

Although the premise that making pedagogical reasoning explicit appears quite straightforward, translating it into practice is demanding because “quality learning requires learner consent.” I would assert that quality learning requires learner consent should be viewed as a fundamental guiding principle in a teacher education program. It is a principle that needs to constantly be recognizable in a teacher educator’s practice so that intent and action are in accord. If that is the case, then it may well be that the principle and the practice will be translated into meaning not only in the expectations, but also the identity of students of teaching; an identity that is encouraged through the modeling of their teacher educators. Working in such a way is one example of how a teacher educator might conceptualize what it means to make clear how knowledge of teaching can emerge from practice and help to direct that practice in a significant way.
KNOWLEDGE INTO PRACTICE: PRACTICE INTO KNOWLEDGE

When Munby, Russell, and Martin (2001) examined the topic of teachers’ knowledge, they opened up for scrutiny the diversity of understandings of that knowledge as well as raising questions about the value of it for teachers themselves. In doing so, they helped to focus attention on what it is that teachers seek to have knowledge of in order to perform their role; which is somewhat different to that which Fenstermacher (1994) described at that time, as the formal perspective of teachers’ knowledge held by many members of the (US) policy community. Fenstermarcher described the formal perspective as representing “a limited epistemological perspective on what teachers should know and be able to do” (p. 4) and in many ways, could be thought of as “conventionally more science-oriented.” For many students of teaching, what Fenstermacher characterized as a formal perspective is easily interpreted as a cause-effect methodology, which then dominates their perceptions and is idealized through the expectation of generalizable outcomes. Therefore, the notion of knowledge carries “baggage” for students of teaching that is not always helpful in shaping their understandings of the interplay between research, practice, and knowledge; especially so as they are enmeshed in the experiences of learning to teach.

For students of teaching, is not hard to see why issues around what knowledge is, how it is developed and constructed, and the value placed on it in practice, may appear opaque and/or confusing. That situation can be exacerbated by the oft’ bemoaned theory-practice gap, driven by the view from schools about universities as Ivory Towers, and from universities about schools as swampy lowlands (Schön, 1983). However, it need not be that way. If the situation is framed differently, based on the idea of building up from practice and abstracting from theory, rather than as separate and distinct entities, the value of knowledge of practice can be interpreted differently.

Berry (2007) illustrated a building-up and abstracting across view exceptionally well through the development of her tensions as a form of knowledge; all of which resonate equally well with teachers as they do with teacher educators, because pedagogy lies at the heart of each tension. For example, her tension between telling and growth captures perfectly the discomfort faced by teachers when seeking to support students in taking control of their own learning while at the same time feeling responsible for that learning. Understanding how that tension might come to be understood as
being built up from practice is a crucial aspect of what Mason (2002, 2009) described as “noticing.”

Noticing is indicative of the way in which a professional frames teaching as inquiry; and is clearly at the heart of fostering a meaningful identity as a teacher. By the same token, there is clear value in being able to abstract from the message inherent in the tension to practice in order to appropriately consider what is to be done, how and why — to pay attention to the pedagogical reasoning underpinning teaching. Hence, conceiving of knowledge of teaching as existing across a continuum (as tensions do) rather than as a dichotomy (theory and practice) is an important realization that makes a difference for students of teaching when thinking about what becoming more informed about, and increasingly expert at, teaching might mean (see Fig. 1 for a schematic representation of the idea). Creating conditions for that to be the case is the great challenge for teacher educators and stands as an invitation that begs a meaningful response for students of teaching.

CONCLUSION

It has been over 30 years since Berliner (1986) sought to change the nature of discussion about teaching and the development of expertise. His questioning of what teachers know and how they come to know it has led to changes in research into teaching, and consequently, into the development of teaching and learning about teaching through teacher education programs. It is inevitable that as students of teaching make the transition from
student to teacher that their views about what it means to be a teacher, as well as their developing teacher identity itself, will be shaped by images of teachers and teaching that they have witnessed as students.

Teacher educators must challenge the superficial views of teaching that can result from what Lortie (1975) described as the “apprenticeship of observation.” It is far too easy to watch teachers teach and have little or no appreciation for the pedagogical reasoning that underpins their practice. Teacher education is clearly the place to initiate a challenge to such thinking – beginning with students of teaching. Through teacher education, knowledge of teaching should consistently be recognizable as meaningful, helpful, and informative in the development of teachers’ professional expertise. When students of teaching see and experience teaching in such a way, their developing teacher identity can be shaped in productive ways and the teaching profession will be positively impacted. Helping students of teaching form identities based on a vision of teaching that goes well beyond teaching as telling and listening as learning must be more than a hope; it must be an expectation for the work that comprises teaching and learning about teaching and the teacher educators responsible for that enterprise.

REFERENCES


