

CHAPTER EIGHT

CAPABILITY THROUGH TEACHER EDUCATION

Susan Weil and David Bridges

Introduction

Teacher Education: change at the interface of three systems

Teacher educators work at the interface of three systems each of which is undergoing profound and rapid change, to the point that, as Charles Handy puts it, it becomes almost "discontinuous." (Handy 1989)

The enormous changes in curriculum, pedagogy and assessment in *the school system* for which teacher educators are preparing their students have presented them with a number of challenges:

- (a) teacher educators have had themselves to face the challenge of keeping their own knowledge and experience up to date;
- (b) they have had to revise their own approaches to teacher education, to reflect the changes which have taken place and continue to take place in the school curriculum;
- (c) they have had to equip their students to handle the changing pedagogy of schools, with increasing emphasis on experiential learning, collaborative group projects, and self assessment;
- (d) they have had to begin to respond to the changing experiences of teaching, learning and curriculum which students at initial and post-experience levels are beginning to bring with them into higher education.

Dramatic and continuing changes in *higher education* are requiring teacher educators to respond a whole new agenda of issues including:

- (a) an expanding student population (approaching an 30% increase in teacher training between 1985 and 1990) ;
- (b) higher expectations of 'cost effectiveness' — which means among other things that the expected expansion in student numbers is being achieved and will continue to be achieved without anything like a corresponding increase in staff resources;
- (c) tighter external auditing and accountability increasingly articulated in the language of 'quality control'— designed to ensure that those responsible directly or indirectly for funding get what they want eg expressed in the Secretary of State's criteria mediated through the Committee for the Accreditation of Teacher Education or (CATE) rather than what HE institutions might independently seek to provide;
- (d) increased dependency by institutions on their capacity to attract income from a variety of clients. Students with their purse full of fees (or half full of borrowed money) form the central but by no means only group. This pressure has prompted the development of a wide range of client centred strategies: investment in outreach courses, marketing and publicity, negotiation of tailor made training programmes and packages, consumer research etc.
- (e) ambivalence in the polytechnic sector as to whether schools or departments of education should be trying rapidly to establish a substantial research role; uncertainty in the university sector as to the extent that particular departments will continue to be funded in support of such a role.

At the same time, and partly as a consequence of these developments teacher educators are having to respond to change in their *client groups*.

Not only is the student population growing but it is changing in character. The incessant demand for more teachers forces the profession to look for recruits from different populations than those that have traditionally entered teaching. But combined with this has been a growing recognition that there are sections of the population which

have a rich contribution to make to teaching which has not previously been properly acknowledged: This includes people whom the system has previously worked to discourage from entry into teaching: for example, students from British ethnic minority groups; people who have not followed conventional educational patterns of progress and qualification; people who have already developed the beginnings of a career in some other walk of life; people who have taken time out of teaching to bring up a family .

Increasingly teacher education institutions have been developing systems and courses designed to enable these groups to enter or re-enter teaching or perhaps to re-train for a different age range or specialism. But their needs are not the same as the traditional postgraduate student straight from university or the BED student who has arrived at college straight from school. Nor indeed are they the same as each other. And teacher education institutions have had to adapt and are continuing to learn to adapt their approaches to this new population. The accreditation of prior learning and achievement, and the development of unit/credit frameworks are but two examples of responses to change now in evidence.

In the in-service field, of course, teacher education institutions are having to adjust to the major shift in the dispersal of resources and power — in particular the dispersal of resources for in-service training - from a relatively small number of Local Education Authorities across a very large number of schools. What kind of arrangements will allow teacher education institutions to negotiate cost effective packages which will meet the needs of such a large number of clients remains to be seen.

Finally many teacher institutions are finding too that there are other clients, in public service organisations and in industry, who recognise and welcome the professional skills which teacher educators have to offer, and these are opening new and challenging opportunities for diversification.

The response in teacher education

Somewhere at the interface of these changing systems is a force of teacher educators seeking to survive or indeed, more ambitiously, seeking to rise to Peters' (1987) image and aspiration of thriving on chaos'. Some of these have found support in effective new alliances (cf the strong links between a teacher education institution, an LEA and schools reflected in the Oxford internship scheme) or in collaborations between teacher education institutions (cf the Eastern Region Teacher Education Consortium). Some have been supported in the process of adapting to change by major projects like the Employment Department Enterprise in Higher Education initiative, the Enterprise Awareness and Teacher Education initiative which is now also located within the Employment Department and the Higher Education for Capability Project sponsored by the RSA.

The notion of capability, though not necessarily in exactly the same language, runs through all these initiatives. While it would be absurd to pretend that it was some magical incantation which would instantly quieten all the storms which buffet teacher education , it is nevertheless a notion which wraps up an interconnected set of responses to some of the issues raised by the changing educational environment.

What is just as important, if not more so, is that the kind of principles articulated in terms of capability are consonant with and arguably express in the language of the 1990s the underlying educational commitments which have perhaps characterised teacher education institutions for the last quarter of a century at least. We refer to a commitment to

- (a) the development of the students'/teachers' independence and autonomy — including in that their capacity to be agents of their own learning;
- (b) the development of their own practical and creative capacity to make things happen;
- (c) the development of their sense of responsibility and willingness to accept responsibility and a recognition that with that goes obligations of accountability.

This much, we suggest, is firmly within the established tradition of the basic values which underpin teacher education. What is perhaps innovative in the education for capability movement is, in general terms, the application of these kind of principles to the changing environment of the late twentieth century and, more specifically, a particular emphasis on the conditions under which (student) teachers develop not merely the capacity to decide what they should do — in their own lives and careers or in their classrooms — but **capability** to act in and upon a world teeming with people with competing as well as complementary aspirations and as likely to be hostile to as to be supportive of their achievement

From *Quality in Learning*, edited by John Stephenson and Susan Weil, published by Kogan Page, London in 1992.

Download the *Quality in Learning* Introduction file from the ICLML catalogue for details of other chapters in this book (www.iclml.com)

As in other chapters of this book, we are organising our exploration and exemplification of capability principles in practice in four sections.

In the first of these we shall look at ways in which teacher education institutions are responding to, recognising and valuing the rich variety of experience which students are bringing with them to initial teacher education and which practising teachers are able to bring to in-service education programmes.

In the second section we shall illustrate ways in which teacher education institutions are trying to involve students more integrally in planning and negotiating their own learning experiences — something which teacher education has found it particularly difficult to develop in the context of increasingly tight centrally imposed definitions of students' courses mediated through the Committee for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE).

In the third section we shall present examples of initiatives designed to provide for more active and interactive learning for student teachers.

And the final set of examples illustrate innovative approaches to assessment and the recording of student achievement, in particular approaches which give the student a more central role in the assessment process.

Not all the examples provided illustrate unqualified success. This would in any case be fairly implausible. What they do illustrate are teacher education institutions combining in a variety of ways:

- (a) a student centredness which is deeply rooted in the traditions of teacher education;
- (b) an attempt to equip students with the kind of flexibility, independence or capability which will enable them to cope with an environment of discontinuous change;
- (c) a client orientation which is demanded by the increasingly market character of educational provision.

These represent, of course, some rather different principles; but it is often difficult to separate them in the day to day life of higher education, and their practical consequences may not be wholly dissimilar.

Theme One: Reviewing and Building on Experience

The development through the 1970s and 1980s of in-service training for teachers brought home firmly some new lessons to those responsible, namely that they were teaching people who could and should contribute substantially to each other's learning from the wealth of prior and continuing experience of teaching which they brought with them. Approaches to training were developed which relied heavily on teachers acting, for example, as researchers in their own classrooms or working together in collaborative groups to share and analyse experience.

Such developments have perhaps been less evident in BEd and PGCE programmes, but as the population of students entering these courses becomes noticeably more mature (several PGCE tutors report an average age of 27 plus in their groups) they bring with them increasingly rich and diverse experience of parenting, working and caring for young and old as well as their own experience as learners in schools and colleges.

These students are increasingly bringing with them, too, experience in schools and higher education institutions of more comprehensive forms of recognition of their learning and achievement (eg in school Records of Achievement) and more flexible forms of accreditation of learning (eg in the acceptance of project presentations or of courses taken abroad as components of a degree).

Teacher educators are increasingly challenged therefore to recognise (in the curriculum they offer as well as in assessment), to value and to accredit a variety of experience which students have acquired prior to entry on their course or which they continue to gain in parallel with their course.

It is quite clear moreover that this expectation will rise as, for example, the requirements for the award of qualified teacher status come increasingly to be articulated in terms of demonstrated competency rather than in terms of specific programmes of study undertaken. Now that the principle has been accepted that one may come to have and to show the required competency (or, more typically, competencies) through a variety of routes, it is a small step to acknowledging that may equally be derived from prior or continuing experience outside any programme study.

Among the submissions received this theme was well illustrated in the context of in-service training, but the dearth of examples from initial training may suggest that, if the above analysis is correct, this sector has some way to go before it is responsive to the changing environment which is identified.

Profiling as strategy for recognising pre and post course experience (University of Cambridge, Department of Education)

At the **University of Cambridge** Department of Education, teachers on the PGCE course {23} have been involved in a pilot scheme that builds actively on student interests by involving them in planning for and compiling a Record of Achievement (57 in 1989/990; 200 in 1990/1991). This seeks to promote student autonomy by involving them in identifying teaching competences they will develop during the course, and planning for learning. Each student, in consultation with the trainers, identifies the skills and knowledge s/he should acquire and the ways in which the various elements in the course will serve those training needs. The record provides a vehicle for discussion and feedback, and a framework for noting progress and building confidence. The whole Record is designed with a view to it being of use in the following year when the new teacher is in his/her first teaching post. It thus generates a language for exploring and building on experience and interests prior to the PGCE, as well as learning gained through the course itself.

At present, the Record serves as a documentation of formative assessment, in which self assessment plays a key role. It records progress, and is updated on several occasions during the training year. The Record does not however contribute to the final qualification. This decision was under review at the time of the submission.

The six aims of the scheme are as follows:

(a) A record of training — to provide a unified approach and the opportunity for each student to compile a record of training, experience, achievement, competences and training needs, and to make the learning aims more explicit by incorporating in this record a list of teaching competences.

(b) A tool for student development — to support student learning by making profiling part of the learning process, to improve feedback to students, and to encourage student autonomy.

(c) Partnership with schools — to improve communication between the Department and teacher supervisors by beginning the developments in partnership with them, of an agreed framework both for advising students during their training and for assessment and reporting at the end of each phase of training.

(d) Helping students to become reflective practitioners — to raise student awareness, to train them in self evaluation and to give students an experience which will be helpful if they have to deal with records of achievement in schools and undergo teacher appraisal.

(e) Applying for the first teaching post — to enable students to provide at interview, if wished, a full record of what they can do.

(f) A bridge to the induction year — to enable the student to compile a list of future training needs and a full record of what has been achieved and can be done as a result of the PGCE course so as to inform and guide the support to be given to the new teacher in a first post. {23}

The development work entailed in introducing such a scheme has been undertaken by department members as part of their normal teaching commitment:

Extra resources have been minimal... We have applied for research funding as part of a proposal relating to teacher education nationally and the variety of routes into the profession but with no success so far. {23}

This has resulted in some critical decisions about when and how individual time can be offered to students:

It has therefore not been possible to give staff the time for interviewing individual students which would have been desirable. Most of the personal guidance has had to take place either as part of normal group work or on a one-to-one basis during the regular teaching sessions, with private interviews during teaching practice and on two or three other occasions during the year. {23}

From Quality in Learning, edited by John Stephenson and Susan Weil, published by Kogan Page, London in 1992.

Download the Quality in Learning Introduction file from the ICLML catalogue for details of other chapters in this book (www.iclml.com)

The pressure of time, combined with the conservatism of some colleagues, has resulted in this development being experienced by students as bolted on, rather than as something integrally related to the examination on which the final qualification depends:

For profiling to be given the importance to make it effective, it must be a course requirement. It cannot wholly succeed as an 'add-on'.{23}

As confidence and experience builds, various strategies are being used to win support:

consultation, on-going discussion and a professionally evaluated pilot programme.{23}

In addition the benefits to students become increasingly evident as time progresses:

In addition to those mentioned, it sets the agenda for training, raises awareness of the range of knowledge, understanding and skills required, increases feedback, informs choices, generally encourages and promotes confidence...It also aids communication between the department and schools. Consultation with teachers helps sustain partnership. {23}

One of the main outcomes of the evaluation of the first version of the profile was a recognition that the department had attempted to profile far too many competencies. Apart from making the task almost impracticable it made it impossible to explore areas of competency seriously. The next version of the profile will reduce the number of competencies to be assessed to six or eight.

(Copies of the evaluation report are available from the department.)

Accrediting academic development and experience (Polytechnic of Wales)

At the ***Polytechnic of Wales***, academic staff have the opportunity of taking a Postgraduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning {221} based on capability principles and practices.

The programme enables staff members to build a programme based entirely on problems and questions arising out of their own experiences as teachers. The pace and style of learning is entirely determined by the individual staff member. Content is negotiated, as relevant to needs and interests arising from the academic's own work. Completion is based on five units, each representing 70 hours of work, the majority of which is time already spent in preparation and teaching. There are three core units, and two additional units, the content and process of which build entirely on participants' experience and interest through negotiation with mentors. The remaining time is spent putting together evidence for the assessment of self-selected teaching-learning developments.

Increasingly, access and other changes are placing new demands on academic staff to develop new understandings of teaching/ learning and assessment. Academics are able to enter HE teaching without prior qualifications preparing them for that role and function. Although this remains the case, as academics develop in response to new demands, a growing concern is whether and how to accredit such learning. This example signals a direction that may become more and more at issue within not only in the training of academics, but also in teacher training more generally, if greater emphasis is to be placed on in-school development.

This particular initiative arose out of the enthusiasm of staff in the Teaching Development Group who had set out to address the limitations of existing provision:

..existing external provision for in-service certification tended to have only limited relevance to the day to day work of staff. It also required them to spend considerable time away from their duties. It was decided to develop a certificate programme that was wholly relevant to the development of teaching and learning processes, with work taking place on an action research basis underpinned by resource materials to provide the necessary theoretical basis. {221}

The following key features of the course design were intended to maximise opportunities for flexibility, relevance, challenge and support:

(a) flexible learning approach: participants work at their own pace in their own way, using resource materials made available;

(b) negotiated learning agreements: participants decide what they want to do, how they want to do it, and when they want to complete it by, as a basis for a negotiated agreement between yourself and the Programme Board of Studies;

(c) total relevance to your normal work: all the work in the negotiated agreement is intended to be directly relevant to participants' teaching. Thus, there are no artificial hoops to jump through;

(d) mentor support: to help participants implement their negotiated agreement, they have two mentors — one from the programme and one from their own department

(e) self and peer assessment: participants design their own assessment criteria as part of their negotiated learning agreement and the success of their work is judged on these criteria, by themselves and their peers;

(f) credit rated professional development: each programme is accredited on the Polytechnic's Credit Accumulation scheme and will count towards the award of the Certificate. {221}

This programme places a high premium on learner responsibility that builds on prior interests and experiences. Content coverage is intended to be related to academics' own learning goals, and negotiated as perceived to be relevant to personal/professional concerns and interests. Nonetheless this programme illustrates how accountability can be married with learner responsibility, to meet requirements for the reward of the Certificate: Each candidate is required to have carried out some work in each of the following areas:

(a) developing and employing a system of student self assessment and/or peer assessment in an agreed part of the curriculum and evaluating the learning outcomes of such assessment;

(b) designing, piloting, and evaluating a short open or flexible learning package for the delivery of an agreed part of the curriculum;

(c) producing evidence to demonstrate a range of teaching competencies, such as giving large and small group presentations and facilitating tutorials, workshops, seminars and practical work. {221}

A great deal of flexibility is thus possible within the development of the learning agreement.

Theme Two: Planning, Negotiation and Approval

As with our previous theme there are more ready examples of developments of this kind within the in-service than in the pre-service context. This is partly because the content and methods of delivery of initial training by higher education institutions are defined with ever increasing specificity by the Secretary of State who makes conformity with his specification a condition of course accreditation. A national curriculum for teacher education (which may well include the early stages of in-service training as well as pre-service training) cannot be far away. In these circumstances there is limited scope for flexibility on the part of either trainers or trainees.

There is nevertheless always some scope for negotiation and the exercise of choice and the principle of a contract which sets out the obligations of students and tutors *to each other* is arguably a fruitful one. It establishes education and training as an activity governed by publicly accessible rules and reciprocal rights and duties — an activity in which both students and tutors have responsibility and accountability.

Negotiating and contracting an Education Unit in a BEd (Hons)

At *Sheffield City Polytechnic*, second year BEd {181}200 students on the primary and secondary courses complete a total of twelve 40-hour units of study/work per year. One unit is devoted to the theoretical aspects of Education. This is completed by means of negotiated contracts, the outcomes of which are in turn presented to tutorial groups of about twenty students. The content of the syllabus is divided into three or four themes. Students arrange themselves in groups of four and negotiate with their Education tutor a total of three or four contracts, one relating to each of the content themes. Their aim is to fulfil the degree requirements as specified in the submission to CNAA of which they are given a copy. They are encouraged to negotiate their contracts so that they can fulfil them in such a way or combination of ways as best fit their personal interests and needs, strengths and weaknesses. Each contract takes approximately four to six weeks to negotiate, implement and finally present. The form of presentations is up to students and tutors, with encouragement for a wide variety of approaches (eg audio-tape, video, oral, written, visual, etc

Tutors support students through keynote and explanatory lectures, workshops and meetings with each contract group.

The unit has so far been assessed by summative assignment. This has to be carefully designed to take account of the particular style of teaching and learning.

The tutors' decision to introduce a capability-type approach to a Year 2 required unit on theoretical aspects of education (40 hours, Educational Studies) with 200 students arose out of a number of concerns:

(a) the increasing diversity in the student population; groups varied in terms of their academic background, their experience with children, and their development of skills relevant to teaching (such as communication and teamwork);

(b) student needs for opportunities to develop specific skills, and their overall capability for living, as well as for working as a teacher;

(c) student needs to be motivated if they were to benefit from the theoretical knowledge demanded by course syllabus requirements, as validated by CNAA;

(d) the marginalization of Education Studies in the B.Ed degree as a consequence of the priority given by CATE demands for school experience, subject content programmes and subject methodology;

(e) a concern with enabling the growing numbers of mature women students to work where, when and in which style they prefer, coupled with a belief that traditional higher education teaching methods did not address these equal opportunities issues.{181}

These concerns combined with the tutors' own values about what kind of education develops more effective teachers. They were also influenced by their own personal and professional background. The latter made them pre-disposed to student-centred and capability approaches, with an overall concern for equal opportunities:

In particular, this development has made it easier for mature women students to cope with all the commitments that this implies..We feel that this system addresses the issue of equal opportunities far more successfully than the traditional higher education teaching methods often used.{181}

The overall emphasis of the course is on teaching and learning processes and its management. The thematic areas for which students would be both responsible and accountable through negotiation of learning contracts were as follows:

*The Developing Person
Understanding Learning
Social Context of Child Development{181}*

In addition, a contract approach is related to the term of teaching practice.

The responsibilities of students and tutors are clearly spelled out in the course booklet. For example:

Responsibility of students

- 1) Read all materials distributed by the course tutor.*
- 2) Play an active part in the negotiation, implementation and presentation of the contract.*
- 3) Ensure that his/her work and understanding are of an appropriate academic standard: this involves paying attention to the feedback given by the tutor and other members of the group.*
- 4) Allocate time for reading and related activities so that the requirements of CNAA are fulfilled.*
- 5) Negotiate with the group individual responsibilities in the completion of the contract.*
- 6) Present himself/herself at times agreed by both the tutor and other members of the contract group.*
- 7) Be required to fulfil these responsibilities conscientiously and to the best of his/her abilities.*
- 8) Involve himself/herself honestly and constructively in self and group appraisal of each contract.*

Responsibility of tutors

- 1) Be available at designated rooms at designated times and only those times.*

- 2) *Negotiate and approve the contracts and direct the processes by which these are achieved.*
- 3) *Ensure that the package of contracts fulfils the aims of the Second Year course.*
- 4) *Inform students where to obtain appropriate source material, additional to the list of references provided.*
- 5) *Give regular feedback and guidance which will enable students to be assured that the work they are doing is of an appropriate academic standard.*
- 6) *Monitor the progress of each contract, and as part of this, will explain and expand on any of the content areas outlined in the list of materials to be studied without removing from the student the principal responsibility for his/her learning. {181}*

When the course team introduced this development, they were working within a number of constraints. The rationale, aims, content and assessment of the course had been agreed by CNAAB two years previously. Their commitment to the use of negotiated learning, and the use of learning contracts, had to be worked through within this pre-existing framework.

Staff also have to meet frequently to plan, discuss and give each other support, as there is no institutional staff development or support for this kind of initiative:

The only real obstacle was fear — that of tutors who were afraid that they were abnegating their duties and that of students afraid of responsibility. This is a constant fear and we live with it and overcome it by supporting and encouraging each other. The teaching team is strong and closely knit and has been able, so far, to absorb and help newcomers. Students get our support and each other's support. {181}

Reservations are gradually being dropped as staff and students gain experience of the programme and its benefits. Evaluations by tutors and students, and a small scale piece of research undertaken by a colleague in another department have pointed to the following specific gains:

Improved study skills, higher motivation, much greater understanding than when we used traditional teaching methods, more reading done, a high quality of presentations, increased student autonomy and improved abilities to work at their own pace in their chosen environment, to negotiate and to work in teams. In addition, the initiative has refreshed tutor morale and communication. {181}

The last point is frequently reported, despite the fact that often such developments are initiated on the backs of traditional programmes at the expense of the individual tutors' publications, research, and personal life. At a time when morale in higher education is low, managers need to consider how they can stimulate and support such innovations across an institution, through their managerial and leadership style, and the structures and processes of the institution.

Negotiating on the edges of traditional programmes

At the *University of Warwick {231}*, students on the BA with Qualified Teacher Status take a course called Lifelong Learning and the School Curriculum! This comprises one quarter of their final year's work and spans twenty-five teaching weeks. The course lecturers have introduced informal processes of negotiating and contracting into this quite traditional programme. The course is scheduled for one lecture hour plus two seminar hours per week, with five revision weeks in the third term. This course is assessed by 3000 words of coursework as well as a three hour examination.

The introduction of informal processes of negotiating and contracting can be a daunting task, if they are introduced in the final year for the first time, and go against the culture of the course as a whole. On this programme, course tutors do this firstly in the seminars:

The purposes and broad areas of knowledge relevant to the theme are sketched. Students are invited to write, then discuss and pool, their expectations, etc. The programme of activities through the year is partly prefigured, partly negotiated with the examination reflecting the areas of focus rather than dictating a syllabus. {251}

Experiential activities also promote more active responsible learning, out of which such negotiations can spring more naturally:

Structured experiential learning situations encourage students to reflect actively on their own recollections of school student days; their teaching practice experience; experience as a university student over the 4 years of the course. The immediate experience of the course and the group is also treated as relevant learning data; reflexivity is fostered.{231}

In this way, the values of reflexivity and of prior and immediate experience as learning data' are reinforced. Students are thus taking responsibility for working with their own experience, and learning how to learn from it. Students also take responsibility, individually and in groups, for other forms of field work and data collection, in relation to questions they have identified as important to their own development as teachers and in relation to the theme of this course.

This shift towards more active responsible learning on the part of students represented a first step for both the lecturers and the students. In the tutor's words, course membership took a half a term to stabilise as the word got around (the initial eight became eighteen but some of the initial eight we never saw.) ... ' This being a course on Education, the disjunctions caused by this counter-cultural development itself became content from which professional and practical understanding could be derived:

The most interesting and intransigent aspect, not an obstacle and only in some senses a problem, concerned the cultural disjunction between this course and students' experience of other ITT courses in their degree...Assessment also caused severe but richly 'learningful' problems or at least grist for a mill, for much of the year. This was exacerbated by some unnecessary uncertainty as to what was actually required (partly information, partly problems of non-acculturation on both sides). In the end the issue and processes of assessment afforded a rich vein for experiential learning and for reflecting on its role in teaching-learning situations generally.{231}

Theme Three: Active and Interactive Learning

Many teacher educators will squirm at the idea that learning could be anything but 'active and interactive'. Can there really be learning which does not involve activity of the mind or the engagement or interaction of the mind with something else, whether it be another person who is physically present, an artefact, a national environment or somebody's ideas presented in literary, graphic or artistic mode?

In the context of education for capability, however, active and interactive learning does attach particular importance to a sub-set of activity and interaction which is likely to help students apply learning to effective achievement in the social world, that is to say:

- to learning by making or doing;
- to learning from practice, including in particular to practice in the environments in which students are preparing to work;
- to interaction with other people, including in particular the kinds of interaction which will help individuals to communicate successfully with each other and to work collaboratively.

To value learning which has these dimensions is not to devalue critical reflection, reading and writing. And indeed one of the pedagogic challenges is to know how successfully to integrate these elements of learning with active and interactive learning more narrowly or prescriptively defined. However part of what is being argued is that this more traditional scholarly engagement and reflection is insufficient for the development of capability within a variety of social fields including teaching.

Teacher education has of course been firmly based on active and experiential learning in schools and classrooms throughout the professional lives of today's teacher trainers — and beyond. The argument has never been as to whether this should be part of teacher training but rather more as to what extent and about the relationship between the more theoretical/critical/reflective components and the more practical/active/experiential components. A grounding in theory has from time to time been expected to provide the foundation for practice; practice has been expected to generate theory; and the two have been happily but not unproblematically resolved in the appealing notion of the reflective practitioner. Teacher education has perhaps more to offer than any other field of professional training in terms of the exploration of this relationship.

Similarly teacher educators have probably been at the front in higher education institutions in developing collaborative group work of a variety of kinds — both in the higher education institutions (eg in seminars but also for

example in the development of participatory group projects in the expressive arts or environmental studies) and in schools. For reasons of cost effectiveness as well as educational value more and more teacher education institutions are organising teaching practice so that groups of four to twelve students are based in one school, with part of their experience involving working as a group.

This section presents some examples drawn from in-service and pre-service training chosen to illustrate different kinds of teaching and strategies being used to develop capability through active and interactive learning.

Enhancing the managerial effectiveness of teachers

At **Manchester Polytechnic** {120} post-experience/post-graduate courses in Education management at Certificate, Diploma and MSc levels, incorporate a wide variety of active and interactive approaches all of which promote learner responsibility and accountability in some way.

Certificate: two possible routes

Thirty teachers in 1990-1 became involved in the trial of one approach that involves assessment of prior learning, and the use of learning contracts in pursuing the Management Charter Initiative competency based Management I endorsement.

An alternative route is via six modules underpinned by the Kolb learning cycle and include a good deal of practice related activity designed to assess competency and capability through reflection, self evaluation and feedback by peers. The keeping of a Management Development Portfolio (journal) is an integral part of this learning process.

Diploma

This is centred around an applied problem solving activity or group consultancy project. Small self generated teams are linked with a client in an organisation who has an identified issue requiring resolution. Teams investigate and complete a report to the client and are then assessed by a group viva on the process of their consultation.

MSc

This is an action learning year. Participants identify management action which they are undertaking in their organisation and through action learning sets they proceed to examine their practice, culminating in a report to their client and a Management Learning Review.

Phase 1 of the Diploma course provides a theoretical underpinning through six modules arranged in three blocks that look at the following:

- the management of people
- the management of resources
- the context for management.

Within this broad structure, there is scope for participants to address themes that are of immediate relevance to themselves as practitioners. The modular structure obviously allows the programme to be offered in separate units and facilitates the delivery of parts of the programme by other agencies.

The second phase is concerned with developing theory into practice — a process that will have begun in the first phase. This phase examines the dynamics of managing in a changing situation:

Problems of application require the understanding of organisations as collections of diverse human beings and require from managers the ability to switch from being abstract conceptualisers to active interventionists. The management of change and intervention therefore provides the theme for the three modules that prepare course members for the Applied Problem Solving Activity that follows. The phase begins with a weekend residential designed to establish working teams and involving a range of activities focussing on generic management skills. {120}

The Applied Problem Solving Activity places greater emphasis on learner responsibility and accountability, especially within teams:

This requires course members, organised into small groups, to carry out a major consultancy exercise over several weeks in a school, college or other educational context. The outcomes of this will form the basis of the assessment element of this phase. Course members produce and present a report on the activity for a named client in the situation This group report, together with an individual Learning Review, the clients

comments and an oral presentation of the critical review of the experience to a panel of examiners forms the basis of the formal assessment. {120}

The other key developmental link for the first two phases is the Management Review Portfolio. This is intended to lend coherence and integration to the various components of the programme, by encouraging participants to relate their learning to their own development and the world in which they live and work:

This is a document kept by the course member recording his/her perception of the relationship between the daily experience of managing and the theoretical concerns and skill based training of the course programme. Because of its confidential nature, the document is required but not assessed. It forms the basis of regular tutorial sessions in phases one and two.{120}

In the third and final phase, the course member engages on an individual Management Study at a strategic level. To meet the validation requirements for an MSc, a masters dissertation is required. But in this case, responsibility and accountability are enhanced by '...the added dimension of the demands placed on the exercise by the fact that it must be presented to a manager who will have an informed view as to its worth.' This also represents a progression from the Applied Problem Solving Activity of the second phase because responsibility for diagnosis and determination of appropriate recommendations for action now rest on the individual course member. The exercise requires intellectual skills of analysis and synthesis of the highest order, as well as command of the relevant literature and of the appropriate political and presentational skills.'

The notion of the critical practitioner community is also taken one stage further at the MSc level:

In regular sessions at least three times a term, the course meets in seminar groups which discuss the progress of each individual study. These sessions explore critically the principles and processes of the studies and also offer advice and support. The process focuses not only on the particular issues of the study but also on the generalisable management learning illustrated by the case study each individual project provides as it unfolds.{120}

On most Masters level courses the dissertation is a lone and often lonely journey, shared only with ones supervisor. Here, it provides a rigorous focal point for enhanced individual and group learning based on principles of responsibility and accountability.

PGCE collaborative enquiry

At the *University of Sheffield {185}*, the one year PGCE (secondary) course involves all students working in small teams for five weeks in the summer term on a piece of collaborative work. This involves the collection and analysis of classroom-based or school-based data which will allow them to reflect on an issue which is of relevance to both the students and the schools involved. The end product is a report which is presented to the teachers involved and other students. The rest of the elements of the PGCE course are suspended while students work on their enquiry.

The Collaborative Enquiry seeks to relate principles of educating for capability in a variety of ways. The emphasis is on making students responsible for the management of their own learning, especially through providing opportunities for the conduct of enquiries on issues of relevance to the problems they confront within their own classrooms:

The students are asked to identify their own problems for investigation; negotiate with the schools which they are going to work with; select appropriate seminars and consultations with specialists in the Division of Education in order to raise their knowledge of research methodology; plan their use of the five weeks allocated to the enquiry; provide regular feedback on progress; reconcile any difficulties within their own team; consider how to share their work with other professionals and peers. {185}

The intention in this case is also to promote:

a research based model of teacher education which encourages to focus on the problematic nature of their 'art' and to foster an approach to personal and professional development which will underpin their future careers.{185}

The innovation grew naturally out of a course philosophy that centred on the value of the, reflective practitioner.' The timing of the Enquiry in the third term was intended,

to harness the natural development of students' desire for autonomy and to build on their classroom practice after the completion of two 'block' teaching practice placements in different schools. Previous assignments build towards this enquiry and so students are being encouraged to develop habits and attitudes supportive of research into their own practice.{185}

Comments drawn from evaluations by students and written and oral feedback from schools capture the flavour and value of the collaborative enquiry process, within the context of the PGCE as a whole. The students comments also convey the extent to which such an experience was unfamiliar, in the context of their previous higher education:

We found that collaborating on a given task proved interesting...not only in what we discovered..but also in what we learned about ourselves. (student group)

Although at the time 'vetting'...seemed to slow the progress of the group and even create a little acrimony, in retrospect it proved to be a worthwhile exercise. Firstly it maintained an atmosphere of healthy criticism. Secondly this encouraged individuals to look more critically at their own work. (student group) {185}

The comments from participating schools also indicate a changing perception of the Department and what its students may have to offer to their further development:

The report and its recommendations show a remarkable insight..The report is therefore of great value to the school and is at present being widely circulated.

This exercise has also served to raise morale within the history department by highlighting the importance of our contribution to teacher training. (head of history){185}

Theme Four: Assessment

Where in particular an assessment system is the gateway to a sought after qualification, an entitlement to practice, it exercises a powerful perhaps overwhelming influence over the programmes of study and the learning which it assesses. It carries its own messages both to students and tutors as to what really counts, what the institution or the course really values — never mind what is otherwise declared. So if capability principles are to be realised anywhere in teacher education, they have to be reflected in assessment systems.

What kind of features might we look for in such assessment practice? They might perhaps reflect the following principles:

- (a) assessment procedures should give emphasis to what students are able to do in practice more than to what they know out of context;
- (b) assessment procedures should encompass students' ability to reflect on and learn from experience, to put experience into perspective, to examine it critically — so that they are not limited to the here and now;
- (c) assessment procedures should support and enhance students' self-knowledge — allowing them to make better informed judgements about their own capability and needs;
- (d) assessment procedures should encourage and enable students to engage in self-assessment and to make that an integral part of their professional lives so that they can go on learning;
- (e) by extension assessment procedures should include arrangements for students to collaborate in reciprocal and peer group assessments so that they learn how to learn from each other.

Such principles have particular significance, of course, in the context of teacher education, because our students will have some responsibility for the assessment procedures which will in turn be employed in schools. They need therefore to think what is the best practice which they may take into schools, as well as to be prepared to deal with the kind of assessment practices already well established in schools.

The examples chosen in this section are of assessment strategies, developed in two institutions.

Formative assessment through self development diaries: developing the capable reflective practitioner

At the *University of Wales* {226} first year undergraduates on a BA (Hons) Physical Education course are involved in a pilot scheme based on the use of self-development diaries. This sets out to make effective use of existing resources, in this case the college tutorial system. The intention is to carry forward this approach to years two and three, in order to increase students' confidence and capability for taking responsibility for their own learning and development.

An initial 'counselling interview' helps students to clarify the personal, study and technical skills development required to satisfy course requirements. Following completion of the diary on a weekly basis for a term, the student returns for another session with the tutor, bringing with them for discussion a summary sheet of changes which have occurred. The diary remains the personal property of the student who may wish to keep it private.

Assessment at present is on an individual basis through discussions with tutor and tutee. It is hoped that the pilot scheme will indicate whether self-development diaries might serve as a useful means of developing self-awareness and assessment through the college tutorial system. If successful, their use will be carried through by students to years two and three.

This scheme was initiated as the result of staff involvement in an Enterprise in Higher Education seminar on Records of Achievement held at the University of Sheffield. Several approaches were presented. The tutors within the physical education department sought to make these various ideas their own, in order to enhance support, for students on the physical education course. The existing college tutorial system provided a framework within which to introduce this new dimension to the programme.

Self development diaries are seen in this context as 'a tool to enable students to identify personal strengths and weaknesses and to record progress or regression in these areas.' In capability terms, the diaries seek to promote:

- (a) heightened self awareness;*
- (b) developing ability to self-evaluate strengths and weaknesses;*
- (c) an increasing awareness of the various sources of information available to and used by the individual for assessment;*
- (d) recognition of the importance of interactive personal skills in achieving progress;*
- (e) an increased awareness for the need to set goals in both the short and long term, and to identify ways of achieving those goals;*
- (f) the ability of students to evaluate for themselves, progress and regression in relation to their starting points and their learning aims and objectives, with an increased awareness of the various sources of information individuals can use for self-assessment;*
- (g) the capability of students in finding ways of achieving identified goals and acting on the outcomes of self and peer review of progress. {226}*

The use of self-development diaries is not intended as a bolt-on innovation, but rather as a means of completing and supporting course requirements in various ways. Emphasis in particular is placed on:

- (a) the effective use of time, and learning how to manage leisure and professional priorities;*
- (b) the use of staff and peer support in identifying and acknowledging strengths and weaknesses. By declaring these, and declaring intentions for change and recording change in writing, students become more confident about identifying and achieving appropriate personal and professional development goals;*
- (c) the on-going responsibility of students for their own professional development. Through the diaries, students are able to set personal attainment goals which are of particular importance to themselves, and with counselling, to plan strategies for achieving these targets. Successes and problems are recognised through counselling. {226}*

In this case, continual self assessment supported by the self-development diary is the key vehicle for driving the development of capability:

For any learner to become more capable, there must be an assessment, preferably by the self, of the progress which is being made. The self-development diaries support and complement the Physical Education course objective to produce students who can monitor and evaluate their own development. {226}

Recording Progress and Achievement

At *Westminster College {231}* the Record of Progress and Achievement (RPA) on the PGCE course (approx 150 students, secondary and primary) involves the profiling of skills and competency in teacher education. It involves the development of negotiated profiles, individual action plans, and self and peer assessment. The RPA documentation identifies key stages within the course for needs analysis, identification of achievement and target setting. The courses are assessed by school-focused assignments and school experience of which the criteria relate to capability.

The scheme was introduced in September, 1989 and piloted during the 1989/1990 academic year. A revised version was in operation in 1990/1991 and further developments were incorporated for the third year.

The RPA was introduced as a means of contributing to the overall quality of student learning and the development of professional competence and capability through explicit attention to the following:

- (a) ***Analysis of learning needs*** starting with assessment of prior learning, linked to the establishment of action plans, evaluation of experience, review and reformulation in the light of experience;
- (b) ***Planning and organisation of own learning*** in College and schools, using specific activities to focus development, eg technology skills, practical experience, in depth investigation of cross-curricular themes (eg Equal opportunities, Industrial Awareness);
- (c) ***Negotiating learning goals***, constantly in respect of College and school experience, with teachers, tutors, individually with peers;
- (d) ***Clarifying the nature of their accountability for specific learning outcomes*** through review of experience, identifying achievement and priorities for development linked to self and negotiated evaluation;
- (e) ***Evidence of achievement*** against intended outcomes follows from target setting linked to stages of review and re-assessment;
- (f) ***Assessing of learning outcomes*** through target setting and review and opportunities to take responsibility for pupil learning in schools;
- (g) ***Development of capability and responsibility*** through focusing on individual responsibility linked to opportunities for peer review. While the views of tutors and teachers are important, the emphasis throughout is on weaning students away from satisfying others to establishing self-confidence in individual judgment;
- (h) ***Transferability and adaptability*** are enhanced through the emphasis on self-evaluation, together with the range of school experience which is offered. Of particular note here is the opportunity for inner city, multi-cultural experience which offers opportunities to identify new targets and to adapt achievements to new circumstances;
- (i) ***Learning to take responsibility and be accountable*** is a natural consequence of the framework and the emphasis on self-evaluation and review which building the RPA into the course process promotes;
- (j) ***Confidence in individual self worth and the ability to act decisively*** are enhanced through self and peer review, the variety of experiences and the responsibility, in discussion with others, for identifying individual progress targets;

(k) *Active learning* is central in a course aimed at preparing new teachers and the RPA helps graduate students adjust to new patterns of learning, not only for themselves but through reflection on their own experience, to have the confidence to build this into the learning experiences of their pupils. {231 }

As resources become increasingly constrained, the use of existing time for new developments becomes increasingly important. 'A range of meetings have been arranged, many of which were not additional to what would otherwise have been needed (eg School Experience Support meetings, evaluation meetings with teachers, team meetings).' But finding time was always a problem - The pressures from other work meant that tutors and teachers were too swamped with other things to give student profiles full attention - the main obstacle lay in finding adequate time to involve tutors in the innovation in such a way that they all felt that they had ownership of it. It appeared to be the development of the few, which was then imposed on others, which caused some active and passive opposition. To overcome this, as wide a group of tutors as possible were involved in further developments.'

The introduction of such a scheme also raises wider issues in the context of other developments in the professional lives of teachers:

The development has raised the question of how the RPA links in philosophically, educationally and logistically into the school appraisal system, and in particular into the guidance programme offered to probationers in the first year of teaching. {231 }

The benefits to students identified through internal evaluation (questionnaires and meetings) are seen as considerable:

More structured guidance, better quality of discussion between student, tutor and teachers, greater evidence of students identifying their own agendas for future development, students having more confidence in school situations, more self-sufficiency, and a greater tendency to seek advice at the right time. {231 }

The introduction of this approach also creates a coherence of experience across the school and HE learning contexts:

It allows students greater understanding of Records of Achievement systems being used in schools, since they are operating pupil records and profiles in schools at the same time as they are using the RPA at their own level. {231 }

Conclusion

We have encountered a number of difficulties in selecting and presenting examples for this chapter. The first arose from the fact that the developments we are describing are very much interconnected. Several of the examples could with just a little adjustment have fitted into more than one Theme — of course.

The second difficulty was the need to balance the demands of brevity with the need to provide enough detail and context to make sense of an initiative. We have probably erred in the side of brevity — and we urge readers to approach institutions directly for more information.

The third difficulty was in leaving out a large number of accounts of fertile and intriguing innovation which we would like to have included. The material submitted (itself only a fraction of what we could have sought) represents something of a tribute to the rarely acknowledged capacity for innovation and creativity of teacher educators in an environment so heavy with ignorant criticism that they could be excused if they had given up in despair.

The examples show however that teacher educators are committed to capability in their students — even if they do not commonly use the language of capability — and are well advanced, as one would hope specialists in education would be, in innovative approaches to capability.

The reported experience thus far raises however a number of critical issues for teacher educators — of which these are our selection:

(a) how can the principles of capability here illustrated best be protected and fostered in a context of increasing centralised regulation of the content and methodology of teacher education?

From Quality in Learning, edited by John Stephenson and Susan Weil, published by Kogan Page, London in 1992.

Download the Quality in Learning Introduction file from the ICLML catalogue for details of other chapters in this book (www.iclml.com)

(b) in particular how can we resist the tendency to pack the initial teacher education curriculum (especially the PGCE) with acres of pre-specified content?

(c) what is the relationship of the rhetoric of *capability* with that of *enterprise* and with that of *the reflective practitioner*? Do we have three ideologies here? Or two? Or can they be reconciled in one?

(d) what model of competency should emerge as the dominant one in the next year or two — what model do we see as supportive of capability principles (broad generic competencies in which intelligence and sensitivity in context feature prominently?) and which as likely to undermine such capability (long lists of atomised performances?)?

(e) as higher education institutions are measured increasingly against 'quality' criteria, how can we ensure that those criteria enshrine rather than exclude the principles and practice conducive to capability in pre-service and in-service teachers?

References

Handy, C (1989) The Age of Unreason London: Business Books

Peters, T (1987) Thriving on Chaos London, Macmillan