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Becoming a Teacher Educator

Peter Boyd and Kim Harris from St Martin's College and Jean Murray, Brunel University. Pete Boyd is a Senior Lecturer in Learning and Teaching at St.Martin's College (soon to be University of Cumbria). Kim Harris is in the Education Faculty in the Child and Adolescent and Creative Studies Division at St Martin's. Dr Jean Murray is a Senior Lecturer in Education and MA in Education course at Brunel University.

A current ESCalate project has focused on the induction of newly appointed university-based lecturers in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) during their first three years in higher education. These teacher educators will usually have moved from successful, and often senior, school-teacher roles and may feel a sense of 'expert becoming novice' as they experience the joys and the pressures of life as an academic. They may also feel that there is a case of 'novice assumed to be expert' in the educational research element of their new role. Some of the issues are relevant to other groups of professional educators in higher education.

In research completed in association with this project (Murray, 2005; Murray & Male, 2005; Boyd, Baker, Harris, Kynch, & McVittie, 2006) new teacher educators reported considerable professional learning in the area of teaching in higher education. They welcomed non-formal support within their department as well as more formal support such as PgC courses for new lecturers. Assessment in higher education was a particular area of pedagogy and practice in which they sought support and development. One particular aspect of ITE is that it is a layered situation involving 'teaching to teach' and new teacher educators reported varying conceptions of 'modelling' within their ITE practice.

In addition to the challenge of adapting to a different role the new teacher educator is working in a subject discipline and educational partnership which includes considerable tensions. One example is the role of theory and



its relationship to the professional practice of school-teaching. This may express itself through differences in priorities and values amongst lecturers, students and school-teachers working within an ITE partnership.

New lecturers in ITE work in widely varying institutional situations. A particular issue is the wide variation in expectations placed on them for engagement in educational research and publication. Scholarship and research activity is a key area of challenge for new teacher educators. Education departments and institutions need to consider how realistic their expectations and requirements are, and also need to review the level and quality of support that they provide for raising the research capacity of teacher educators. The encouragement of action-oriented practitioner research in learning and teaching in higher education is

one area of activity which might appear to be particularly appropriate for teacher educators because of the congruence with the subject discipline (practitioner research methodology and project work is widely used within ITE programmes).

Neither the literature nor experience offer easy answers to the development of effective workplace learning environments and both structural design and the agency of individuals are involved. Exploiting the learning potential of everyday work activities and encouraging non-formal dialogue amongst colleagues do appear to be very significant. In addition the wide variation in the experiences and needs of staff, even within one subject discipline of ITE, suggests that an individualised approach to induction is required. Formal activities such as PgC courses for new lecturers need to recognise, promote, and enhance day-to-day

workplace learning and ensure that they enable individualised support. The need for an individualised approach also suggests that formal and non-formal mentoring may be an important strategy within induction.

The project has led to the publication of a guidance document for induction of new university-based teacher educators (Boyd, Harris & Murray, 2007). The guidance document is aimed at deans, heads of department, and academic developers as well as at new teacher educators themselves. The guidance introduces some key ideas and literature on workplace learning and especially on the professional learning of academics. It then sets out some specific areas for review including mentoring, planning for individual staff, role design,

developing a pedagogy for ITE, school-based roles, and support for scholarship and research activity. The guidance document is presented as a tool to help departments evaluate their provision for induction of new teacher educators. It aims to provoke reflection, review, and action by departments and individuals to improve the induction experience for new teacher educators within their particular institutional contexts.

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Proceedings, Higher Education Academy. Available at www.escalate.ac.uk/2419 [Accessed May 2006].

Boyd, P., Harris, K. & Murray, J. (2007) *Becoming a Teacher Educator: Guidelines for the induction of newly appointed lecturers in Initial Teacher Education*, Bristol: ESCalate, Higher Education Academy.

Murray, J. (2005) *Investigating Good Practices in the Induction of Teacher Educators into Higher Education*. ESCalate / Higher Education Academy.

Murray, J. & Male, T. (2005) 'Becoming a teacher educator: evidence from the field', *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 21 (2), 25-142.

Steiner-Waldorf Education - John Burnett

The Trebullom Farm Project

John Burnett has been Programme Director of the University of Plymouth's BA programme in Steiner Waldorf Education since 1992. He's a Fellow of the Centre for Sustainable Futures at Plymouth and is currently working on developing a new degree programme centred around the idea of learning communities orientated towards a sustainable future.



The Trebullom Farm project was launched in September 2006 by tutors and students from the University of Plymouth. Its aim has been to develop a teaching and learning centre in rural Cornwall as a resource for higher education students wishing to develop skills and learn about sustainability issues in a practical 'hands-on' environment.

Trebullom is a beautiful, early nineteenth century farmhouse not far from Launceston which was

converted in the 1970's as a facility for the residents of Peredur Educational Trust. Since the 1950's, Peredur has provided home and workplace for young men with learning difficulties, offering a rich cultural environment with workshops for high quality weaving, pottery, and wood-craft. Although, over recent years, Trebullom has been little used, its potential as a teaching and learning centre was recognised by Bowhill Educational Trust who offered to work with Peredur in

running a series of pilot residentials at the site, culminating in a large scale public event which would celebrate a range of practical environmental activities led by student volunteers from the University of Plymouth. It was agreed that this could be the initial, exploratory phase of a longer-term project which, if successful, could lead to Trebullom coming into full operation as a centre promoting education for sustainability.

Student volunteers, who have