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**Being a school-based teacher educator: developing pedagogy and identity in facilitating work-based higher education in a professional field**

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Pete Boyd & Jon Tibke  
University of Cumbria  
pete.boyd@cumbria.ac.uk

**Abstract**

Facilitating work-based learning in higher education involves the educator in developing both their pedagogy and their professional identity. A current policy drive in England is towards *school-embedded* teacher education programmes facilitated by school-based teacher educators. The promoted schemes involve postgraduate student teachers being formally based in schools for the duration of their programme. This work-based approach involves school-based teacher educators who teach school students regularly as well as having a considerable responsibility for teaching and coaching their student teachers. This is a significant change from previous *partnership*-based teacher education where university-based teacher educators collaborated with school-based ‘mentors’, experienced teachers, to provide taught sessions in the university plus work-based learning in school. Many of these postgraduate teacher education programmes include credit-bearing modules at Masters level and an award at postgraduate certificate level. After qualification some teachers use these credits to study part-time towards a full Masters award.

This paper focuses on the workplace learning and developing identity of a school-based teacher educator who teaches music classes for school students, contributes to extra-curricular music activities in the school, and educates ten secondary music specialist postgraduate student teachers completing a one-year postgraduate programme. The study uses a reflective diary kept by the school-based teacher educator for a full academic year combined with semi-structured interviews at intervals. The interview transcripts and selected segments of the reflective diary were subjected to qualitative thematic analysis.

The findings of this small-scale study suggest that there is great potential in the school-embedded approach to facilitate powerful classroom experiences for student teachers supported by coaching and opportunities for collaborative and reflective learning. However, for this integrated teacher education to be ‘higher education’ – rather than technical training – has important implications for the school as a workplace environment and for the professional knowing and identity of the school-based teacher educator. Learning to teach is complex, relational, and challenging and student teachers need space to be learners as well as teachers. Becoming an effective school-based teacher educator, facilitating work-based higher education, will be no less challenging.

## Keywords

Teacher educator; work-based learning; school-based teacher education.

## Introduction

Work-based learning 'in' higher education, or even more radically 'as' higher education, is an important and contested area in the context of an increasingly utilitarian approach to university education by governments and – to some extent – perhaps also by students. This study focuses on the evolving identity and pedagogy of a school-based teacher educator in an innovative school-embedded credit-bearing postgraduate teacher education programme during one academic year.

Postgraduate initial teacher education programmes in England and internationally are currently largely based on partnership between schools and specialist teacher education providers including university departments. The schools generally provide the essential workplace learning experiences for student teachers as well as mentoring by experienced teachers and also often some elements of more formal professional training. In these partnership programmes the university department or other provider will contribute teacher education workshop sessions focused on educational theory and practice, as well as support for written assignments and moderation of teacher assessment between school sites. Typically, a student teacher will gain experience in more than one school during their programme. Currently in England, many postgraduate teacher education programmes include credit-bearing modules at Masters level and an award at postgraduate certificate level. After qualification some teachers use these credits to study part-time towards a full Masters award.

A policy drive within England at present is to move initial postgraduate teacher education increasingly into school-embedded programmes so that school-based staff will provide all or most of the programme. This arguably has the potential benefits of making teacher education more realistic and more pragmatic. With sufficient investment by schools and universities it is possible to envisage the development of radical work-based learning higher education programmes that will:

*'...bring together universities and work organisations to create new learning opportunities in workplaces.'* (Boud and Solomon, 2001:4)

This also appears to have potential for contributing more powerfully to professional development of the experienced school teachers involved, and with appropriate leadership may contribute to wider professional development and whole school improvement. Within the emerging models of school-embedded teacher education, experienced school teachers will take on a range of roles, with some becoming more engaged with teacher education and others perhaps continuing to provide mentoring in a similar role to current partnership programmes. In contrast to the potential benefits of school-embedded initial teacher education there are also some apparent risks. Schools and school teachers are primarily focused on the learning needs of school students and on objective measures of quality within a performativity culture, there appears to be a risk that teacher education will not gain the priority it requires within a busy school workplace. In addition, maintaining the credit-bearing Masters level of postgraduate teacher education requires a suitable level of scholarship for school-based teacher educators and relevant quality assurance processes for higher education provision.

In the development of school-based teacher education programmes in England a considerable variety of contexts and approaches is likely to emerge, not least because each school setting will be distinctive in some ways. The appointment and professional learning of school-based teacher educators is also likely to vary considerably not least because each programme will vary in terms of their specific responsibilities, the student teacher group involved, the involvement of other schools and the contribution of a university department or other provider. A wider study that attempts to draw generalisations across all of these possible varieties will of course have value but in designing the current study an in-depth, more ethnographic approach of a single case study was seen as having potential to make a worthwhile contribution to our understanding of school-based teacher education. In particular the current paper focuses on the experiences of the school-based teacher educator. It asks the question:

*How do the dual roles of a school-based teacher educator, in supporting school students and student teachers, influence their professional identity and their pedagogy for teacher education?*

The paper is based on in-depth study of the experiences of one school-based teacher educator in a small new English teacher education provision for student teachers for the secondary age phase with a specialism in the school subject of music. This context of a specialist subject cohort is important because many new school-embedded programmes developing in England will have student teachers specialising in a range of secondary subjects within one school. In the case study provision the school-based teacher educator was based in a secondary school with a clear role as a music specialist teacher with around 55% of the school student teaching timetable of a full-time teacher. The school-based teacher educator also had full responsibility for ten music specialist student teachers on a postgraduate teacher education programme. For a limited number of weeks at the beginning and at the halfway point of the one-year programme all ten student teachers were located at the 'base' school. However, for significant periods five of the student teachers were on teaching placements in other secondary school music departments with local mentor supervision by an experienced teacher and support plus occasional visits for teaching observation by the case study school-based teacher educator. The student teachers also had a number of formal sessions facilitated by school-based teacher educators during their school teaching placements alongside student teachers specialising in other curriculum subjects who were following partnership programmes. The base school had considerable prior experience of partnership teacher education programmes.

As English policy develops an increasingly school-embedded approach to teacher education it is likely that the majority of school-based teacher educators will be recruited directly from experienced school teachers, including those with some experience as mentors to student teachers. However, in the case study reported in this paper the school-based teacher educator had spent four years out of school working as a university department-based teacher educator prior to appointment in the school as music teacher and school-based teacher educator. Clearly this recent experience as a university-based teacher educator, including having recently started their doctoral studies, means that the developing identity and perspective of the case study teacher educator is likely to be distinctive. In addition, the case study involves a school-based teacher educator who was newly appointed as a teacher in the school rather than being an established member of staff with existing relationships with staff and school students.

## Identity and agency in the workplace

Teachers and teacher educators, develop multiple identities that may be conceived as narratives that help the individual to make sense of their experiences and to justify their decision making in complex workplace contexts. The professional learning and identity building of the school-based teacher educator is considered as situated learning within a complex workplace context and as consisting of interwoven strands of identity that develop over time as 'trajectories' (Wenger, 1998). In the current study this view of identity means that the school-based teacher educator is considered to potentially experience development of different strands of their professional identity.

Teachers may experience tensions between different elements of their identity and this concept is usefully developed as 'identity dissonance' (Warin et al., 2006). The workplace context of a teacher exposes them to considerable expectations from a range of audiences including school students, parents, peers, school leaders, external quality assurance inspectors and the wider public, and these varied pressures create tensions (Stronach et al., 2002; Warin et al., 2006). Identity dissonance may be experienced between personal identity and professional identity (Nias, 1989) but the current study focuses more specifically on possible dissonance between professional roles as a classroom teacher and as a school-based teacher educator.

Taking a lead from Wenger (1998) the study recognises the strong link between identity and practice and so it sees the source of identity dissonance as being rooted in practice. A useful study of 35 teacher educators from a variety of settings focused on the dilemmas they claim to face within their practice and the strategies they adopt to overcome them (Tillema and Kremer-Hayon, 2005). The study identified five domains of teacher dilemmas and the strategies that teacher educators used to respond to them. The five domains were:

- Theory versus practice
- Reflection versus action
- Supervising versus mentoring
- Delivery versus student teacher enquiry
- Professional growth or stability.

This work informed our framework for the analysis of the reflective diary. While browsing the diary the teacher educator was interviewed by the researcher and asked 'what are the dilemmas you face in your school-based teacher educator role?' and 'How do you deal with them?'

Situated perspectives of professional learning may tend to neglect the role of individual biography of teachers as practitioners within a workplace. Through their personal agency, individuals are not only being shaped by their context but may also contribute to shaping that workplace. As an individual and established practitioner the case study teacher educator brings prior experience to the role and experiences within the particular school workplace. The ensuing negotiations:

*'...constitute a duality between personal and social agency best conceptualised as a relational interdependence' (Billett, 2008:41).*

In referring to the duality between personal and social agency, Billett argues that:

*'...the relational character of individuals' capacities to influence the interdependence that substantiates this duality warrants deeper consideration.'* (Billett, 2008:41)

This relational interdependence is seen by Billett as justifying workplace research that more clearly recognises the mediating role of individuals. The current single teacher educator case study offers a small contribution towards this. As a new teacher joining the school at the beginning of an academic year, the school-based teacher educator needed to negotiate their place within the staff. In a study of student teachers joining their placement schools three proactive strategies were identified:

- Tactical compliance
- Personalising advice
- Seeking out opportunities to exercise control (Roberts and Graham, 2008)

The current study will consider the agency of the teacher educator in using such strategies to integrate themselves into the school staff. It will also consider the influence of such strategies on the teacher educator's pedagogy for teacher education.

Understanding identity and pedagogy within a school-based teacher educator role may be partially informed by studies of newly appointed university-based teacher educators. For example, one study of teachers appointed as university-based teacher educators found that they held onto their existing practitioner identity as they sought to maintain their credibility as a school teacher (Boyd and Harris, 2010) and in many cases this caused them to delay or avoid developing their scholarship and research activity. Studies of school-based teacher mentors in teacher education partnerships may also inform our understanding of the new role of school-based teacher educator. For example, in her study Burn (2007) argues for the development of an identity of expert school teachers as learners (as well as teachers and coaches) and as creators of new knowledge through enquiry and action research with their student teachers (Burn, 2007). These considerations linking teacher educator identity to the pedagogy of teacher education lead us to briefly consider the literature on approaches to teacher education before focusing on the case study itself.

## **The pedagogy of teacher education**

This paper focuses specifically on teacher education as a professional field but the project is informed by the wider literature on workplace learning applied to students learning from placements with employers (for a useful review see Tynjala, 2008). The literature on design and implementation of work-based learning programmes in higher education is also relevant and sets out the challenge for universities in awarding credit when 'work is the curriculum' (Boud and Solomon 2001: 5).

In the case of teacher education, Loughran argues that pedagogy:

*'is about the relationship between teaching and learning and how together they lead to growth in knowledge and understanding through meaningful practice.'* (2006:2)

Within teacher education Loughran identifies two broad areas as 'learning to teach' and 'teaching to learn' and this dual approach means that the student teacher must develop an

explicit identity as a learner and have opportunities for learning as well as developing an identity and practice as a teacher.

Conceptions of 'learning to teach' held by student teachers, university-based teacher educators, and schools based teacher mentors, within a university-schools partnership were investigated in a phenomenographic study by Taylor (2008). The highest level conception of learning to teach that she identified, 'student as teacher and learner', involves 'enabling students to think critically and originally, question existing practices and explore new principles' (Taylor, 2008:78). This has resonance with Loughran's idea of 'learning to teach' and 'teaching to learn'. The questioning or enquiry approach to teacher education contained within this conception appears to be central to the consideration of approaches to teacher education.

There is a simplistic technical-rational argument that assumes we already 'know' what excellent teaching looks like, and this perspective questions why is it then considered necessary for each new teacher to discover or reinvent that for themselves? From a sociocultural perspective, an alternative argument is that 'professional knowing' will always be a contested area (Blackler, 1995) and therefore an enquiry approach to teacher education seems appropriate. It may also be reasonable to argue that teaching is so heavily based on relationships and on identity of the teacher that this creates the need for a personalised and enquiry-based approach. However, within the context of teacher education it has been argued that teacher educators, be they school or university-based, who believe student teachers should grapple with the complexities of school student learning and the process of becoming an education professional, are 'swimming against the tide' of a technical-rationalist model of training (Furlong et al., 2006:43). The exciting challenge for the new school-embedded teacher educators is that they are likely to require a new identity and pedagogy which is different from previous school-based mentors and is also different from university-based academics.

There are at least two established approaches to teacher education although in practice a very wide range of hybrid programmes are found. The **realistic teacher education** approach (Korthagen et al., 2001; Korthagen, 2010) is flexible and personalised, in that it builds from the workplace experiences of the beginning teachers and focuses on their practical concerns. This approach assumes that student teachers have direct classroom experience but also have time and space to reflect on their experiences. It also assumes skilful facilitation by a teacher educator and high levels of trust and collaborative enquiry-based learning within the student teacher group. Alternatively, a **clinical** model for teacher education requires teacher educator teams to identify a set of core teacher practices that provide the structure of the programme (Grossman, Hammerness and McDonald, 2009). This approach assumes that structured workplace experiences, opportunities for 'enactment' combined with skilled coaching will be provided to engage student teachers with this set of teaching practices. This approach also requires time and space for student teacher reflection and may involve considerable levels of student teacher enquiry. Both approaches encompass to some degree the well-established enquiry-based approach to teacher education (Stenhouse, 1980). The justification for an enquiry-based approach is based on the preconceptions that adults bring to teaching from their own schooling, the complexity of classrooms including relationships and identities, and the subsequent need for teachers to question and test their emerging practice. These different approaches provide a framework for consideration of new school-embedded provision.

These established approaches to teacher education rely on good quality workplace experiences for student teachers in their placement schools. Schools are understandably focused on school student learning but teacher education, especially as it moves to become school-embedded, requires that the school is a workplace that strongly supports teacher learning through providing an expansive learning environment (Hodkinson and Hodkinson, 2005). Such a workplace will include teacher learning as 'a dimension of normal working practices' and provide supported opportunities for teachers and student teachers to cross boundaries, learn from others and experiment with practice in their classrooms.

### **The case study**

The case study teacher education provision was developed in response to changing government policy and allocation of student teacher funding. The opportunity to investigate the new school-embedded teacher education provision seemed too important to pass by. As the school-based teacher educator, together with the academic colleague assigned to conduct a basic evaluation of the new provision, we decided to collaborate to complete a small-scale qualitative research project. The research design was initially informed by self-study approaches in teacher education (Hamilton and Pinnegar, 2000; Bullough and Pinnegar, 2001). This approach aims to contribute to a collaborative effort to understand and enhance teacher education through small-scale reflective studies of practice. However, in this study the other urgent commitments of the school-based teacher educator, with a new role and programme, directed us to adopt more of a collaborative or supported self-study approach with the researcher working closely with the school-based teacher educator (Lunenberg and Willemse, 2006). Our approach was informed by Billett's concept of relational interdependence between the personal and social agency of the school-based teacher educator, we aimed to investigate what the teacher educator brought to the new role and context and how the workplace influenced their identity and practice.

The school-based teacher educator completed a reflective diary during the academic year and extracts from this became part of the data. At the end of the year an audio-recorded interview was conducted during which the teacher educator scanned the reflective diary picking up on tensions or dilemmas they had faced in their teacher educator practice and self-selecting significant extracts. They then expanded on the selected diary entries in an audio-recorded interview with neutral prompts by the interviewer to pursue the issue in depth. Both the diary entry and the transcript of the interview became part of the project data. The researcher also conducted three semi-structured interviews with the teacher educator at intervals during the academic year. These three audio-recorded semi-structured interviews used a very open ended initial question of '*how is the school-embedded programme going?*' and then used prompts to pursue issues raised by the teacher educator. Our approach to analysis used a qualitative thematic approach to identify and build initial concrete codes into more conceptual or explanatory categories through a constant comparative technique (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). The data collection had been shaped by the focus on pedagogy for teacher education and the idea of dilemmas within that but we began the data analysis with an open approach allowing themes to emerge from the data.

The self-study element of the research means that from an ethical perspective the school-based teacher educator is vulnerable because of the focus on their identity and practice, and there is a need to respect their position within the study (Bullough and Pinnegar, 2001). The

school-based teacher educator was able to self-select extracts from the reflective diary and consider withdrawing sections of the interview transcripts before their use in analysis. In addition their role in analysis and as co-author of the paper provided good levels of control. There is some ethical risk for the school and for school-based colleagues but the focus of the study on the school-based teacher educator's identity and pedagogy for teacher education tended to limit this. These school-based colleagues were asked to respond to the draft paper to ensure that their perspective was considered.

## Findings

Three themes emerged from the analysis and are presented in this section with illustrative quotes from the teacher educator interviews or from the reflective diary extracts. The focus is primarily on the emerging pedagogy of the teacher educator but these provide insight into their evolving professional identity. The themes are:

- Integration
- Critical thinking and enquiry
- Collaborative working and learning

### *Integration*

Initially the teacher educator expected to some extent for the new programme to have a similar pattern to the previous partnership model programme including a considerable input of direct taught sessions with the student teachers. In practice this was simply not feasible due to the need to monitor the student teachers as they taught the timetable of school student classes. Alternative approaches evolved which appear to be a more integrated approach to teacher education, in the sense of integrating theory and practice:

*...realising the possibilities such as on one occasion I asked the students in three little groups to examine the principles of musical learning that were promoted by three particular music theorists of musical learning. I asked them to do presentations... and... teach the rest of the group an activity based on that thinking... and in the afternoon observed me teaching a Year 8 class looking for evidence of the influence of these three theorists and that is where it actually needs to go more and more (Teacher educator interview)*

As the academic year progressed, the school-based teacher educator became more convinced about the possibilities and opportunities of the school-based provision:

*...there are very many positive things about approaching things as we are and if I approach it in the right sort of mindset then we can really make something very, very powerful and significant out of this (Teacher educator interview)*

For the school-based teacher educator it was not often possible to offer face to face feedback to student teachers immediately after observing them teach because of the pressure of the school student timetable and of working with other student teachers. The teacher educator was able to rationalise this and find some benefits to it:

*...that the kind of traditional way things happen is that a university tutor comes to school, observes the lesson, then we do all the feedback straight afterwards when the student teacher is still in that kind of emotive phase and isn't necessarily massively receptive so what I'm doing now is there will be some thinking space so they will get my observation e-mailed to them, they will have time to consider it alongside their own written evaluation of the lesson and then, maybe two days later, when we have the discussion about that (Teacher educator interview)*

In these ways the school-based teacher educator was demonstrating relational interdependence between personal and social agency (Billett, 2008) and resolving tensions in their approach to teacher education. Because of the prior experience of the individual teacher educator as a university-based tutor, the direction of travel seems to have been to come to terms with the new context of teacher education and find solutions to apparent problems and benefits from the revised approach:

*...interesting week, doing a lot of observing, monitoring and written and verbal feedback. Never before have I had such a picture of my student [teacher] at work in the class room...there is so much to comment upon and discuss and the opportunity to do it straight away and then follow up further. (Reflective diary, November)*

In considering the partnership model, which may involve teaching some more theoretical aspects of education before student teachers are expected to 'apply' it in the classroom, the teacher educator felt his student teachers were more often beginning with the practical wisdom of teachers:

*It's coming to my student teachers sometimes the other way round and they do gather some of that practical wisdom from what they see and what they hear. I'm realising that there is a role for me at that point to say 'quite right, the theories and principles on which that's based come from the research from'... we just come at it the other way round and it's often much more relevant that way. (Teacher educator interview)*

As an example of this kind of turnaround in the approach to teacher education the teacher educator uses behaviour management, a key issue for student teachers:

*...they think they are administrating the school sort of behaviour management system but it doesn't seem to be helping then we need to, you have to go back a step further. What is this system designed on? What is it aiming to achieve? What are the principles underneath it and if we grasp that can we administer it more effectively? (Teacher educator interview)*

This example of behaviour management policy also suggests a way of tackling the need for the teacher educator and the student teachers to be compliant with established school approaches and routines. It leads to opportunities to be questioning of those approaches while generally being compliant with school policy:

*...very soon, they're all going to be in different schools and different circumstances and they've got to understand the principles which are actually there and made to work in different ways and the context, the procedures, the policies might appear to be different but they'll be based on similar principles and that is the crucial thing that they need to understand. (Teacher educator interview)*

Being based in school with a role as a subject teacher provided the school-based teacher educator with insight into the perspectives of the school leadership team and teaching staff. In successive interviews during the academic year the school-based teacher educator showed signs of increasing identification with the school and with being a teacher. They brought this perspective and the insight it provided to their evolving pedagogy for teacher education.

The teacher educator did express concerns in relation to finding time and space for more formal learning and for learning that is not directly responding to classroom experiences:

*...I'm not satisfied that some of the theory that we needed to look at in some depth that we ever quite managed that...the opportunities just seemed too often to slip through our fingers somehow because of the busyness of everything around us...and just the relentlessness of life in schools. They're busy places and music departments are extremely busy places. (Teacher educator interview)*

To some extent the teacher educator was expressing a desire for the kind of longer formal sessions that are more feasible in a partnership programme with days spent on a university campus. In the school-based provision the demands of the timetable of school student lessons explains why the teacher educator felt there was probably insufficient time spent on formal learning sessions with the student teachers or on enquiry-based activity by them.

Generally then the theme of 'integration' appears to be positive in terms of developing a school-embedded approach to teacher education but with the possible challenge raised of needing to carefully plan and monitor content coverage within a busy and dynamic workplace environment.

### *Critical thinking and enquiry*

Part of the increased insight into teacher and school perspectives gained by the school-based teacher educator was the very strong influence on school policy and practice of the external quality assurance body (Ofsted) responsible for school inspections. The approach of the school from the teacher educator's perspective appeared to be justified by reference to the requirements of school leaders and the need to respond to the quality assurance body:

*...something that I think has been a real eye opener for me, even though we're all aware of it – the significance of Ofsted [quality assurance agency] on a day to day basis in the life of teachers. So much feeling like it's driven by an Ofsted agenda or at least a school leadership's interpretation of the Ofsted agenda and sometimes there is no room or scope or time for debate over any of that. (Teacher educator interview)*

This was particularly his impression in the early part of the academic year but his attitude changed as the year progressed. It is important to note that the school leadership recognise the influence of the review body but argue that:

*...the school is focused on the individual child: their learning, their social needs and personal development.*

This appears to have changed the approach of the teacher educator towards the way that core teaching skills and key issues are tackled with the student teachers. A more pragmatic approach appears to have developed, compared to their previous practice on partnership

teacher education programmes, whereby the practical implementation of school policy would first be established in the classroom and then may be questioned:

*...so I have to say [to my student teachers] I'm doing it this way because that is how this school wants it to happen for this school's own reasons but this isn't the only way of doing this and the principles underlying this particular approach are these... (Teacher educator interview)*

In a sense this pragmatic approach simply reflects the practical reality of school and the need to facilitate the timetable of school student lessons. However, it does raise questions about the level of critical reflection and questioning of practice that is possible:

*...schools are such busy, relentless places. Teachers don't get the chance to reflect and delve and try and think differently about things that they do. So they're under constant pressure... (Teacher educator interview)*

The priority of teachers to comply with the requirements of the external review body and/or the school leadership created a concern for the teacher educator because of his belief that student teachers need to question practice and experiment with alternative approaches. The teacher educator became more aware through being embedded in the school, of the need for compliance with established school approaches and routines. In some ways the teacher educator's lack of prior establishment in the school made them doubly aware of this pressure for compliance, as a subject teacher themselves, and for their student teachers:

*[occasionally as a group]...we have come back here [to the university campus] on a regular basis because there's a clear sense in my mind that when they want to ask questions, when they want to say 'Why does this school do this?' 'Why does it do that?' There is a sense that this doesn't feel quite right [while] sat in the school. It feels slightly disloyal almost, whereas we can come to a room on campus and say 'Well within these four walls we're going to have this wider discussion'. And ask these questions and have that kind of criticality about what we're doing...*

*...some even went home at lunchtime and changed out of their 'school uniform' and dressed informally for the university-based sessions...this allowed a different atmosphere...allowed them to be learners? (Teacher educator interview)*

When challenged about this during interview the teacher educator at an early point in the academic year saw this issue as a real barrier to student teacher learning but later in the year their attitude changed somewhat:

*...I think I've slowly moved from almost being in the same place as my students and saying 'Yeah why do they do it like that?' 'Wouldn't it be better if ...? To a point where I've got a better grasp of the school, where it is, where it's come from and where it hopes to be going to whereby I have a better understanding of why it does things the way it does.*

The teacher educator appears to become more pragmatic during the academic year and to identify more strongly with school and their school teacher identity. The school leadership argue that dialogue around teaching and learning is an important element of the school's ethos and it is perhaps the teacher educator's perspective as a newcomer or even his perceived need to remain as an outsider to the school that is at play here. From the perspective of the teacher educator the school-embedded provision offers opportunities for

realistic teacher education, responding to student teacher classroom experiences (Korthagen et al., 2001). The challenges of being so busy appear to make it possible but challenging for the teacher educator to design opportunities for organising student teacher enactment to support their engagement with core teacher practices (Grossman et al., 2009).

### *Collaborative working and learning*

The nature of the school-based provision, with between five and ten music specialist student teachers in the base school, made collaborative working and learning a significant element of the programme:

*...they come up with ideas and solutions and approaches which I would venture to say none of them would come up with individually and I think that has been a striking feature of what's going on here...there is undoubtedly a kind of peer process going on which is hugely significant...(Teacher educator interview)*

To a large extent the teacher educator described collaborative work that included themselves as a member of the music teacher team and they felt they were working as a peer alongside the student teacher:

*...and there were times when you felt like that where you didn't feel any sense of rank particularly or hierarchy amongst us. That we were all in the business of making music happen in that school and making musical learning happen...(Teacher educator interview)*

The collaboration was assisted by the provision of a live video link between the main music teaching room and the student teacher base room. This link allowed frequent observation and debrief on the classroom practice of both teacher educator and student teachers. The emphasis on collaborative working appears to be a very positive outcome of the particular model of teacher education involved in the study, with several specialist teachers placed within one subject department. However, the approach appeared to have two significant effects, one from the perspective of the student teachers and one from the perspective of the teacher educator.

The constant presence of the teacher educator working in this way may have made the students over-reliant on him being there. The teacher educator recognised that at times the students felt they were being used as 'regular teachers' when they were expected to plan and facilitate lessons with little or no direct support:

*Well we did that quite extensively. I think the students have had... their own concerns about that and they've felt that – and I don't entirely agree with them, their views being that that doesn't necessarily support the development of their practice. They felt just like they were left to get on with it on some occasions...*

However, this growing expectation for independent working is part of all teacher education programmes. These feelings by the student teachers may simply relate to the times that the teacher educator spent out of school visiting other student teachers on their placements elsewhere. The school leadership feel that on these occasions the teacher educator did not always effectively engage the existing support available for the student teachers within the

school. In some ways perhaps the student teachers felt very well supported through the presence of the teacher educator and of their collaborating peers. This may have made the transition to independent work perhaps more of a step for some of them. The five student teachers who stayed at the base school, alongside the school-based teacher educator, until half way through the programme, did find it quite challenging to go on placement to another school, and this had been reported to the teacher educator by their school-based mentors.

From the perspective of the teacher educator the close collaborative working with the student teachers raised the issue of vulnerability and this emerged clearly in the data analysis. The most significant example, of vulnerability for the teacher educator, occurred due to being observed in the classroom working with challenging classes by the student teachers.

*I have been observed teaching some 'quite poor' lessons with one particularly difficult group. This is quite humiliating... (Reflective diary, November)*

The school-based teacher educator unsurprisingly sets high standards for his own teaching and feels vulnerable when self-assessing his lessons at less than excellent. In addition to this example, of teaching a difficult class, other minor aspects of vulnerability were identified. The teacher educator to some extent felt vulnerable when discussing school policy and practice, and also because the work of the student teachers in many ways reflected directly back onto the teacher educator.

Throughout the reflective diary and interviews the teacher educator expresses their experience of managing a heavy workload and finding it difficult for example, to plan and follow up school student lessons as well as student teacher sessions. The nature of this study creates a different element of vulnerability because the focus on the identity and practice of one individual prevents the normal ethical approach of anonymity within a group of respondents. The teacher educator preferred not to publish in this paper any illustrative quotes from their reflective diary and interviews that revealed the pressure of work that they carried during the academic year. Workload-related dilemmas experienced by the teacher educator included taking on the full role of a teacher, for example, by contributing fully to extra-curricular activities, and yet they were already carrying the work of teacher educator as well as classroom teacher.

## **Discussion**

The analysis captures some of the potential for such school-embedded programmes of teacher education. The additional insight into school practice appeared to enable the teacher educator to integrate practical wisdom of teachers with more public knowledge in the literature to produce powerful professional learning experiences for student teachers that are broadly in line with realistic teacher education approaches (Korthagen et al., 2001; Korthagen, 2010). This is why the current English policy on moving towards school-embedded teacher education is exciting and appears to have great potential. The challenge for such a school-based teacher education programme is to find the time, within a busy school life and priorities for school student learning, for the important supported reflective learning by student teachers that realistic approaches require.

An additional challenge seems to be that in this case the teacher educator was not confident about having delivered a full structured programme, for example, covering all of the core practices of teaching (Grossman et al., 2009). School-based programmes need to ensure that

student teachers engage with the full range of core practices during their programme, even though the demands of the school student lesson timetable of secondary schools may militate against such an extensive set of formal teacher education sessions as that currently found in equivalent partnership teacher education programmes. Despite the strengths of realistic and personalised approaches based on informal workplace learning, some alternative way of ensuring engagement by student teachers on key issues are likely to be needed within a programme in order to ensure systematic coverage of core practices. Situated learning theory and approaches may have tended to emphasise informal learning and too easily dismiss the contribution of formal learning. Work on modern apprenticeships has argued that formal learning is important and has contributed to a critique of situated learning theory on this aspect of workplace learning (Fuller et al., 2005).

From the school-based teacher educator's perspective, the issue of critical thinking, questioning policy and practice both by the teacher educator and by the student teachers, appears to have been significant. In terms of the school as a workplace the perception of the teacher educator was that student teachers were not completely comfortable in questioning school policy and practice. This kind of loyalty to a school and to practical everyday routines may not be easily avoided, but it is important that student teachers and more experienced practitioners experience an expansive workplace environment where learning across boundaries and variations in practice are tolerated (Hodkinson and Hodkinson, 2005).

The identity, knowledge and skills of a school-based teacher educator will be highly contested as policy on school-embedded teacher education is implemented in England. Is being a skilled classroom teacher sufficient? Or should a school-based teacher educator be an active action researcher, engaged with the literature and able to support good quality student teacher enquiry? The development of scholarship is a key target for teachers newly appointed to university teacher educator roles (Boyd and Harris, 2010; Boyd, Harris and Murray, 2011) but the level of scholarship required by school-based teacher educators will be a contested issue. A comparable group of teachers are further education college lecturers who are delivering higher education programmes, in their case finding time and support for scholarship is a key issue (Young, 2002). This is a key challenge for school-embedded provision and it seems to be centred on the perception and agency of the teacher educator and of the school leadership that supports them and helps to shape the workplace culture. Without sufficient attention to this issue, the school-embedded approach appears to risk shifting the professional preparation of new teachers towards a technical-rationalist 'training' rather than a complex and challenging professional educational process (Furlong et al., 2006).

The perception of high quality collaborative working and learning by student teachers identified in this study holds considerable promise for a school-based teacher education programme. Achieving this kind of collaborative work between student teachers so close to their classroom practice appears to be a positive aspect of saturating a department with specialist student teachers. However, in this study it appears to have created considerable pressure on the workload of the teacher educator as the student teachers see him as a collaborative colleague and expect his continued support. In addition, the close collaboration may make the teacher educator vulnerable because their practice is so frequently and continuously observed by the student teachers. In the performativity culture dominant in many schools and within teacher education in England this kind of vulnerability may be difficult for many teachers to tolerate. In the case study the new provision was only run in his

way for one year, the school appointed a music teacher to take on the school student teaching and the university used an alternative model for the next cohort of student teachers. The school-based teacher educator returned to a university-based role. In their opinion, despite a great deal of learning and satisfaction gained from the experience, the role was not sustainable in its current form due to workload and the range of pressures on the individual.

Overall, the analysis suggests that the school-based teacher educator experienced some level of dissonance between their identity as school teacher and teacher educator. This identity dissonance (Warin et al., 2006) seemed to centre around compliance with school policy and practice versus the adoption of a critical perspective that is required for higher education. In the case study the teacher educator was new to the school as a teacher, had moved from a higher education post, and was engaged with doctoral research, so this may have increased the insider–outsider tension and the drive to adopt a critical perspective. The identity dissonance of the teacher educator also seems to have been experienced by the student teachers in terms of testing their loyalty to their placement school. In order to mediate this identity dissonance, the teacher educator in this case used elements of tactical compliance and seeking out opportunities to exercise control (Roberts and Graham, 2008). In terms of the balance between personal and social agency the teacher educator in the case study was in a strong position to be agentic and to mediate the experience of the student teachers. In the case of school-based teacher educators appointed from within the existing staff of a school this seems less likely. As an example of work-based learning in higher education the selection and appointment of the work-based educators and their identity in relation to the employer and to the university appears to need careful consideration and monitoring.

Clearly, this very small-scale study has limitations in terms of what it can tell us about school-based teacher education programmes. However, by considering one teacher educator's perspectives in depth it has provided insight into the potential complexity of such work-based provision of higher education and the tensions that may arise within it. If school-embedded teacher education programmes are to remain as higher education Masters level credit-bearing programmes then radical development may be required involving a 'reconfiguring' of the university and a change in the value placed on different kinds of knowledge (Boud and Solomon, 2001).

## **Conclusion**

We conclude from this study that the role of school-based teacher educator within school-embedded programmes is challenging. We anticipate that a more pragmatic pedagogy for teacher education seems likely to emerge from the current policy drive in England towards school-embedded teacher education. This more pragmatic approach may have attractions, including perhaps more quickly moving student teachers to the point that they are able to perform effectively in the classroom. There appears to be great potential for structuring student teacher workplace learning experiences and developing work-based professional learning that will be valued by schools and professional quality review agencies as well as by universities and higher education quality assurance bodies. The speed and scale of policy implementation may jeopardise such a scenario. Otherwise, school-embedded teacher education provision may not offer the student teachers an initial training that prepares them for a career as a critical thinking professional and classroom enquirer.

School leaders and school-based teacher educators will need to nurture a critical and action research-based approach by adopting a determined stance to resist merely delivering 'training' in the form of an introduction to 'good practice'. The pressures on identity and practice of school-based teacher educators working in school-embedded programmes requires strong support from school leaders and the exercise of personal and social agency by the teachers involved. There is a need to develop an expansive workplace environment despite the performativity pressures on schools. There is also a need to provide time resource set aside for working with student teachers and for related personal professional development and scholarship for school-based teacher educators.

As the new school-embedded teacher education policy in England rolls out there will need to be quality assurance reports and large scale research evaluation that will indicate if the current drive is enhancing the education of teachers, or is dismantling effective Masters level postgraduate teacher education infrastructure and replacing it with a fragile and pragmatic training for technical teaching roles within specific schools. This will also indicate if the post of school-based teacher educator will be an attractive and developmental professional role for school teachers, or is too overloaded with everyday work and conflicting priorities to be sustainable. Meanwhile, colleagues across the English teacher education sector will be working hard to implement the new policy framework in a way that maximises its positive elements and outcomes for student teachers and simultaneously for school students.

The findings of this small-scale study suggest that there is great potential in the school-embedded approach to facilitate powerful classroom experiences for student teachers supported by coaching and opportunities for collaborative and reflective learning. However, if this integrated teacher education is to be 'higher education' rather than technical training then there appear to be important implications for the school as a workplace environment and for the professional knowing and identity of the school-based teacher educator. Learning to teach is complex, relational, and challenging and student teachers need space to be learners as well as teachers. Becoming an effective school-based teacher educator, facilitating work-based higher education, will be no less challenging.

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