

***Building teaching identities:  
Implications for preservice teacher education***

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## **Abstract:**

*This paper reflects critically on continuities and changes in research on learning to teach during the past two decades and the resultant impact on teacher education, and takes up the challenge to reconstruct and revision preservice teacher education for the new millennium. It examines the stories of four preservice teachers as they learn to teach in their primary teacher preparation program. The stories highlight the individualised and contextualised learning journeys of each of these preservice teachers as they deal with the influence of their personal biographies and negotiate the social and political contexts of the preservice teacher education environment. The paper analyses these learning journeys by drawing out issues around the construction of teaching identities, and assesses, through a postmodern lens, implications for preservice teacher education.*

## **Introduction**

In Australia, recent inquiries and reports of governments and professional bodies have aimed to contribute to the design and conduct of preservice teacher education. (e.g. Australian Council of Deans of Education, 1998; Senate Employment Education and Training References Committee, 1998) However, many of their recommendations highlight preferred structures and organisational features rather than provide a basis for discussing the philosophical underpinnings of teacher education or its pedagogy. Amongst other things, the focus is often on issues of time, partnerships, extended school based components, the relationships between on campus components and the practicum, and selection and training of school-based supervisors. Broader issues of content and process in preservice teacher education have attracted limited attention and consideration.

This paper aims to contribute to the knowledge base for the design and conduct of preservice teacher education, by drawing on the stories of four preservice teachers as they were learning to teach during a 6 month period of their teacher preparation program. The stories highlight the importance of conceptualising a distinction between role and identity in self-formation as a teacher. Analysis of this distinction provides some suggestions for the development and implementation of preservice teacher education programs.

## **Learning to teach**

Despite the plethora of research on learning to teach, regular reviews have repeatedly highlighted an inability to draw any firm conclusions. (e.g. Carter, 1990; Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1996). What can be concluded is that learning to teach is a highly complex process that is very personalised and contextualised. Therefore, while no firm generalisations are applicable across all education contexts for all preservice teachers, there is a rich and diverse knowledge base that informs preservice teacher education programs.

The research tells us that beliefs about teaching and learning are well established by the time preservice teachers begin their formal teacher preparation (Calderhead & Robson, 1991) and that these beliefs are "tenacious and powerful" (Holt-Reynolds, 1992, p.344),, relatively inflexible, and resistant to change (Pajares, 1992).. This is because entrants to preservice teacher education courses are 'insiders' who already have a strong sense of what it means to be a teacher . They have experienced approximately 12 years 'apprenticeship of observation' sitting in classrooms, learning and observing teaching. Often these images of and beliefs about teaching, as well as having been informed by prior schooling experiences, have been influenced by deeply seated archetypes of teaching that pervade the wider culture . This sets preservice teacher education apart from other professional preparation courses, and presents a particularly complex context for teacher educators. As Britzman concludes:

Prospective teachers, then, bring to their teacher education more than their desire to teach. They bring their implicit institutional biographies - the cumulative experience of school lives - which in turn, inform their knowledge of the student's world, of school structure, and of curriculum. All this contributes to well-worn and commonsense images of the teachers' work and serves as the frame of reference for prospective teachers' self-images. (p.443)

These well established and commonsense conceptions about teaching often lead preservice teachers to believe that they know how to teach and they therefore regularly resist aspects of teacher education programs which ask them to reflect on teaching. For them, teaching is "something you do, not something you think about or study" . Quite often, preservice teachers do not see learning to teach as problematic. They frequently see themselves as 'born' or 'natural' teachers who, through trial and error in the practicum classroom, will develop a repertoire of teaching techniques . This process is informed by what worked for them , and they conceptualise teaching as predominantly information transmission, with the task of the students to memorise or practice skills .

Preservice teacher education seems to have little impact on the beliefs that preservice teachers bring to teacher education . These beliefs provide a lens or filter through which they approach their teacher preparation and even when teacher education courses deliberately set out to change prior beliefs, there seems to be little or no change in the content of those beliefs . Sometimes there is change in behaviour but no lasting belief change , or change that is superficial or short-lived . However some research suggests there may in fact be change in the conceptual processing of preservice teachers' beliefs. For example, Tillema concludes that although it may seem as if there are no changes (particularly if analysis of belief changes is at the group level), closer analysis shows that seemingly unchanged beliefs are a complex network of changed and unchanged beliefs for each individual. In addition, Wideen, Mayer-Smith and Moon conclude that those teacher education programs which reject a view of learning to teach as providing knowledge about teaching, and operate within a more constructivist orientation where preservice teachers examine their own beliefs and then build upon those, are able to report significant development including belief change.

However, despite much research on learning to teach, agreement on any firm conclusions is elusive; no single theory of learning to teach exists. Learning to teach is personalised and contextualised. The "lived experience [of learning to teach] is fraught with ambiguity, ambivalence and contradiction" . There are no comfortable metanarratives; learning to teach is ongoing and part of a discourse where one's teaching identity is open to continuous redefinition. Therefore, further research in the area should aim for depth of analysis with a specific group of preservice teachers, rather than continuing an unproductive and unhelpful search for any definitive answer about learning to teach. Guided by this purpose, the study reported in this paper aimed to illuminate the processes of learning to teach for a small group of preservice primary teachers.

### **The study**

The study aimed to illuminate the personalised and contextualised processes of learning to teach for a small group of preservice primary teachers as they were completing a 6 month period of their teacher preparation program. It set out to investigate and document how these preservice teachers were learning to teach by exploring their experiences as learners. The participants were eight primary preservice teachers who volunteered to be involved in the study during a semester of their teacher preparation degree. The stories of four of the participants have been drawn upon for this paper: Mary, Joanne, Martin and

Theresa. At the time of data collection Mary was a 23 year old Bachelor of Information Technology graduate completing the first year of a 2 year end-on graduate teacher preparation course. Joanne was a 27-year-old Bachelor of Arts graduate also completing the first year of a 2-year end-on graduate teacher preparation course. Martin was 23 years old and in the third year of a four year undergraduate teacher preparation degree, while Theresa was a 31 year old mother of two who was in the third year of a four year undergraduate teacher preparation degree, after having worked in a bank for some years.

### **Data collection and analysis**

Throughout the semester, participants maintained a daily journal based on Tripp's (1993) critical incident approach. This involved recording incidents and reflecting on these, sometimes revisiting and re-analysing previous entries. Each week the participants and I (the researcher) met for an hour-long group analysis conversation where we discussed and analysed a selection of incidents the participants had recorded in the preceding week. The analysis was guided by Tripp's work which encourages participants to delve into the underlying assumptions of their thinking and actions, and the justice of the consequences. Each group analysis conversation was audiotaped, transcribed, and then returned to the participants in the following week's session. The group analysis conversation transcripts and the journals were the focus of the individual negotiation conversations, the next stage of the study. In these individual negotiation conversations towards the end of the semester, each participant met with me for two separate sessions of approximately 30-40 minutes. During these sessions, discussion centred on the things that the participants had said in the group analysis conversations and what they had written at various stages in their journals, with a view to verifying, clarifying and illuminating what they thought was happening as they were learning to teach during the semester. The specific aim of the second of these sessions was to negotiate an agreed upon account of how the participants conceptualised their experiences of learning to teach, the professional growth which occurred and their developing knowledge base. These conversations were audiotaped, transcribed verbatim and then returned to each participant for verification. Finally the participants were asked to provide a short narrative which they felt summed up their learning to teach experiences over the course of the semester. Thus, data collected were journal transcripts, group analysis conversation transcripts, individual negotiation conversation transcripts, initial and final written narratives about learning to teach as well as demographic information and field notes.

The analytic procedures used in this study were similar to those outlined by Dey and involved classifying the data and then making connections, although not necessarily in linear fashion. Whilst data collecting and transcribing dominated the earlier phases of the research, and data analysing dominated the later stages, collecting and analysing often ran parallel to each other and were informed by each other. Q.S.R. NUD\*IST 4 Software for Qualitative Data Analysis was used to manage the data, to categorise it and to connect categories and test hunches and hypotheses. The data so analysed and interpreted, was used to construct individual stories of learning to teach for each of the participants. It is these stories which are drawn upon in the discussion that follows.

### **Discussion**

Like much of the current literature, this investigation showed that for this group of preservice teachers, the processes of learning to teach were strongly influenced by their experiences prior to entering their teacher preparation course. Their own schooling was particularly influential in forming early theories about teachers and teaching, and these theories proved to be very resistant to change. Becoming a teacher was a complex and personalised process and involved building a teaching identity within multiple contexts.

## Teaching identities

### How were they shaped?

Deconstructing each participant's motivations for wanting to become a teacher, provided insights into how they identified with teaching and the factors instrumental in shaping their teaching identities.

For all participants, their *apprenticeships of observation* as students in classrooms featured prominently in the ways they identified with teaching. This was particularly so for Joanne, whose own schooling was a very positive experience. She reported she had teachers who nurtured her self-esteem and that this was what she wanted to do for other children. Thus, building self-confidence and developing social skills were important dimensions of how she saw herself as a teacher. On the other hand, Mary's own schooling experience were not so positive and contributed to her initial resistance towards a teaching career. However, in rethinking her school experiences, she ultimately came to identify with teaching by constructing a teaching identity for herself that was different from those teachers prominent in her own educational biography. Thus, like Jamie Owl in Britzman's study, unfavourable aspects associated with her own schooling seemed to form Mary's initial views, but her "internally persuasive discourse ... told her things could be different and that she could be different" .

Experiences in *atypical teaching episodes* were also cited as motivations for wanting to become a teacher. Martin, for example, found that he got a high from being able to explain to his mother how to use a video recorder. He recalled this as moment of exhilaration. Theresa drew heavily on her positive 'pseudo-teaching' experiences as a mother and parent helper in her children's classroom, to explain her decision to become a teacher. However, these atypical teaching episodes "lack the complexity of classroom teaching which places heavy demands on pedagogical and organisational skills as well as on expert knowledge of subject matter" . Therefore views of themselves as teachers which have been shaped by atypical teaching experiences are probably far removed from the realities of teachers' work.

*Traditional teaching archetypes* which pervade society also helped shape the developing teaching identities of the preservice teachers in this study. Mary's decision to pursue a teaching career was made only after she completed her first degree. As a consequence, throughout the study she often reflected on the reasons she had not decided on teaching earlier. Along with the general feeling that her own schooling was not a positive experience, another reason she cited for initially not wanting to become a teacher was that she did not want to conform to the stereotypical image of the female teacher. However, in contrast to the internal dialogue which helped her rework her feelings about becoming a teacher different from those she experienced, there seemed to be no internal dialogue evident in this case. She seemed to simply accept that she was conforming to the stereotype. She did however provide a rather altruistic view of a teacher with which she wanted to identify; she wanted to make a difference to individual children and ultimately to society. Joanne presents a strong cultural archetype with which she wanted to identify; she aimed to help those less fortunate than herself. Martin also seemed to be influenced by an archetypal view of teaching, that of the respected teacher in rural areas. One of his teacher education experiences involved him teaching children on a Queensland sheep station. Being *the person from the university* in a small country town fitted with Martin's view of a teacher being afforded respect and status, and thus he developed an image of himself in that role.

Of particular note in deconstructing these motivations for teaching, was that all the participants thought they had appropriate *personal qualities* for teaching. They believed that these qualities were innate, and considered themselves to be *born teachers* . They

considered they were well suited to teaching because they possessed these innate qualities. Joanne thought she was born to be a teacher because she was very much like her father and she considered that he was a natural teacher even though he had never completed any formal teacher preparation. In her words, he was *patient and kind*, had a great *rapport* with young people, and could *explain* things in a *fun* way. Mary also considered she had the necessary personal qualities for teaching and that teacher education was merely *fine-tuning* them. Even stronger in her views on this matter was Theresa who firmly believed *teachers are born*. She saw herself as a well-organised person who was often in control; in her view, a *born teacher*. Therefore, for her, teacher education had very little to offer. She was very confident that she would be a highly effective teacher.

Thus, for Mary, Joanne, Martin and Theresa, identification with the teaching profession as gleaned from deconstructing their motivations for teaching, was essentially modern. They believed that there are essential characteristics common to all teachers and that they already possessed these requisite qualities and attributes. They believed they had been born with them and consequently regarded themselves as natural teachers. These requisite qualities have been reinforced by traditional teaching archetypes in society and supported by their atypical teaching experiences. Thus, having a teaching personality was privileged over any subject matter knowledge or pedagogical knowledge. In addition, their apprenticeships of observation supported this view since the images of teaching formed during their own schooling were usually as a young student highly receptive to the emotional and affective dimensions of a teacher's actions rather than to their pedagogical expertise or subject matter knowledge. Thus, appropriate attitudes and dispositions were, for these preservice teachers, the essentials of being a good teacher.

### **What did they look like?**

The teaching identities developed by Mary, Joanne, Martin and Theresa were essentialist in nature. To be a good teacher some essential characteristics and skills are necessary. For these participants, a good teacher has a particular teaching personality, is able to organise and control the learners, and is able to transmit information effectively.

Mary, like the other participants, privileged a teaching personality over knowledge of strategies while she was learning to teach. Since she believed in the importance of a teacher having *good communication skills, humility, courage, impartiality, open-mindedness, empathy, enthusiasm, judgement and imagination*, she considered that much of one's teaching ability is innate. She did refer to the importance of subject matter knowledge in the sense of worrying whether she would know enough. In this, she tended toward the idea of 'teacher as expert' as outlined by Britzman. Such a view reinforces the view of teacher as autonomous individual and that knowledge is something to be delivered. The role of the teacher is to transmit that knowledge. However, the privileging of a teaching personality was also evident when Mary talked about the role of the teacher as transmitter of knowledge. Like Martin and Theresa, she stressed the importance of *passion* in that transmission, rather than knowledge of strategies or even knowledge of the content, both of which seem to be 'picked up' along the way as they are needed or are simply *obvious* or *commonsense*.

Joanne had similar beliefs to Mary. She believed that teaching is largely a matter of one's personality and that good teachers are born or self-made. She strongly emphasised the importance of focussing on students' self-esteem and their social skills. As a teacher she said she would aim to nurture each child personally and socially, and then convey knowledge, believing she would get the skills for this during the practicum. As a teacher, she saw herself as trying to compensate for what she saw as lack of good parenting, and planned to deal with the problems the children would bring to school. However there were dualisms in Joanne's developing teaching identity. On the one hand, her doubts about

herself as a teacher were related to personal qualities: e.g. *Will I be organised enough? Will I be able to help the children deal with the problems they bring with from home? Will students respect me?* On the other hand though, she believed she already had the skills required to nurture each child personally and socially (she had the requisite personal qualities). Tension seemed to develop because she needed constant confirmation (usually from her supervising teacher) that she was performing adequately. Thus, in Joanne's developing identity, having a teaching personality competed with pedagogical competence.

For Theresa, good teaching was simply an extension of good parenting. As a parent, she was very confident she would be a good teacher. Good parents, like good teachers, are firm (there's a *line* you don't cross), in control, in charge, organised and ordered. Theresa constantly emphasised a teaching personality, quickly devaluing anything that hinted of academic theory. She found it very difficult to accept that she herself had a theory of teaching, preferring to call it a *feeling about teaching*. She talked about *the qualities that you need for teaching* and stressed that *it's the type of person you are* that is important in being a teacher. Without these personal characteristics, she believed that a teacher would be *just going through the motions*. Like Joanne, Theresa was concerned about the problems some students endured as a result of their family backgrounds but wondered where she would *draw the line* in terms of dealing with those concerns. For Theresa, developing content knowledge for teaching was simply something you did as you needed to know it and generally this would be *on the job*. She believed that these things could be learnt, but developing the appropriate personal qualities was more problematic - you have to be *born with them*.

Of the four participants, Martin was the one least focussed on a teaching personality as the crux of his teaching identity. He stressed the transmission of knowledge role of the teacher. He believed teachers must be knowledgeable - *you must know what you're on about*. However, the personal dimension did emerge. Like Mary and Theresa, he felt that you must be able to convey that knowledge with *passion*. He also stressed organisation and control; you have *to stay on top of them*.

For Martin, a dualism was evident in his teaching identity that stemmed from his view of teaching as controlling and organising learners, and his view of learning to teach as acquiring strategies. During the study he found some attraction in a range of student-centred strategies and socially just ways of teaching to which he was exposed. However, tensions surfaced because of contradictions in his espoused preferences for these strategies and his preexistent personal theories which, when deconstructed, pointed to a view of teaching as communicating and explaining knowledge in an organised and controlled environment. These views expressed in his personal theory were based on approaches he perceived worked for him at school. Because these tensions were not really resolved by Martin during the period of data collection, acquiring the new strategies seemed to become an end in its own right, resulting in little consistency in different dimensions of his teaching identity. Indeed he expressed emphatically concerns about his supervising teacher who did not seem to have the control and organisation he thought she should when she used group work strategies. This was despite his professed orientation to discovery learning and other less teacher-directed strategies. However, even though Martin was attracted to these student-centred strategies and socially just ways of looking at education, he did not seem to focus on trying to enact them during the practicum. Affirmation from the supervising teacher was central to Martin's evolving teaching identity. It was not so much the content of his view of himself as a teacher that was important during the practicum, as being seen to be doing the right thing by the supervising teacher was. Throughout the study, Martin did not seem to analyse his beliefs quite as deeply as some other participants. Instead he often resorted to learning to teach by copying what was done in the practicum classroom, and soliciting positive comments from the supervising teacher. He was very dependent upon confirmation

from the supervising teacher that he was performing the role of teacher adequately. Such confirmation seemed to appease him, and he did not seem to grapple further with any dilemmas in his evolving identity. As long as he was *going okay*, as determined by those who evaluated him, he was content to let other things pass and build an idealised view of himself as teacher that he could operationalise when he graduated. Martin's view of himself as teacher, and the role of teacher he was performing, was not consistent.

The participants in this study stressed the importance of a teaching personality. In addition, for them, a good teacher is someone who is in control and transmits knowledge in interesting and motivating ways. However, there are dualisms evident in their evolving teaching identities that often surfaced as contradictions and tensions as they learnt to teach. Most obvious is that within the teaching identities these preservice teachers were forming, having a teaching personality was privileged over pedagogical and subject content knowledge. They saw themselves as having all the 'appropriate' personal qualities for effective teaching, but in the practicum they had to focus on pedagogical competence. Therefore, how they felt about themselves as teachers (i.e. their developing identity) was often at odds with the way in which they were doing teaching (i.e. performing the functions of the role of a teacher during the practicum). These contradictions surfaced as a consequence of the multiple contexts they had to negotiate as they were learning to teach.

### Teaching role and teaching identity

From the above analysis of the developing teaching identities of the preservice teachers in this study, self-formation in the multiple contexts of preservice teacher education can be conceptualised using the concepts of 'teaching role' and 'teaching identity'. A teaching role encapsulates the things the teacher does in performing the functions required of her/him as a teacher, whereas a teaching identity is a more personal thing and indicates how one identifies with being a teacher and how one feels as a teacher. As Britzman points out:

Role speaks to function whereas identity voices investments and commitments. Function, or what one should do, and investments, or what one feels, are often at odds. The two are in dialogic relation and it is this tension that makes for a 'lived experience' of teacher. (p.29)

This view of the 'lived experience' means that learning from experience is not simply acquiring pedagogical skills. That more narrow view of learning from experience has valourised the practicum as the only place where one becomes a teacher. By conceptualising 'experience' as the dialogic interaction of role and identity, the social dimensions that are interwoven into our very existences are accommodated. In this way, becoming a teacher involves the interplay of these two concepts. This distinction is a particularly illuminating conceptual tool for interpreting what was happening as the participants in this study were learning to teach.

In the identities of the preservice teachers in this study, having a teaching personality was privileged over pedagogical and subject content knowledge. As they learnt to teach, Mary, Joanne, Martin and Theresa privileged the possession of personal attributes over developing knowledge of content and strategies. In general, they saw themselves as having appropriate personal qualities for effective teaching and thought that they would develop pedagogical competence and the requisite content knowledge during the practicum experience 'as they needed it'. In many instances these things were merely *obvious* or *commonsense*. Thus, in their minds, teacher education had little to offer them. They felt they already had the personal requisites, so they just wanted to get out and 'do' teaching and get feedback from the supervising teacher that they were okay. Any doubts they had would be fixed by *getting out and doing more of it*.

However, when they got into schools during the practicum, they often had to do things that did not seem to match their *obvious* or *commonsense* approaches or sometimes they simply did not have a way of going about things (in this situation their *commonsense* lets them down; it is incomplete). Because they did not see knowledge of strategies and content as central within their teaching identities, strategies and content knowledge became ends in their own right, since they had to be developed to 'survive' the practicum. Thus learning to teach takes on a dualistic quality. The development of strategies and content become goals in their own rights, and are often unrelated to the essential components of teaching identities (core beliefs) which remain unchanged.

As they learnt to teach, the preservice teachers in this study tried to resolve this dilemma. Sometimes they were able to resolve the dual goals by creating a link between the core beliefs of their identities and their professional practice in the practicum. Concepts of *relevance* as expressed by Mary and *ownership* as expressed by Joanne are examples of ways in which they tried to resolve the link. For Mary, some approaches simply *back up your commonsense*, hence they are *relevant*. Other approaches work in the classroom and since the students experience success, they are *relevant*. For Joanne, *ownership* meant that she considered an approach as hers if it seemed to fit with her focus on social relationship skill development in the classroom. She tried things out and if they worked for her and fitted with her beliefs, she established *ownership*. On the other hand, no resolution meant the development of strategies and content knowledge became goals in themselves, and teacher education was then seen as irrelevant (i.e. what they were doing was not consistent with their core beliefs, their identity). Then, the practicum became the only place where they believed they learnt to teach. This was evident when Martin and Theresa talked about 'playing the game' to pass university subjects so they could graduate. In this way, preservice teacher education became 'a rite of passage'. This was also evident in some practicum experiences. For example, Mary used coping mechanisms to *keep things rolling along* in the practicum. Thus these preservice teachers seemed to put their identities 'to one side' until they graduated and could operationalise them in their 'own classrooms'. In this way survival also became a goal in its own right.

This paints a bleak picture of the relevance of preservice teacher education in learning to teach. However, it is possible to conceptualise this situation as essentially a difference of role and identity. To function in the role of teacher one needs knowledge of content and strategies; whereas core beliefs constitute one's teaching identity. For the preservice teachers in this study, having a teaching personality was privileged over knowledge of content and strategies as a core belief of their identity. Since they thought they already had the requisite personal skills, the latter simply became part of what one had to do to perform the functions required for a teaching role. They became goals in their own right as outlined above. Teacher education can instigate change in preservice teachers with respect to the functions of being a teacher, as for example when they see something working in the classroom. This is evident in Martin's change in preference from a 'chalk and talk' approach to the more constructivist and discovery based methods he said he came to know and liked to use. It is also consistent with the fact that many other participants reported that they would take on board ideas and approaches if they saw that they *worked in the classroom*. However for many of them, the core of how they felt as a teacher (their identities) seemed unchanged.

The distinction between role and identity, and the fact that teacher education seems to impact most readily on the ways in which preservice teachers perform the function of the teaching role, could explain why the preservice teachers in this study relied so much on confirmation from their supervising teachers that they were doing the right thing. It also helps explain why the practicum is both the context within which they feel they are learning the most (they are developing strategies and content to fulfill the teaching functions required in the classroom and they are successful with these goals), and the component of preservice

teacher education which causes great angst (the ways in which they are 'doing' teaching does not seem to be consistent with their core beliefs and the ways in which they want to identify with teaching). The practicum seems to be the context where the concepts of identity and role (and related function) as they have been outlined here, are in closest proximity. The messages they are getting about 'this is the way to be the teacher' do not always match 'this is the way I feel like a teacher' (i.e. their identity). But in a postmodern world, focussing on function to the exclusion of broader issues of identity gives an anchor which the participants showed they needed - they have essentialist, modernist views of teaching. Focussing on the metanarratives of function (of successful ways to be the teacher) allows them to find support for their essentialist views of teaching.

### **Implications for preservice teacher education**

Learning to teach for the preservice teachers in this study involved interplay of teaching role and teaching identity. A teaching role points to particular functions that have to be performed to carry out the role of the teacher. On the other hand, a teaching identity has been shaped over a long period of time and involves core beliefs. Learning to teach can be learning the skills and knowledge to perform the functions of a teacher or it can be developing a sense of self as teacher. In the former, one is 'being the teacher', whereas in the latter, one is 'becoming a teacher'. As has been shown, allowing an emphasis on 'being the teacher' (i.e. the functions of the teaching role) can result in knowledge of content and strategies becoming goals in their own rights. Preservice teacher education becomes 'irrelevant' and survival also becomes a goal in its own right. These distinctions have significant implications for the design and conduct of preservice teacher education programs.

In the first instance, thinking of teacher education as vocational training would inhibit constructive responses to problems of identity formation in becoming a teacher. A training approach emphasises the development of discrete and technical teaching skills and often assumes a single definition of a 'good teacher' which centres on the demonstration of skills. In this view, teaching is 'instruction' or imparting knowledge - the process of 'banking' knowledge in the 'empty' heads of students. In the same way, teaching preservice teachers becomes imparting knowledge about teaching so they can build up a healthy bank balance, and become 'effective teachers'. The outcome is likely to be teachers who are dependent, conservative, and conforming. The process celebrates individualism. However as this study shows, becoming a teacher involves a personal and social dimension not addressed by such conceptualisations of learning to teach. It involves identity formation: more than learning the role. If preservice teacher education works only on role, as a vocational training orientation tends to do, identity remains the same. Because one's teaching identity involves core beliefs that are 'tenacious and powerful', the likelihood of beginning teachers resorting to teaching in the ways they were taught in non-reflective ways is very high.

Such an approach also denies the importance of the development of professional judgement, a crucial dimension to the view of the teaching profession by those within the profession as well as those outside it. Views that teaching is a relatively technical enterprise and that learning to teach therefore involves being trained in a number of skills which have been shown by research to be 'successful' in one context and are then able to be transferred to a range of contexts, have done little to enhance the view of teaching as a profession. A professional needs to be a competent practitioner, but also (and more importantly) needs to understand what it is that s/he does and how it is done, and then be able to articulate this professional judgement (Tripp, 1993). This aspect of being considered a professional, as opposed to being only a competent practitioner, is a matter of "being intellectually expert about expert practice" (Tripp, 1993, p.5). It is possible to become an expert practitioner by actually doing the job, by performing the skills, but true professional teaching involves

another dimension, an intellectual dimension. This intellectual dimension of expert practice is, for most teachers, reflection.

Therefore the goals of teacher education must relate to issues surrounding 'becoming a teacher' not focussed only on the functions required to carry out the role of the teacher. To do this, preservice teacher education has to deal with core beliefs. It must help preservice teachers make their personal theories explicit, examine them to identify their sources, and analyse them for consequences in professional practice. Such a view of preservice teacher education de-emphasises the centrality of research based approaches to knowledge for teaching and emphasises linking personal theories with the public theories available from research. As teacher educators, we need to appreciate the tacitness and validity of personal theories rather than just try to replace them with images and beliefs that are somehow regarded more valid and scientific because they are grounded in 'valid' or 'rigorous' research. To do that, preservice teachers must be encouraged to deconstruct their personal theories, to expose them and identify their origins. Teacher education should provide opportunities for discourse and reflection within the context of social inquiry, to facilitate ongoing redefinition of these theories and examination of the consequences of the assumptions that underpin them. Personal theories must be seen as evolving, not static, and their epistemological legitimacy and tenacity should be acknowledged.

To do these things, we need to reconsider not only the content of preservice teacher education, but also the pedagogical processes used in the programs. Life history and autobiography, various forms of reflective writing such as logs, diaries, journals and reports, metaphor development and analysis, critical incident recording and analysis (e.g. Tripp, 1993) and action research, are all methods which can be used in preservice teacher education to help prospective teachers develop an awareness of their personal beliefs and to examine them for underlying assumptions and consequences for school students.

Whilst there are obvious cautions and limitations for drawing broad generalisations, the ideas drawn from this study allow a reconceptualisation of preservice teacher education which focusses on 'becoming a teacher', not merely on learning how to perform as a teacher. Failure to appreciate this difference will do little to enhance the professionalism of teaching. Learning to teach is individualised, personalised and contextualised, and it is ongoing. It happens within multiple contexts, and sometimes this causes dilemmas during identity formation. Therefore valuing personal theories and creating links to public theories, ensuring that the university-school links in teacher education are strong, and recognising the importance of linking preservice and inservice teacher education, are all crucial considerations for those responsible for preparing teachers.

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