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TEAN special issue 2 editorial

In this issue, the TEAN journal presents the second of the two special issues from our guest editors, Dr Lynne Graham-Matheson and Professor Vivienne Griffiths from Canterbury Christ Church University. I am most grateful for all the work that Lynne and Vivienne have put into this issue and I know you will enjoy the papers. Many thanks to all the authors who have contributed to this fascinating issue of the journal and thanks too to the TEAN reviewers who have, as ever, given their time, expertise and enthusiasm to help towards the successful publication of this issue.

If you have an idea for a special issue, please get in touch with TEAN to discuss possibilities.

Now Lynne and Vivienne will present the editorial to accompany their issue of the TEAN journal.

Alison Jackson

Theme of the special issue: innovative practice in initial teacher education

Editors: Lynne Graham-Matheson and Vivienne Griffiths, Canterbury Christ Church University

Background

This is the second special issue to be developed from the international conference 'At the Crossroads: New Directions in Teacher Education', held at Canterbury Christ Church University in July 2012, which brought together over 200 scholars from 16 countries. As well as a range of methodological approaches to research in teacher education, represented in the studies published in the previous special issue (Vol. 6 issue 1, March 2014), many of the conference papers focussed on the development of innovative practice in initial teacher education. The five papers presented here, which have been updated for this special issue, illustrate some of these exciting initiatives, which are flourishing despite the growing challenges to teacher education in parts of the UK, particularly England (Beauchamp et al., 2013). It is perhaps not surprising that two of the studies are based in Scotland (Aderbigbe et al.; Ferguson), where creative teaching and research-based practice in teacher education are strongly encouraged (Donaldson, 2011; Scottish Executive, 2004). The articles will be of particular interest to university and school-based teacher educators: one is co-authored by lecturers and teachers (Kazim et al.); and all the articles focus in different ways on the need to sustain and develop new models of pedagogy, collaboration and enquiry between universities and schools.

Teacher education at the crossroads

International comparisons indicate that many initial teacher education programmes globally (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2011), exemplified by 'top performing countries' such as Finland, Singapore and Shanghai-China (OECD, 2011; Tatto, 2013), have strong bases in research, as well as pedagogy and the practicum experience, giving teacher educators and student teachers in such contexts an advantage. However, Furlong argues that there is a 'sharp

contrast' (2013:10) between this research emphasis and current developments in England and parts of the USA, where government policy is drawing teacher education increasingly away from higher education and into schools, thus shifting the locus of control. Such differences in global developments in teacher education therefore have major implications for teacher educators, depending on the particular context.

The recent British Educational Research Association (BERA) and Royal Society for the Arts (RSA) Inquiry into the role of research in teacher education (BERA/RSA, 2014) was a timely response to such concerns, especially in relation to the situation in England, where the role of research in teacher education is being side-lined (Beauchamp et al., 2013) in comparison to other parts of the UK as well globally. The final report of the Inquiry (BERA/RSA, 2014) makes a strong argument for the role of research and enquiry in schools and colleges, and a strengthening of partnership between teacher researchers and the wider research community. The report (ibid.:5) identifies four main ways in which research can be incorporated more strongly into teacher education: firstly, that the content of teacher education programmes is informed by research-based knowledge; secondly, that the design of these programmes draws on research findings; thirdly, that teachers and teacher educators are equipped to engage with research; and finally, that teachers and teacher educators are enabled to undertake their own research into educational practice and interventions. The report's recommendations are ambitious, and span teachers' continuing professional development as well as initial teacher education, and all phases of education.

The results of the Inquiry and its (so far) seven accompanying papers, which cover UK and international findings, academic and teacher perspectives, will hopefully give positive ammunition in the form of in-depth research evidence to teacher educators and researchers who are striving to improve all aspects of teacher education, and will enable them to work collaboratively rather than in competition with school partners (BERA/RSA, 2014.:5). As the final report states:

A focus on enquiry-based practice needs to be sustained during initial teacher education programmes and throughout teachers' professional careers, so that disciplined innovation and collaborative enquiry are embedded within the lives of schools or colleges and become the normal way of teaching and learning, rather than the exception. (BERA/RSA, 2014:6)

Articles in this special issue

The special issue opens with Chris Philpott's proposals for a pedagogical framework for initial teacher education. He argues that a pedagogy of teacher education is lacking in England, and that articulating such a pedagogy is particularly important when school-based models are gaining currency. Drawing on models from the USA and the Netherlands, which emphasise processes of *how* as much as *what* to learn to teach, Philpott exemplifies this possible framework through a case study of music teacher education. Strategies such as explicit modelling and collaborative teaching are identified, with a further layer of meta-cognitive practices such as reflexivity, systematic enquiry and theorising practice.

In an empirical study of a BEd programme in Scotland, Semiyu Aderibigbe, Laura Colucci-Gray and Donald Gray investigate how mentoring and collaboration between teachers and students can be supported and enhanced using a critical, constructivist perspective. The authors broaden conceptions of mentoring from an apprenticeship model to one involving (among other aspects) coaching, facilitating, reflection, support and collaboration. Data from interviews with mentors, student teachers and university tutors provide evidence for mentoring as a potentially egalitarian learning process, where mentors and mentees can engage in mutual, active professional learning and development.

Raza Kazim, Adam Mahomed, Mark Moloney and Liz Morrison also focus on the importance of collaborative pedagogical practices between mentors and student teachers in their study of paired and multi-placements in secondary PGCE mathematics teacher education. Drawing on observation, individual interviews and focus groups, they identify the positive support and learning which can take place through group placements, and the lively lessons which can result. Furthermore, as well as pre- and post-lesson planning and debriefing, they also argue for the value of 'dynamic' mentoring, through which in-lesson reflection and meta-cognition can enhance pupil learning as well as student teacher development.

Anne Ferguson describes the development of an innovative, four-year combined MA degree in primary education with teaching qualification in Scotland. University tutors worked closely with schools and the local authority to devise the programme, based on developments in the USA incorporated into Scottish reforms of teacher education. The programme meets the creative requirements of A Curriculum for Excellence through offering a wide range of inter-disciplinary courses, with an intensive focus on child development at its core. Problem-solving principles drawn from clinical practice are also used extensively. Ferguson argues that the collaboration between local schools and the university is vital to the success of the degree and its future progress.

In the final article, Vivienne Griffiths writes a retrospective, autobiographical account of her career as a teacher, teacher researcher and researcher. She identifies critical incidents and key influences, including Lawrence Stenhouse, Liz Stanley and Dorothy Heathcote, and discusses transitions and shifts in professional identity over a 40-year period. Innovative practices and research in education and teacher education, such as the Humanities Curriculum Project, mentoring in schools, drama-in-education and beginning primary teacher projects, provide a bridge between changing education policies, contexts and communities of practice.

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