Articulating a pedagogy of teacher education

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Introduction
This overview paper is designed to briefly explore some of the elements which comprise a pedagogy of teacher education (Loughran, 2006). Paying careful attention to a pedagogy of teacher education and the way it might be developed is important because:

being a teacher educator is often difficult … in most places, there is no culture in which it is common for teacher education staff to collaboratively work on the question of how to improve the pedagogy of teacher education. (Korthagen, 2001a, p. 8)

The first point that matters in considering what a pedagogy of teacher education might look like is embedded in the notion of pedagogy itself. In many places (e.g., the US, Australia, the UK, Canada and New Zealand), pedagogy is sometimes used as a synonym for teaching. However, van Manen (1999) suggests that pedagogy as based on European traditions (e.g., The Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and Scandinavia) should be characterized more as the art and science of educating children. Therefore, focusing on the relationship between learning and teaching is critical to a deeper understanding of pedagogy and is a serious starting point for considering its meaning in terms of a pedagogy of teacher education.

Developing a pedagogy of teacher education suggests that teaching and learning be purposefully examined, described, articulated and portrayed in ways that will better inform understandings of the complex interplay between the two. In so doing, there is a critical need to recognize what teaching actually entails - beyond the technical rational aspects of "doing teaching" - and that means understanding teaching as being problematic.

Teaching is problematic
Teaching is "a complex and messy terrain, often difficult to [map and] describe" (Berry, 2004a, p. 1312). One difficulty with conceptualizing teaching as being problematic is that, for novices, the messiness, the apparent lack of a clear path, and the reliance on individuals to accept responsibility
for directing their own learning about teaching can be an impediment and create a yearning for a much simpler solution.

Recognizing and building on that which is problematic in practice can be enhanced through noticing (Mason, 2002). An important aspect of noticing is the realization that a situation may not really be seen until it is seen differently, and so noticing is important in helping to see into practice in different ways. However, with so many different things able to be "noticed" in teaching, it can be very difficult to narrow one's focus to just one or two things that might be more easily seen and appreciated, especially for students of teaching.

In a pedagogy of teacher education, teacher educators need to be able to demonstrate that they embrace creativity, experimentation and risk-taking in their practice in ways that shape their learning about pedagogy. Teaching about teaching therefore hinges on supporting students of teaching as they learn to be comfortable with managing the dilemmas, issues and concerns in pedagogic situations and see their teacher educators as doing the same. Students of teaching need to see that there is not necessarily one "right way" of doing teaching and that dealing with uncertainty is part of what it means to understand teaching as being problematic. The following vignette from a teacher education class illustrates one way in which teaching as being problematic might be examined and how such an approach can shape a pedagogy of teacher education.

**Making the problematic explicit**

We were doing the initial 'modeling' of teaching with the class and my role was to do the de-brief in such a way as to bring out as much as possible about the teaching, learning and pedagogical reasoning. I wasn't too concerned as we'd decided to use the same teaching approach as last year - John would do a POE [a teaching procedure - Predict, Observe, Explain] and that usually engaged the students quite well.

As the session progressed, things seemed fine, then for some reason which was not clear to me, a student question led John into some ideas on static electricity.
This certainly didn't happen last year and although it was interesting, I couldn't quite see how it was linked to the air pressure topic he was doing, nor why he was spending so much time on it.

As the session came to an end, I moved into the de-briefing mode. After asking John about his purpose in the session and the manner in which he had conducted it, I asked if there was anything in the session that surprised him. He spoke about the level of student engagement and how the POE seemed to work well but he didn't mention the static electricity bit that had caught my attention.

I thought it was worth the risk, so I said, "Well, what happened with that static electricity bit? You spent ages playing with the balloon, trying to get it to 'stick' to the wall, and I wasn't sure why you got so caught up with that. What was happening there?"

John then explained how at first, he was simply responding to a student's suggestion about static electricity. He said he did not want to be seen to be discounting a 'wrong response' and so took the suggestion seriously and pushed it further. However, at every step, he told us that he felt himself getting further and further away from the 'real' topic and that he couldn't find a way out of his dilemma and back to the task. He said he felt like he just didn't know how to resolve the situation without making the student's idea seem (now) more unrelated, or how to 'force' a way of making a link back to the topic. Eventually he said he just made a joke of his inability to create static electricity and abruptly went back to the air pressure topic. However, in so doing, he felt as though he'd lost the impetus of the session and from then on things were less than satisfactory - from his perspective.

The students all had a lot to say at this point.

Many were surprised that John thought he had made the situation worse than it was. Others didn't think the static electricity was a side-track at all and that things were going 'as intended'. The student who put the static electricity idea forward said she was pleased that her idea had so much impact on the teacher.

As the de-brief came to a close, I drew the class's attention back to the static electricity one more time. I asked what they made of the
examination of the episode and how it might influence their own teaching.

Jacinta said, "Well, what you think you are doing as the teacher is not always what the class think you're doing, and it's good to see that happening with our lecturers because it sure as heck happens to us. I think it's good that we see you struggle in ways just like us. But maybe your experience covers it up so that we just don't see the reality often enough. I liked having a chance to talk about it. It's good to see the thinking behind the teaching that we experience."

(Berry & Loughran, 2004, pp. 17-18)

Opening up teaching in the manner portrayed through the vignette (above) is one concrete way of helping students of teaching begin to appreciate teaching as problematic and in so doing, can free them up to see into their own teaching in new ways.

Seeing our teaching through our students' eyes

There are many ways of seeing our practice through our students' eyes (see for example the work of Brookfield, 1995; Bullough & Gitlin, 2001; Dinkleman, 1999; Hoban, 1997; Nicol, 1997; Northfield & Gunstone, 1997; Peterman, 1997). Because there are numerous implicit messages and intentions in our teaching, it is important that students of teaching have access to our thinking about our teaching so that the intended learning outcomes from our practice have a reasonable chance of being realized.

Through a pedagogy of teacher education, we need to be able to articulate not only what we are doing, but why we are doing it and how we envisage what is being communicated through our practice. For example, consider what the following anecdote suggests about that which was being communicated by a teacher educator.

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1. Anecdotes in this use of the term are a tool developed by Max van Manen (1999) for gaining insights into students' thinking about a situation. Students are asked to think about a critical event in their learning and to construct an anecdote (using simple guidelines) to portray that for others. The anecdotes in this paper have been written by students of teaching.
A lesson on policy

The tutorial room was quiet. Only the professor's voice broke the silence. I had to say something. I disagreed with what he was saying. I spoke up. That's what I thought we were supposed to be learning to do. To be actively engaged in our learning. To question our understanding. We're certainly expected to be doing that with our students in school.

'I don't think that policy has to be about change!' I said, and I gave some examples to support my point of view. With that, others in the class also started to contribute.

'This is what the definition is! Reputed researchers agree!' was his rather forceful response.

Faced with that, what else could I say? He was the expert. He would take it as a personal insult if I again raised issues, so I kept my mouth shut. As the rest of the monologue surged forth, the class returned to its earlier silence. I opened my notebook and wrote furiously, 'I disagree, I disagree.'

We had just been talking about including people in discussions, accepting others' point of view, inclusion, understanding. I don't think that classrooms should be lecture theatres. Teaching is not a one-way process. (Loughran, 1997, pp. 5-6)

It is not difficult to see how seeing our practice through our students' eyes matters in shaping not just our practice but also our students' interpretations of our practice. As the anecdote above suggests, everything we do in teacher education models something about teaching. It is therefore crucial that teacher educators constantly work to understand their practice from perspectives other than that of a teacher alone.

Articulating principles for practice

An important aspect of a pedagogy of teacher education is the ability to articulate the principles that underpin one's practice. An example of articulating principles for practice is illustrated by Kroll (2004, Kroll et al., 2005). With her colleagues, Kroll has purposefully worked to ensure that the teacher education program at Mills College is based on principles that are explicitly used to shape their approach to teaching about teaching. The six principles are:
1. Teaching is a moral act invoking an ethic of care.
2. Teaching is reflective and requires an inquiry stance.
3. Learning is a developmental/constructivist process.
4. Subject matter matters.
5. There is a need to develop strong collegial bonds.
6. Teaching is a political act.

These principles are intended to help students of teaching see into teaching through the ways in which these principles are translated into practice. Articulating principles for practice in this way also suggests that knowledge of practice is being used not only to shape practice but also to inform that which occurs in the way that teaching is planned, conducted and reviewed.

**Learning about teaching: Shaping an identity as a teacher**

Knowing oneself is crucial in coming to understand how one acts in given situations. Consider the following anecdote which demonstrates how this student of teaching came to know herself and therefore her developing identity as a teacher.

Dear Diary,

I had the worst class ever today. Year nine, double Indonesian on a Friday afternoon. The year nines had been on camp so I had no experience of what they were like or capable of! I walked in fairly confident. I had planned this lesson thoroughly as it was my first year nine class and my first ever double. I had created communicative activities: pair work, surveys, everything any beginning teacher would need to engage a bunch of apathetic year nines. I would surely catch their attention and help them see the value of being able to speak another language; as opposed to what I had experienced as a student!

My supervising teacher walked in and the noisy year nines straggled in behind him. I walked to the front of the class and introduced myself.

"Good afternoon, year 9. I am Miss Soultan and I will be teaching you for the next few weeks," I said, sounding like I'd done it all a hundred times before.
Mr. Cool, who reeked of a "couldn't care less attitude" despite needing to have his cap sit "just so" on his head, called out, "Are you a real teacher or a student teacher?"

I tried to ignore his question and carried on with some (pathetic) spiel about how we could all learn from each other and how the next few weeks would just fly.

I then launched into my lesson plan. I introduced myself in Indonesian and then asked each student to do the same. I said we would go around the room and hear something about each student. I emphasised that it didn't matter how simple it was, as long as it was said in Indonesian.

The first student stood up and hesitantly said, "Nama saya Ben. Saya tinggi."

I could hear some of the boys around him saying how stupid they thought all of this was because they already knew each other but I ignored them as I attempted to reward Ben's effort.

"Very good, Ben." I responded.

I was all for positive comments even though I really didn't mean it because I was disappointed with his too simple, "My name is Ben. I'm tall."

I looked along to Josh, the next student. He slowly stood and said, "Nama saya Josh. Saya tinggi."

The class erupted into laughter. Josh was maybe half the size of Ben. My heart was sinking fast as I could feel these year nines slipping away from me.

I battled on, but things got no better. It was hard to get their attention so I waited. I waited a bit longer.

Waiting, waiting, hoping.

I couldn't stand it anymore so I mustered up the angriest face I could and told them all how rude they were and that I would not tolerate calling out and talking over one another.

"Miss, your face is going red," came out of nowhere; but more than likely from under that cap, although they were all starting to look a bit more painful now.

I started sinking ever deeper.
I stormed over to the rubbish bin and threw in the worksheets and surveys I had spent so much time and care preparing, then turned and told them all (well maybe I yelled) to begin copying a large slab of writing from their out-of-date textbook.

I never wanted to be that sort of teacher. But there I was doing boring work, punishing them and making them do irrelevant work that would make them like the subject even less.

What have I become? Why did this have to happen to me?

(Dana) (Loughran, 2006, pp. 110-111)

Dana found herself in a situation that she had not envisaged and she responded in ways that disappointed her and undermined her original teaching purpose. She wanted her students to appreciate a second language and not to experience the type of teaching she had endured as a student. She knew what she did not want to do but it happened anyway. What this anecdote highlights is the need for students of teaching to have real opportunities to learn about themselves and how they react in situations so that they can see into their own teaching with "honest eyes".

By being confronted by this pedagogic situation, Dana felt a sense of dissonance. Through dissonance, she is invited to look again at what she was doing in ways that she might otherwise have overlooked. Hence, she can see the situation from varying perspectives. This sense of dissonance is what is described (Whitehead, 1993) as being a living contradiction. As this anecdote demonstrates, coming to know oneself matters in learning about teaching. I would argue that teaching about teaching based on a genuine pursuit of the development of a pedagogy of teacher education takes this into account and helps students of teaching to be confronted by their own experiences of learning about teaching in ways that more meaningfully shape what they can learn from those experiences. Hence, in teaching about teaching, there is a synergy with learning about teaching that must be encapsulated in a pedagogy of teacher education. But for academics, a notion such as a pedagogy of teacher education can sometimes be a theoretical construct and not a practical response. Hence, enacting a pedagogy of teacher education matters.
Enacting a pedagogy of teacher education: Self-study matters

A pedagogy of teacher education is built on the need to help students of teaching to search for, and respond to, their own problems of practice. However, for this to be the case, they need to consistently see that their teacher educators are doing the same. Therefore, enacting a pedagogy of teacher education (Russell & Loughran, 2007) is closely linked to pursuing understandings of teaching and learning about teaching that are intertwined with an approach to inquiry into practice based on self-study (Berry, 2007; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2004; Hamilton, 2004; Hamilton et al., 1998; Loughran, Hamilton, Laboskey, & Russell, 2004; Russell, 2004).

Self-study has grown out of the fields of reflective practice, action research and practitioner research/inquiry. Despite growing from these roots, self-study is not so easy to define categorically as some of these other fields. As noted above, Whitehead (1993) captures the essence of the reason for embarking on self-study through his notion of being a "living contradiction", i.e., recognizing that what you are doing is not always the same as what you think you are doing.

One difficulty associated with self-study is that the very term suggests an individual approach, yet the involvement of others is really important in self-study so that the learning is not simply a justification of the existing situation. Self-study then must go beyond personal reflections of practice and be a lead-in to methods of purposefully building knowledge of teacher education practices in ways that might resonate with others. Therefore, self-study is focused on practice in ways that can be personally difficult to confront yet exceptionally important and professionally rewarding in learning how to better align teaching intentions with teaching actions.

Teaching and learning about teaching is enhanced through self-study of teacher education practices because it illustrates a fundamental expectation that researching practice is crucial to being better informed about one's practice - and the subsequent student learning. Self-study is one way of learning to develop new insights into practice that matter because they are deeply entrenched in one's own experiences of teaching and learning. In self-study, the notion of 'practice what you preach' matters as it helps to draw attention to the need to model good teaching, but it also goes beyond this. As noted above, the way we teach about teaching always models something about practice, hence self-study reminds us of the importance of involving
students in our inquiries into pedagogy. However, it is important that modeling not be seen as simply encouraging students of teaching to "teach as I teach" but to dig more deeply into the pedagogical experiences created in teacher education so that both the "seen" and the "unseen" aspects of those experiences might be examined. In so doing, they have immediate access to new ways of understanding practice through their own experiences that hopefully better impact their views and judgments of what it means to teach - as opposed to being told what they should have learnt, or what they should have done, or how they should do teaching.

Unpacking practice is one way of seeing into teaching about teaching by highlighting teacher educators' own doubts, perplexities and uncertainties and is an excellent way of coming to understand what self-study really means. By researching practice through self-study, these doubts, perplexities and uncertainties can be brought to the fore to help create real learning through pedagogical experiences. Self-study in this way then is about creating spaces for students of teaching and teacher educators to dissect and discuss their shared experiences of teaching and learning by making their own practice a site for inquiry, examination, critique and learning. If self-study is to be meaningful in shaping a pedagogy of teacher education, then teacher educators must explicitly illustrate how they learn about their own practice. In so doing, they will encourage their students to see that learning about teaching must be embedded in learning from their own experiences of doing teaching, and that is a key to enacting a pedagogy of teacher education. However, self-study should not be seen as an end unto itself. There is a need to extend personal knowledge construction of teaching and learning about teaching in ways that add to the developing knowledge of teacher education practices. What it means to be a teacher educator, what it means to understand teaching as a discipline in its own right, and what the knowledge of teacher education therefore comprises and means are important issues in academia but have largely gone unrecognized and been undervalued. It is therefore important that teacher educators as a group accept responsibility for highlighting the importance and value of their work and do so in ways that demonstrate rigour, scholarship and impact in the learning about teaching of their students.

The essence of being a teacher educator is encapsulated in the skills and ability of making teaching about teaching meaningful and valuable for students of teaching and for oneself. Teacher educators need to help create a
learning environment in which understanding teaching and developing skills as a teacher are seen as ways of becoming more informed about practice - not simply developing routines and scripts "that work". In accepting the challenge of self-study, teacher educators can seriously work at developing their pedagogy of teacher education in ways that are articulable and meaningful to the teacher education practices of others. By doing that, they also demonstrate a scholarship that is critical to shaping knowledge of teacher education practices and the important role of being a teacher educator.

References


