Beyond Parochialism: Preparing Global Educators by enabling them to create and develop their own living educational theories

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I am seeking to raise awareness through my interactions as an educator with practising teachers and their mentors believing that all teachers are potential knowledge creators and that we need to enable development of professional educators who respond appropriately in different contexts in a value laden profession. We are witnessing an increasing move to competence based accountability from the previous focus on developing reflective practitioners. This means that pre-service teachers and their mentors can interact with externally generated educational knowledge, meeting predetermined 'norms', unrestricted to working in narrow parochialism. In this paper, I explore ways to educate knowledge creating professionals, able to excite a sense of wonder-in-learning as they interact with their students.

Currently there is a mismatch between the preparation of teachers and the growing demands of a global marketplace with its social, economic and cultural implications (Halsey, et al. (1997)) In my paper I enquire into how beginning teachers might be enabled to live their values more fully and retain their commitment to the profession. Levels of attrition among beginning teachers are unacceptably high at present. I look at how more experienced teachers as mentors might assist beginning teachers in creating their own educational theories and contributing to educational knowledge about how and why teachers teach as they do. I focus on how I am working with teachers helping them to ask good quality research as they research their own practice. I believe that this is an appropriate basis for improving my own learning.

Perspectives and Theoretical Framework

The preparation of new teachers needs to enable the development of educators who can embody their values in their practice in a way that will lead them to lead lives of enquiry by sustaining an on-going creative commitment to developing their own living educational theories (Whitehead, 2001). In working with practitioners at pre-service and more experienced stages in their career, I pose questions:

How can I assist you as you develop your teaching skills in creative compliance with externally imposed standards of judgement?
How can I help you to identify your own educative values so you can understand when you are denying these values in your practice?
How might I assist you in using your values as standards of judgement for your teaching?
How can I assist you in determining the value and validity of your educational practices?

How might I contribute to developing a global workforce of teachers committed to improving their own practice and their own and their students' learning?
How might I contribute to educational practice that leads to good global social order?'

In the 1970s Hirst and Peters identified the parochialism of education where educators sometimes follow an educational practice that they would not choose because it relates to the moral code of another community or a subculture of their own. He also draws attention to a resistance to 'education' of any description found in some quarters of society because it is not considered valid or valuable as it does not reflect what some consider to be the fund of knowledge that should be transmitted to children.

Dewey (1954) draws our attention to the 'emphasis upon acquisition and possession of enjoyments' and how this utilitarianism being 'incapable of being an adequate representation of the modern spirit'. I am seeking to support beginning teachers so they can come to live their spirituality in a creative engagement with their students. This is not to say that I am using 'spirituality' in the way I would talk about 'religion'. To me spirituality means living a life for the good of humanity, with sensitivity to others and compassion. I believe that teachers should embody universal values in education in their desire to pass not only knowledge from one generation to the next but as a values base that is for the good of a social order.

By recognising the living 'I' with its contradictions (Whitehead, 1989) at the heart of teacher education and using teacher's own values as living standards of practice and judgement (Whitehead, 1999), I seek to enable individual educators to improve their own teaching and their own and their students learning in a life-long way.

But is it possible for a beginning teacher to undertake such a transformatory practice unsupported? Clearly this would be unreasonable (McIntyre, Hagger and Wilkin, 1994) and so I support the idea of school-based mentoring (Fletcher, 1997) as a means of enabling new entrants to the profession to analyse their professional practice in terms of their pedagogical content knowledge, educational values, social contexts and educative influences (Whitehead, 2001).

Mentoring needs to relate to the growing understanding of the centrality of values within teaching (Arthur, Davison and Moss, 1997), (Mullen, 1999) and an ability to transcend destructive forces of power and control that endanger for educational acts (Bernstein, 1996), (Whitehead, 1998). Beginning teachers particularly need to be sensitised the use and abuse of education as political manipulation (Harris, 1979) and their mentors need to support a growth of this awareness by embodying their own values in their work. Teaching is a profession (McIntyre and Hagger, 1996) that determines the value that a society places upon its own future. By supporting teachers trying to live their values more fully I hope to lead to an improvement in the quality of the lives of educators (Hudson and Lambert, 1997) any students with whom they interact.

I believe we have a need, as educators, to enable beginning teachers to undertake self-study enquiries. Research is all too often done *on* teachers rather than *with* them.

Decisions about curriculum and instruction are often made without reference to real problems of classroom life. Teachers are "developed" by outside experts rather than participating in their own development.   Leiberman, A. (2000)

How do I improve my own mentoring?

I don't like being video recorded but I am used to seeing myself on video, the expansive hand movements, the smiling, and the intensity of my gaze. I still don't relish the experience, but I value it, deeply. As I work in my role as a university-based tutor I often turn the camera lens on my own practice with the intention of learning more about how I do what I do and how I might use what I learn as a basis for improvement. I video record my work when I meet trainee teachers and when I meet a new group of school-based mentors because I want them to see that I am prepared to undergo what I will suggest they do. How can I ask another person, be it trainee or mentor, to consider looking at their own practice so they might improve it, if I am not prepared to practice what I am asking?

One of my values, as an educator, is that I should open up possibilities for my own learning as well as for others, wherever I am able to. I believe that teachers are, by the very fact of their engagement with learners, enquirers and learners too. Learning is not something done to others; it is experienced in being alongside them. When I work with mentors I learn as much or more than I teach. They help develop my tutoring skills as I gain insights into their practice and my own. I was a school-based mentor for three years before I became a university lecturer and this was a useful starting point for enabling me to understand what we mentors do – but it was just that, a starting point. I hold a conviction and a passion that as a mentor, I am therefore a researcher. I am involved in a two-way learning situation and I can come to understand what I do and how I can improve by sharing others' experiences and engaging in an on-going dialogue.

How do I try to assist other mentors in improving their own practice?

When we start working together, we explore what it means to mentor by looking for shared understandings. As I work with mentors I begin to share my understandings of what it is for me to engage in action research. I explain and I story what it is that I do. I try to assist mentors in identifying a focus for improvement and we brainstorm possible strategies. Starting from a very simple question such as, "How do I improve my practice as a mentor?" I gradually draw out the learning processes that I have learned alongside Jack Whitehead while we have engaged in dialogue, sharing exploration of our work as tutors.

Sometimes I show a video of one of my trainees articulating her account of how she has used action research to improve a small aspect of her work. I want to communicate that in mentoring we learn with one another. We cannot do the learning 'to' another person. I often put forward the suggestion that most of the research about mentoring has been undertaken by researchers who have never been mentors. How much richer our shared

understanding of mentoring would be if we learned from one another as we mentor! I explain that I wrote my book on mentoring because it was the book I needed and which did not exist. I needed to externalise what I was learning as I tutored and mentored and tentatively put my learning forward as a basis with the intention that I and others would learn more through reading what I had written. My own definition of mentoring is not a definitive statement of what mentoring can and should be but a 'coming to understand.'

> Mentoring means guiding and supporting trainees to ease them through difficult transitions: it is about smoothing the way, enabling and reassuring as well as directing, managing and instructing. Mentoring is concerned with continuing personal as well as professional development (CPPD) and not just professional development. In the process, personal and professional values come under scrutiny and are subject to change. Fletcher, S. (2000b) Mentoring in Schools: A Handbook of Good Practice,

How do I integrate mentoring and action research?

I began my experiment in integrating action research and mentoring in ITT after the Easter vacation in 2000. I was inspired by seeing experienced teachers undertaking such high quality enquiries for accredited programmes at the University of Bath, especially those relating to the unit Portfolio Assessment that I began to wonder if action enquiry might not usefully be introduced into the PGCE year. As I visited the trainees in their school placements and in our frequent e-mail communications, we explored together what it meant to research our own practice. The group watched me as I studied my own work as a tutor and I used digital video to record my work with them as I travelled out to see them teaching in placement schools. By the final week of term they would be expected as individuals to give account of their progress and how they used action research approaches to improve. I agreed that some trainees would not be videoed during my school visits as I believe it is vital to video only those who believe that a multi-media representation will help them. By the final session of our PGCE course every one of my trainees was happy to be video recorded as they made their presentations to one another.

I asked my trainee teachers at the end of last year how they viewed the introduction of action research approaches to help them to improve their teaching and they were generally full of praise for the process. Some concerns were expressed by some about calling it 'research' when I explained that I was planning to introduce it earlier next time.

> It's important that the techniques of action research are only made explicit when novice teachers have reached a certain stage of competence and confidence in their own abilities as teachers. Teachers and novice teachers will see the benefits of action research in practice in their classroom. There are only positive results, as whether you reach a 'solution' or not you gain a deeper understanding of your values as an educator. A.J

How do I try to help my trainee teachers to improve their practice?

I try to assist my trainees in improving their teaching and their own and their students' learning by modelling and by inviting them to participate in action research enquiries. As they ask themselves questions about their practice of teaching, I often encourage them to celebrate what they see they do well as well as to share areas of concern they may have.

Typically, the areas of concern arise from feedback from their mentors or from me, as a visiting tutor who observes an occasional lesson that we then discuss. One of the ways I think I help my trainees to improve is to show them how they are progressing through video as well as telling them what I see in a series of written reports. I reference the video timings to the written feedback, so for example, I might write:

> *Standard B3 for QTS see timing 02.43-03.49 I really like the way worked with M. to see how she could use the feedback you gave her on her course work to improve her writing.*

Do I have any evidence that I have helped anyone to improve teaching?

In my work with mentors and with our trainee teachers, I insist that any claims to know or to have improved must be supported with appropriate evidence. Thus any claim and supporting evidence has to be offered for public validation by trainees and by mentors. One of my favourite pieces of evidence about my influence as an educator upon the professional development of a trainee teacher comprises a sequence of video clips. Effectively he has a video diary that enables him to analyse and reflect upon his professional development as a teacher. His praise of using video was fulsome and he soon began to us it in his lessons to assist his students in learning a foreign language. Helping beginning teachers to compile video diaries within portfolios for QTS is a way of preparing teachers for a profession where they must be accountable for their own work.

> My view of myself has changed through all those teaching experiences and over this course. The video you made was so useful. I know people told me to slow down but you need to see it to really believe it. I think I'm right to insist on target language in Spanish. I realise now they need time to absorb it. And time to work in pairs, groups ands on their own. Since seeing myself I have unconsciously slowed down. Teachers have commented on this since the video. I wish I had been videoed sooner. I'd like to be videoed again. A.J.

What issues arise from my work as I integrate action research and mentoring?

I believe that using an action research approach to enquiry within the ITT provision afforded by the PGCE course at Bath University enables me to get a holistic view of trainees' professional development. I fully endorse the views expressed by Pachler and Field in the Language Learning Journal, Summer 2001, No. 23.

> a narrow skills-based approach to learning to teach is at best misguided and at worst counter-productive in that it does not do justice to the complex web of 'knowledges', skills and understanding characterising excellence in teaching and teachers.

I believe that I am able to assist them on an individual basis as they seek to improve their own teaching and learning. I think help them to define and refine their professional values and this will become an increasingly central focus with the introduction of the TTA's revisions to 4/98 in September 2002. In these revised Standards for QTS we can rightfully locate Professional Values and Practice at the heart of ITT/CPD requirements. We need to move towards assisting the development of a new generation of teachers who can sustain commitment through retaining engagement with their professional values.

I believe that integrating action research and mentoring is one creative way of doing this. As I assist trainees through creative compliance with externally imposed standards for QTS, they are defining their own values to become internalised standards of judgement.

Methods, techniques and modes of enquiry

Using the present Standards for Qualified Teacher Status as a starting point, I am enquiring with pre-service teachers, mentors and experienced teachers into how governmental Standards can become a basis to enable them to develop their own values as standards of judgement and educational theories.
I am teaching beginning teachers, their mentors and other teachers in school how to use digital video and as I do so, I how I am interacting with pre-service and mentors as they undertake enquiries into how teachers do their work (Fletcher, 2000a) and (Whitehead, 2001). I am seeking to embody educative values that I hope the next generation of teachers might enact (Fletcher, 1997). As well as being a mentor engaged in educative mentoring relationships, I have been mentored by others as we sought to develop ourselves as educators (Fletcher, 1997).

I have kept reflective logs on my mentoring in the form of text and multi-media representations. I am striving to develop myself as a reflective tutor developing partnerships with other educators (Frost, 1996) As I examine our own experience of dealing with professional problems, particularly where I do not live values I aspire to, I am seeking ways of adding value to the profession to which I belong (Maynard, 1996). I am trying to enable myself and other teachers to become more than just knowledge purveyors but more educators who will excite and sustain a sense of wonder in their students as they support their learning. In trying to understand my own influence as a tutor I am trying to become more aware of how I am empowering or restricting educational growth among beginning and their more experienced mentors.

I look at some of the implications of preparing global educators rather than teachers equipped to work in a particular context. I explore what it might be to encourage beginning teachers to learn to enquire into the social, economic and cultural influences that might presently constrain their professionalism. There is a growing understanding in schools that students have different intelligences and that different teaching strategies are more likely to enable them to learn (McNiff, 2000). How much understanding is there, as yet, that beginning teachers have different levels of 'educative intelligence' that mentoring needs to afford different opportunities if the are to actualise as global educators prepared to improve their own work? Mentoring, at its best, is participating in life growing (Fletcher, 2000b) in an open and dialogical way that encourages the pre-service teacher and mentors to work together in asking and answering 'How do I improve?' By engaging in action research approaches to improving practice which focus on the 'I' as a living educator, teachers are able to remain in touch with the educative values that can sustain them.

While it is commendable for any teacher to engage in enquiry, an individual's claims to have improved their practice must remain suspect unless opened to validation processes

by other educators. I, like others, (Whitehead, 1998) provide web-based resources for pre-service teachers and mentors to use as an inspirational resource for understanding how they might undertake enquiries as they strive to improve their practice.

Data Sources and Evidence

I explore ways, which include using digital video and visualisation, in which a new generation of teachers might understand how their own values influence their practice and how this practice can be transformed and enhanced by asking questions of the kind, 'How far am I living my values as an educator?' and 'How am I helping students to learn?' Such questions are not context bound since they transcend boundaries imposed by economic, social and political structures in a way that is universal.

In September 2001 when I met my new group of pre-service teachers for the first time, I started out by asking them to share the values that they were holding as they prepared to teach. A month later the values had changed somewhat but were fundamentally the same after four weeks in secondary schools. There was an obvious refinement - a precision in saying This is what I am aiming at as subsequent discussions about professional values arose over the course of the next two months. After a term of teaching and just before the pre-service teachers were applying for teaching posts I asked them to give an account of how they saw themselves as teachers and what beneficial attributes they considered they were bringing to the classroom. I had never tried this approach before although I have been working with beginning teachers for many years now. I was piloting how my group and I might work with the revised Standards for Qualified Teacher Status which are being introduced by the Teacher Training Agency in September 2002. I knew that the timescale for introducing major changes would be characteristically short and decided to try and get ahead of the onslaught by using a creative approach to meeting these imposed standards of judgement. What I was aiming at was creative compliance with the Teacher Training Agency's (2001) regulations in a way that enabled pre-service teachers to develop professional values while meeting the list of specified competence statements.

Teacher Training Agency. Standards for Qualified Teacher Status
Section One: Professional Values and Practice

1.1   They have high expectations of all pupils; respect their social, cultural, Linguistic and religious and ethnic backgrounds and are committed to raising their educational achievement.
1.2   They treat pupils consistently, with respect and consideration and are concerned for their development as learners
1.3   They demonstrate and promote the positive values, attitudes and behaviour they expect from their pupils.
1.4   They can communicate sensitively and effectively with parents and carers recognising their roles in pupils' learning and their rights, responsibilities and interests in this.
1.5   They can contribute to and share responsibly in the corporate life of schools.
1.6   They understand the contribution that support staff and other professionals make to teaching and learning.
1.7   They are able to improve their own teaching, by evaluating it, learning from the effective practice of others and from evidence. They re motivated and able to take increasing responsibility for their own professional development.

1.8   They are aware of and work within the statutory frameworks relating to teachers' responsibilities.

I was struck by an excitement at first sight of these statements and simultaneously with a sense of determination to raise them above rhetoric and to enable pre-service teachers to embody not just aspire to these statements of values. How mighty I do this? That was the challenge. I decided to work alongside my group and ask them how we might see them embodying these values and the ones that they had passionately expressed as their own over the first few months of the course. When I carried out schools visits to see individuals in action I took the video camera with me and most of the group invited me to record their teaching in the classroom. I liked my feedback on what O saw to timings on the video and statements of the values I saw embodied and I made a video copy of the lesson for the novice to reflect on in their own time and t share with their mentors as a basis for identifying what was going well and what needed attention. Later I invited the individuals who had been video recorded to select a two-minute clip, no more, of that part of the lesson where they could see themselves living out their professional values. The session was stunning. I was enthralled by the sheer excitement that these pre-service teachers radiated as they showed the rest of the group how they saw themselves as educators embodying the values they had owned in previous discussion times. The most important step I think we made together was in relation to statement 1.7 in the list above. Here the novices were identifying for themselves how they might improve their teaching and celebrating where they saw themselves being the teachers they wanted to be. They were taking responsibility for their own professional development and were certainly motivated. What came through was their readiness to seek validation from the rest of the group too me with questions like 'Do you see me doing that too?'

I stress that I am exploring ways of enabling pre-service teachers to comply creatively with imposed government standards at the same time as they develop and refine professional values they aspire to. I am offering my way of working as a possible and partial solution to the challenge of reaching holistic assessments of teaching in action because I believe that since teaching is interaction should be assessed through a medium that enables this action to be appreciated. This is why I am turning to video so the novices and I can work with one another as we ask How can we work together better? I think it is important for the novice to identify within their teaching where they are being the changes they want to see (as Ghandi said). I want to move the m away from relying on me or on their mentor to tell them when they are meeting a particular competence in a bank of statements that 'dissect' teaching.

By the end of the year it is likely that my group will have created video diaries of their progress over the 36 week course and I am encouraging them to use these as part of the portfolio they compile to evidence their progress towards Qualified Teacher Status. What I am encouraging them to do is to see enquiry as fundamental to teaching and not a bolt on extra. I want them to create their own 'living'; theories of what amounts t good teaching rather then waiting for someone else to dictate this to them. By encouraging them to seek validation for any claims to be improving among their group I think we are moving some way to enabling autonomy and a sense of professional responsibility for development.

Multi-media forms of representation are enabling us to see the interplay of our values as we engage in a practice of education in a way that text alone cannot do. The evidence that in using digital video and visualisation I am helping teachers to come to understand and to improve their own practice is drawn from their own accounts of their learning and their teaching within this one year post graduate course.

Results, conclusions and points of view

As our beginning teachers struggle to provide text-based evidence of their progress against externally specified criteria they often lose the vitality of engagement with their values that brought them into teaching in the first place.   By engaging creatively in meeting standards of competence through action research beginning teachers can see teaching as an enquiry based profession with no 'fix-alls' and where 'tips for teachers' is not 'the' definitive answer for improving teaching and learning processes. The feedback from the first cohort of PGCE novice teachers with whom I developed an action research approach to meeting competences, is encouraging. I enclose two exemplars in evidence.

Mentoring can be a closed or an open, a restricting or an empowering means of working with fellow educators. By opening up enquiries and asking questions rather than providing 'tips for teachers' I think we have an opportunity to engage with some predetermined content of mentoring by merely passing on 'the particular strategies' that are effective (Tomlinson, 1995) in working with students. By engaging in an open dialectic between my own and the practice of others as we undertake enquiries into our own practice, we can assist new teachers to learn through their own teaching (Tomlinson). Learning how to teach does not mean just meeting levels of competence in statements predetermined by a government agency. Learning how to teach means growing and taking responsibility for the 'I' in teaching, by systematically enquiring into how to improve one's own practice as an educator (Whitehead, 2000) and by engaging with educational research from the basis of one's own practice (Whitehead, 2001). Learning how to mentor comes from enquiring into one's own practice, engaging with educational research in a dialectical way (www.MentorResearch.net and www.actionresearch.net) in seeking to improve. What I claim we are moving towards is a greater professionalism and by this I mean that as gatekeepers to our children's eduvcation we are ensuring the on-going learning by teachers as they work with their pupils in the classroom in ways that support education for good social order. Education for good arises, I believe when teachers are in touch with their professional values and bring a vitality as well as an 'alongsidedness' as Robyn Pound in the research group I participate in terms it. By this she is describing an intention to be focusing with others on enquiry as a way of engaging in life.

Over the past two years I have been increasingly involved in working in an international dimension among teachers who are at the start of their careers or have been seasoned by years of teaching. What they share it seems to me is a need to keep in touch with power and passion of teaching. They need to nurture within them the essence of why it is they

came into teaching in the first place and to claim a creative space to grow despite the onslaught of regulations, competence statements and administration.

One of my most memorable learning experiences was in Kobe, Japan in December 2001. Mrs. Nagasaka was working with a group of about thirty students aged 13-14. Some had marked behavioural problems and others were showing difficulties in learning. I was humbled to hear that this was a result of the devastating earthquake in the city seven years earlier. What stands out in my mind was how Mrs Nagasaka drew her class around her at the end of the day and said Now let's discuss how far my teaching has enabled you to learn today. And she listened and so did they as she explained how she would improve. This was the side of a contract to learn I have rarely seen in classrooms anywhere. It followed a lesson where each child was displaying work from the previous day and saying how he or she would try and improve it in this new lesson. The members of the class were active in encouraging this. At the end of the lesson each child explained how far they thought they had improved and the group acted as validators. There was a power to teach. There was a lesson in learning … to share!

Mine is a giving power
All that I know
about the world
and about how
one learns
about the world
I must give

And in the giving
of my gift
I receive
my greatest power
The Power to teach
My students
To learn how to learn

<u>(taken from a poster bought during my last visit to AERA in New Orleans)</u>

I think that as teacher educators we share a duty to prepare pre-service teachers to take increasing responsibility for their own professional development as teacher-researchers seeking to live out their professional values fully and not just to aspire to them. I want them to recognise their own strengths and areas that need improvement as they work alongside their mentors and their pupils as validators. It is theories that beginning teachers create that can enliven the classroom and revitalise their mentors as they reveal new ways of bringing about improved teaching and learning and embodying their values.