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RESEARCH AND RECONSTRUCTION IN TEACHER EDUCATION - EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

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In 1983 this Journal published a paper outlining a model of teacher development (Fielding, 1983). The model employed concepts drawn from Personal Construct Psychology (Kelly, 1955). Kellyian concepts were chosen because it was thought they affirmed the model's basic assumption that human experience may be and frequently is both non-deterministic in character and non-functionalist in its outcomes for individuals.

By this was meant that individuals may construe their experience in such a way that they are lead to the conclusion they have a measure of control over their present and future development as persons; that therefore, the universe of experience is relatively indeterministic, and, as a corollary to this, that individuals create, acquire and employ a repertoire of roles which is unique for each individual and which is established, at least in part by individuals acting autonomously and self-selectively. These ideas were embodied in the description of the model, first, to provide the basis of a new understanding of the processes of learning how to teach and becoming a teacher in societies such as we have in Australia, and, secondly, to provide a conceptual framework for the task of curricular reconstruction in teacher education.

In the same issue of the Journal (A.J.T.E., Vol.8, No.2, 1983), six critical reactions to the Fielding Model were published, three written by British and three by Australian teacher educators.

Each of the papers raised issues not dealt with by Fielding and each was able to identify weaknesses in the model as it then stood.

This is to be expected, indeed hoped for.

No model can hope to deal exhaustively with the complex realities of experience even in simple social environments. Fielding's Model must be seen therefore for what it was - a primitive attempt to portray some of the pertinent features of the teacher development experience. Whether the model has done this is not yet clear. What can be claimed however is that

the model has proved sufficiently robust to have retained some currency over a period of several years. For this reason, the Editors of this Journal have agreed to provide space for additional commentaries which relate either directly or indirectly to the substantive content of the Fielding Model.

In the first of his two papers, McQualter takes on the task of extending the Fielding Model by analysing and describing its relationships with details of Kellyian theory and method. McQualter's paper is important for it begins to formulate the means of putting the model under critical, objective scrutiny; that is, to determine;

- (a) the model's relevance to practice,
- (b) the model's capacity to stand up to empirical enquiry, and,
- (c) the model's power to generate hypotheses and knowledge about teachers and their teaching.

In doing this, McQualter takes up suggestions made by Shaw (1983), thus setting the stage for the kind of research effort necessary if models such as this are ultimately to have any serious impact on practice.

In his second paper, McQualter provides a detailed analysis of the content of Kellyian theory and method. His intention is to relate the substantive content of Personal Construct Theory to the experimental study of teaching and teacher development. The analysis is included in the collection since it is clear that the scope of the research effort needed to test Fielding's and similar models is vast and that, therefore, it is necessary to encourage other colleagues to consider if Personal Construct Theory and Method might be pertinent to their own related enquiries.

The remaining four papers examine a number of different contexts within which the Fielding Model must operate if it is to be translated into curricular practice. Symes's paper deals with the changing patterns of teaching. He argues that no one formula of teaching exists any longer. Rather the whole methodology of teaching has become multi-dimensional. Recent policy initiatives and developments in pedagogic theory have nurtured new styles of teaching, different in orientation and preoccupation from those which have existed previously. Symes delineates the character of traditional teaching, notes its preoccupation with epistemological experience and contrasts such teaching with new styles which appear to stress ontological and societal concerns. Symes also indicates that the new teaching styles have resulted in different approaches to curriculum and classroom knowledge. The classic approach to learning, which stressed a curriculum grounded in the cultural inheritance, is gradually being overturned. The essentialist curriculum is being replaced by a phenomenological one, one

based on negotiation with pupils. At the same time, concludes Symes, the meritocratic influence of education is being mollified as more thought is being given to styling education so as to attain greater participation. Symes' paper thus provides a rich source of new assumptions about the changing role of the teacher, in particular, the assumption that the contemporary teacher more than ever needs a rich diversity of role attributes together with the capacity to extend that diversity through time in order to keep pace with changing social expectations and not least of all with the growing penetration of educational practice by computer technology.

In the next paper, Cavanagh extends his previous analysis of the Fielding model in which he employed the notion of "paradigm shift" as a means of analysing a number of the ingredients of the model (Cavanagh, 1983). Cavanagh assesses those historical antecedents which he believes diverted teacher education in N.S.W. into a condition of permanent curricular failure. Cavanagh believes that the way out of this failure is to seek an effective paradigm shift in the methodology employed in curriculum research.

Cavanagh's suggestions complement those of McQualter by stressing the curricular environment as distinct from the personal one.

The paper by Shaw is an attempt to understand Fielding's Model in the context of the professional career in a state bureaucracy. Shaw's position is that Fielding emphasises a distinct view of professionalism, one which is concerned with how individuals cope with experiences of life in teaching, integrate them into more complex roles, and extend these roles so as to bring about progressive personality development.

Shaw attempts to extend this view by arguing that the development of this professionalism is mediated by how people's life projects encounter social constraints and are moulded by them. Shaw thus provides a necessary contrast to the individualistic approach given emphasis in the Fielding model.

Quite correctly, Shaw points out that development is both individually inspired - the professionalism theme - and socially modified - the theme of professional status. An important implication of this for the Fielding Model is that for the model to achieve implementation it must somehow account for the group-dependency factor in personal development.

In the concluding paper, McNamara provides an account of the far-reaching consequences of recent policy initiatives by the British Government in respect of the accreditation of teacher education courses in England and Wales. As well as being informative, McNamara's analysis points to another influence on teacher education, always lurking in the background, which

is that of political interest in the affairs of educational institutions. Clearly, strong institutional autonomy is a necessary requirement to any effective implementation of a curriculum for teachers which stresses personal development. McNamara's discussion provides important illustrations of how Government, whether by design or default, can erode institutional autonomy in its zeal to have a hand in the process of curriculum development in universities and colleges.

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Teacher Knowledge Part 1: Unstopping the Dam

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Research on teachers and their teaching aims at understanding what it means to teach. Such research is conducted in a variety of ways. Major users of its findings are teacher educators. It is hoped that the research findings will provide a knowledge base for teacher education programmes often characterised as being more whimsical than rational. There are two basic views of the process of becoming a teacher: "master the model" or "model the master" (Stones, 1972). Both views stress institutional conformity, draw upon institutionalised knowledge and aim at developing technical skill rather than professional competency. The intention of this paper is to suggest a theory, and accompanying methodology, which could be used to explore and develop a model of teacher development more in keeping with institutional and personal freedom: to explore the process of "becoming a teacher" as proposed by Fielding (1983).

The methodology was used in a series of studies on becoming a mathematics teacher between 1981 and 1983. (McQualter and Warren, 1984). It is based on Personal Construct Theory (PCT) (Kelly, 1955), and uses repertory grid (rep grid) preparation and analysis. After conducting the Newcastle studies and surveying other studies it was felt that PCT procedures would be very useful in studying teachers and their teaching, especially the process of becoming a teacher.

It was also felt that further work should not proceed unless it had a model of teacher development to provide a guide for extending Kelly's theory and accompanying rep grid procedures to the phenomenological world of teachers and their teaching. Such a model has now been provided (Fielding, 1983).

This model was developed to overcome the unease about, and often major theoretical objections to, teacher education programmes in operation in the 1970s (see for example Fuller and Bown, 1975; Hogben, 1982; Stones, 1984; Travers and Dillon, 1975). It provides for institutional freedom for those becoming teachers to make personal, autonomous selective responses to the task of understanding and mastering the complex of knowledge, skills