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Learning to Teach, Teaching to Learn

William Louden
Edith Cowan University

accept an intern teacher. The arrangements for discontinuance or transfer are sensitive since the student has the right to guaranteed conditions under which the subject requirements can be met and the school has the right to expect teacher behaviour consistent with that of an employed first year out teacher.

The University has decided that whenever problems arise abrupt termination or transfer of the intern would not be consistent with the year two objectives of the course. Collaborative solutions of problems is written into the course. If the student is likely to be disadvantaged by the decision to transfer the University must take steps to renegotiate a place in the same or another school. The normal University processes of academic appeal apply. The alternative semester two internship strand also provides a safety net for those students disadvantaged by circumstances rather than their own failure in semester one.

There is no doubt that the internship concept challenges the relatively secure arrangements for experience in schools developed in teacher education courses since the 1970's. Effectively schools are offered the opportunity to determine the criteria for selection of students into a Bachelor of Teaching subject and the major contribution to an assessment which is framed to be an indicator of the profession's statement about quality and control of entry.

In this brief overview it is not possible to discuss the proposed resolution of the inherent tension between the credibility of the school as a site for credentialling the intending teacher and the obligation of the University for the conduct of a subject and the assessment of the students. The arrangements in the Bachelor of Teaching recognise the professional responsibilities of all participants. Since employment in the next year is not guaranteed by schools or the Directorate of School Education, and the intern teacher is not paid salary, agreement on the arrangements was not difficult to effect.

The propensity of school based teacher education to replicate practice without critical reflection is well documented. The Bachelor of Teaching degree recognises that intensive induction teaching may be vulnerable to this conservative and constricting influence. The solution in the course lies in the careful choice of schools and mentor teachers, the assessment requirements of the Internship subject which include seminar presentation and written evaluations of school

and classroom and the assessment of the school based research project. Research and evaluation can be guided towards change and innovation. Since University staff and students are part of a team with a broader experience than that of the intern teacher or school community, it would be expected that their continued involvement in year two of the course would challenge any potential conserving influence.

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LEARNING TO TEACH AND TEACHING TO LEARN

William Louden
Edith Cowan University

Clandinin, D., Davies, A, Hogan, P and Kennard, B. (1993)(Eds). *Learning to teach, teaching to learn*. New York: Teachers College Press. 238 pages.

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The dangers of conventional teacher education programs are well known: collisions between university-based theory and school-based practice, hit-and-run supervision by university staff who have no other connection with the student's development as a teacher, and sink-or-swim supervision by cooperating teachers who are unwilling (or unable) to help students bridge the gaps in their knowledge. As this edition of *The Australian Journal of Teacher Education* shows, there is no shortage of interest in school-based alternatives which attempt to provide a more integrated introduction to the craft of teaching. I was a student in one in the mid-Seventies, and am now teaching in a similar alternative program. Like the alternative program from which I learned so much as a student, most of these experiments in teacher education live and die on the energy of a few university staff. Few alternative programs seem to have been sustained over the years; even fewer are the subject of serious book-length evaluations. These two books, both called *Learning to teach: Teaching to learn*, provide detailed accounts of alternative teacher education programs conducted half a world and almost 20 years apart. Considering the gaps of space, time and context, the similarities between the two programs are striking.

Gwyneth Dow's *Learning to teach: Teaching to learn* (1979) shows that current criticisms of university-based teacher education have a long history. The book describes her own response to these criticisms in the context of an experimental one-year post-graduate program conducted at the University of Melbourne. Called Course B, the program began in 1973 and was designed to provide prospective secondary teachers with an experience that blended theory and practice. Course B was based on three key assumptions. The first of these assumptions was that for each student, the problem of becoming a teacher was a very personal matter. In order to discover an appropriate teaching style, each student first had to answer the questions "Who am I?" and "How do others, especially children, see me?" The second assumption was that the best time for tackling theoretical questions was when they

arose in actual teaching. The third assumption was that students would benefit more from learning to think for themselves than from learning "tips for teachers". For this reason, the course team resolved that students should have as much experience as possible in thinking and acting autonomously in their training year.

For most of the academic year, Course B students spent Mondays and Tuesdays in two long Methods seminars at the university. Wednesdays and Thursdays were spent in a school. On Friday mornings students were involved in a program called Curriculum Studies which replaced separate foundations courses in psychology, philosophy and sociology with an integrated and problem-centred program which was sometimes conducted at the university and sometimes conducted in schools. Through the Methods courses and Curriculum Studies, the small group of university staff attached to Course B worked hard to build bridges between students' personal and professional concerns in becoming a teacher. In order to narrow the gap between students' school and university experiences, the program made some joint appointments of staff to schools and the university.

Twenty years after many of the events described in the book, some of the material inevitably feels dated. I remember being as excited about Freire, Illich, Holt and Kohl as Dow's students were, but their concerns about freedom and authority seem to have been replaced by Nineties issues such as quality and accountability. The freshest and most enduring aspect of the book is the student-teachers' voices, quoted extensively from their diaries. Their concerns are the perennial concerns of young people making the transition from student to teacher: autonomy, authority, how to present themselves to children, and how to talk and listen to children. Viewed close-up, with Dow's generous attention to the students' perspectives, it is clear how personal and risky is the process of becoming a teacher. As Dow says, "A course of teacher training, whether it is aware of it or not, puts the novice teacher at risk; but the more it bases the learning on experiences and the

more responsibility it throws on students for learning in action, the greater the risk." (1979, p.115).

Many of the issues and strategies documented in Dow's account are echoed in the alternative teacher education program described by Clandinin, Davies, Hogan, Kennard and the other contributors to *Learning to teach, teaching to learn* (1993). Clandinin and her colleagues identify five themes that shaped the program they offered to a group of 28 final year primary teacher education students in Calgary in 1989-90. They saw teacher education as part of "the ongoing writing of student teachers' lives, not a separate preparation for something disconnected from what came before and a readying for what is to come after" (p.11). They questioned the conventional separation of theory and practice, and preferred an image of theory and practice as dialectically related. Central to their project was an emphasis on collaboration; on academics, collaborating teachers and student teachers learning to listen to each other in order to make a new sense of their teaching practice. The fourth theme was a search for language that would help the participants to talk about the ways each of them made sense of themselves as teachers and as people. Finally, the program was built on a theme of improvisation. Rather than lock down all of the details of the program in advance, the participants tried to remain open to the improvisations necessary as participants "tried to figure out what it meant to learn to live a new story" (p.12).

The practical details of the program are not very different from Dow's alternative program, involving eight months of part-time school experience. Mondays, Fridays and Wednesday mornings were spent in cooperating teachers' classrooms, Tuesday and Thursday mornings were spent in methods courses at the university, and Wednesday afternoons were spent in small group seminars conducted in the schools. Central to the program and the book, however, is an understanding of the relationship between stories and lives which will be familiar to readers of Clandinin's other work, and her work with Michael Connolly. Through the stories they tell, people "refigure the past and create purpose in the future" (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990, p.4). In the alternative teacher education program, this commitment to telling and retelling stories is reflected in the extensive "dialogue journals" written by all participants and shared within each of the student-teacher-academic triads in the program. Most of the contributions to the 1993 *Learning to teach, teaching to learn* involve

students', teachers' or academics' reworkings of material originally recorded in their dialogue journals.

As is so often the case in edited collections, there is some unevenness in the 1993 *Learning to teach, teaching to learn*. Perhaps this is exacerbated in a volume which relies so much on the quality of the story-telling. Some people just seem to write in a more engaging way than others. I particularly admired Kathryn Cope's chapter on the early writing development of one of her Year 1 students, Wally. This piece shows more understanding of young children's language than many more experienced teachers' and writers' accounts of developmental progress. What holds the volume together, however, is a tonal unity which flows from the central place of stories in the project and in the book. The individual voices of the student teachers and the collaborating teachers are strong, clear and engaging. So too, are the voices of the university teachers, but they do not mute or misappropriate the voices of their school teacher colleagues as the academics attend to their legitimate theoretical concerns. All the contributors to this book write with enthusiasm for teachers' learning and a sense of the unfinished-ness of every teacher's learning about teaching. Clandinin and her colleagues' *Learning to teach, teaching to learn* is a fine book which reaffirms my faith that classroom practitioners can make a powerful and special contribution to student teachers' learning, and that university teachers and school teachers can learn a great deal about their own teaching from sharing the task of helping students learn to teach.

The 1993 and the 1979 accounts of the problem of learning to teach are both worth reading, and are worth reading together. Dow's volume has more to say about how to organise a more personal, practical, collegial and reflective teacher education program. Contemporary teacher educators might well want to begin their own alternative programs with the structures and learning patterns of Course B. Clandinin and her colleagues' volume has more to say about what it is like to participate in such a program. In this, the 1993 book benefits from Clandinin's more subtle understanding of the relationship between language and experience, and from changes in the conventions of academic discourse. Freed from the tight quote-quote-summarise style of academic discourse which constrains the 1979 book, the 1993 book allows readers to engage more fully and directly with participants' own accounts of the expedience.

The similarities between the two volumes called *Learning to teach: Teaching to learn*, as I said, are striking. Both of the programs involved university teachers, cooperating teachers and student teachers collaborating in small teams; both programs made extensive use of reflective journals as a medium for learning; both programs spread the practicum experience across a whole academic year, and both programs made strenuous efforts to overcome the artificial gap between theory and practice in teacher education. Both programs began with the assumption that, because we teach what we are, teacher education must begin with the person. Some of the difficulties reported in the two books are similar, too. Both programs struggled to develop and maintain the collaborative relationships between school and university staff. They found that school-based teacher education requires more than extending the practicum or shifting the theory courses to a school staffroom. In order for the programs to be successful, school and university staff had to learn new roles through collaboration. In Clandinin's words, school and university teachers both needed to learn "living in the middle ground" (p. 211). University staff need to learn to moderate their preference for imposing expert solutions; collaborating teachers need to abandon their tradition of seeing supervision of students as a favour to the university. What both of these books make clear in their different ways, is that school-based teacher education provides school and university teachers with the opportunity to continue to learn about teaching while they teach about teaching.

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