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In-service Initial Teacher Education in the Learning and Skills Sector in England: Integrating Course and Workplace Learning

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Abstract

The aim of the paper is to advance understanding of in-service learning and skills sector trainee teachers' learning and propose ways of improving their learning. A conceptual framework is developed by extending Billett's (2008) conceptualisation of workplace learning, as a relationally interdependent process between the opportunities workplaces afford for activities and interactions, and how individuals engage with these, to a third base of participation, the affordances of the initial teacher education course. Hager and Hodkinson's (2009) metaphor of 'learning as becoming' is used to conceptualise the ways trainees reconstruct learning in a continuous transactional process of boundary crossing between course and workplace. The findings of six longitudinal case studies of trainees' development, and evidence from other studies, illustrate the complex interrelationships between LSS workplace affordances, course affordances and trainee characteristics and the ways in which trainees reconstruct learning in each setting. The experience of teaching and interacting with learners, interactions colleagues, and access to workplace resources and training are important workplace affordances for learning. However, some trainees have limited access to these affordances. Teaching observations, course activities, and experiences as a learner are significant course affordances. Trainees' beliefs, prior experiences and dispositions vary and significantly influence their engagement with course and workplace affordances. It is proposed that better integration of course and workplace learning, through guided participation in an intentional workplace curriculum and attention to the ways trainees choose to engage with this, together with the use of practical theorising has the potential to improve trainee learning.

Keywords: workplace learning, initial teacher education; learning and skills, further education

Introduction

The learning and skills sector (LSS) in England comprises further education colleges, sixth form colleges, personal and community development learning, work based training and learning in other adult settings, such as prisons and the uniformed services. The majority of LSS teachers[1] enter the sector as a second career to teach a subject related to their prior vocational experience and undertake initial teacher education (ITE) on a part-time in-service basis, alongside their teaching work. Their professional formation is therefore crucially influenced by both their participation in ITE and their workplace experience. In most ITE programmes course and workplace learning are loosely coupled, and responsibility for integrating the two rests with the trainee. Reflection, which is central to most LSS ITE programmes, is seen to be the means by which trainees learn from workplace experience and apply the principles and theories, introduced in their ITE course, to practice. However, LSS trainees often struggle to integrate theory and practice (Harkin, Clow & Hillier, 2003). A national inspection survey of LSS ITE (Ofsted, 2003) highlighted issues with trainees' workplace experience and the lack of integration of course and workplace learning. This led to reforms (DfES, 2004) requiring, amongst other things, that all

trainees have a workplace mentor and more rigorous assessment of trainees' teaching. In response teacher educators have begun to develop stronger links with workplace mentors, but communication is usually confined to teaching assessments. A deeper consideration of the role of the workplace as a context for trainee learning is absent from the reforms (Lucas & Unwin, 2009), as is critical consideration of the ways in which integrating course and workplace learning could improve trainee learning.

The first aim of this paper is to advance understanding of the inter-related course, workplace and individual factors that influence in-service LSS trainee learning and the ways in which trainees integrate course and workplace learning. A conceptual framework is developed, and used to explore the findings of a small-scale longitudinal study of in-service LSS trainee development and other empirical studies. The second aim is to propose ways of improving trainee learning. It is argued that trainee learning can be improved by better integration of course and workplace learning where teacher educators and mentors work collaboratively, to guide trainee participation in an intentional workplace curriculum (Billett, 2002) and engage trainees in practical theorising (Hagger & McIntyre, 2006).

A conceptual framework for examining LSS trainee learning

The purpose of this section is to develop a conceptual framework for examining the factors that influence LSS trainee learning and the ways in which trainees integrate course and workplace learning. Drawing on Illeris (2003, p. 397), trainee learning is assumed to encompass 'all processes that le[a]d to relatively lasting changes of capacity, whether they be of a motor, cognitive, psychodynamic (i.e. emotional, motivational, or attitudinal) or social character'. This encompasses the development of competence, which 'comprises not only relevant knowledge and skills but also a range of personal qualities and the ability to perform adequately and flexibly in well-know and unknown situations' (p. 396). However, while developing individual competence is crucial, collective competence - 'making collective sense of events in the workplace, developing and using a collective knowledge base, [and] developing a sense of interdependency' (Boreham 2004, p. 9) - is also an important dimension of beginner teacher learning (McNally, Boreham, Cope, Gray & Stronach 2004).

Much of the recent work on workplace learning has been undertaken within the 'emerging paradigm of learning' (Hager, 2004). Knowledge is assumed to be fluid and subject to continual reconstruction. Learning is contextually situated occurring through *participation* in social interactions, where individuals 'shape and transform both themselves and the social/ interactional environments within which they work' (Lee et al. 2004, p. 9). However, the emerging paradigm of learning is far from a unified-approach (Lee et al., 2004). The crucial variation is in the conceptualisation of the relationship between the individual and their social context. Hodkinson & Hodkinson (2004) helpfully identify three centres of gravity. Two conceptualise the individual as separate from, but interacting with, the social context. In the first learning is primarily located within the individual but is 'integrally influenced by the situation in which they work and learn', and in the second the focus is 'on the complex interrelationships which determine the activities people engage in' (p. 22). In contrast, the third centre of gravity conceptualises the learner as an integral part of the learning context.

While professional learning continues to be a contested concept there is a growing trend, to explore workplace learning in ways that move beyond the limiting dualist conceptions of learning, as either individual or social. For example, Hager and Hodkinson (2009) combine different conceptual lenses to better understand learning. As Lethinen (2008, p261) points out 'taking into account individual and social level processes simultaneously, is difficult but necessary if we try to develop adequate models to analyse real learning processes in workplaces'.

How then can LSS trainee learning be conceptualised? Following Lethinen's direction a conceptual framework needs to take account of individual learning, such as learning through reflection, as well as the social level processes within the workplace, such as opportunities for engagement in teacher communities of practice. Since the ITE course is also a site for trainee learning the framework must incorporate the social level processes on the course, such as trainees' interactions with tutors and peers. Furthermore, the conceptual framework needs to recognise trainees' beliefs, prior experiences and dispositions towards learning and work, and the ways in which these affect their engagement with their course and workplace. Dispositions, which 'develop and evolve through the experiences and interactions within the learner's life course' (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2003), are influential in teacher learning (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2005). They are largely held unconsciously and 'are embodied, involving emotions and practice, as well as thoughts' (p117-8). LSS trainees have varied prior experiences of education, life and work, begin teaching at different ages and stages in their careers, and hold differing beliefs about education and training, so bring differing dispositions to participation in their course and workplace.

Billett's (2008) conceptualisation of workplace learning, as a relationally interdependent process, has particular utility in providing the basis for developing a conceptual model of LSS trainee learning. Workplace learning is assumed to occur through participatory processes. Learning is constructed from the relationally interdependent dual bases for participation – the opportunities that individuals are afforded to engage in workplace activities and interactions and how individuals elect to engage with these affordances. Workplace affordances are shaped by culturally and historically derived workplace values, norm, practices and relationships, and may be inequitably distributed within, and across, work settings (Billett, Barker & Hernon-Tilling, 2004). Different LSS work settings will offer different affordances. For example, a college department, with a culture of collaboration and a broad course portfolio, offers trainees different activities and interactions than an isolated community learning setting, were tutors rarely see each other and the curriculum is narrow. Individuals' agency, which determines how they interpret and participate in workplace affordances, is socially constructed through personal histories (Billett et al., 2004). To encompass trainees' participation in ITE Billett's dual bases for participation need to be supplemented with a third base, the affordances for participation and learning offered by the ITE course. Course affordances are likely to include activities and interactions that generate knowledge of learning and teaching and provide guidance on how to teach. These affordances are shaped by the socially and historically derived norms, practices and relationships of the team delivering the course, as well as the providers' organisational values and practices and the wider political context. Figure 1 illustrates the way in which Billett's conceptualisation of relational interdependence may be applied to LSS trainee learning. The solid arrows denote the relational interdependence between the trainee's interpretation of, and engagement with, their course and workplace. The horizontal dotted arrow recognises connections between the course and the

trainee's workplace which impinge on trainee learning, for example communication between ITE tutors and workplace mentors, or the mediation of theory from the course into a practical context by mentors.

Figure 1 about here

Billett's approach is located within Hodkinson and Hodkinson's (2004) second centre of gravity in socio-cultural studies, where the individual and social are perceived as separate and the focus is on interrelationships. It has, therefore, been criticised for over privileging agency by writers who argue that the individual and social cannot be separated (for example: Lee et al., 2004). However, Hodkinson, Biesta and James (2008), using the metaphor of map scales, point out that differing understandings of learning often reflect the scale at which learning is examined. So: when the scale is the individual agency is privileged; when the scale relates to one social context the focus is on the social, rather than individual or wider structural issues; and when the scale relates to the system structural issues predominate. The conceptual framework of LSS trainee learning, presented above, brings together individual and social context levels of analysis. Illumination of learning processes at this scale provides the opportunity to advance understanding of trainees learning in, and across, their course and workplace context, while taking account of trainees' agency. Although structural issues are not the main focus at this scale, it is recognised that structure underpins the nature of the workplace and ITE affordances and is embodied within individual beliefs, prior experiences and dispositions.

The proposed conceptual model enables consideration of how trainees *integrate* course and workplace learning. Research and theorising over the last decade indicates that the traditional view of knowledge being 'transferred' from education to practice settings is flawed (Hager and Hodkinson, 2009). The transfer metaphor, which assumes that learning is an individual cognitive process, is irreconcilable with the complex relational web encompassing individual and social learning, proposed to explain LSS trainee learning. Furthermore, it trainees, not discrete packages of 'knowledge', that move across course and workplace settings. Conceptualising the ways in which trainees integrate their learning experiences is more adequately represented by the metaphor of 'learning as becoming'. '[T]his entails understanding learning as social and embodied (practical, physical and emotional, as well as cognitive)' (Hager and Hodkinson, 2009, p633), and 'transactional in that it changes both the learners and the context' (p631). Trainees reconstruct learning gained through participation in their course in the workplace, and vice versa, as well as reconstructing learning from prior experiences in both settings. For example, Lucas (2007) highlights the importance of the workplace as a site where LSS trainees reconstruct, or transform, their subject content knowledge, which has been generated through the course or prior experiences, into pedagogical content knowledge - knowledge of how to teach the subject. As trainees reconstruct skills, knowledge and understanding in one setting this becomes embodied in their dispositions (Hager and Hodkinson, 2009). In turn the way trainees choose to engage with the affordances for learning in other settings is then influenced by these changed dispositions.

In summary, a conceptual framework for examining LSS ITE, which extends Billett's conceptualisation of relational interdependence, between workplace affordances and how individuals engage with these, to a third base of participation, the affordances of the ITE course, has been developed. It has been proposed that trainees integrate course and workplace learning

through a transactional process, where learning is reconstructed as they cross and re-cross the boundaries between education and practice settings. In the following sections the framework is used to examine the findings of a study of LSS trainee development and other empirical work, to advance our understanding of LSS trainee learning.

Methodology

The findings reported in this paper are drawn from six longitudinal case studies of in-service trainees undertaken over their first year of ITE. These case studies formed part of a mixed methods study which explored the development of LSS trainees' conceptions of learning and teaching and their teaching practices, and the factors that supported and inhibited those developments (see also: Maxwell, 2009).

The case study participants (Table 1) were volunteers from one university ITE partnership. While this is not a representative sample of trainees, it provides rich contextualised data from trainees of different ages, with different prior experiences, teaching different subjects, in a variety of settings. Kerri and Amy had recently completed higher education qualifications, were new to teaching and primarily undertook team teaching roles. After five years as a fire-fighter, Liam spent eighteen months as a fire service training officer before commencing his ITE course. Karen, a part-time library service reading development officer, had taught for 1 year before starting ITE. Safiah began the year delivering informal training, as part of her role as a community development manager, then became a freelance trainer. Julie had been involved in voluntary activity for many years and had prior experience of leading informal study groups.

Table 1 about here

Each case study trainee participated in three semi-structured interviews and was observed teaching by the researcher twice. Documentary data was gathered from their ITE teaching observation reports, reflections on those observations, reflective journal and professional development file. Data generation was staged over the year to minimise inaccurate memory recall, and avoid trainees rationalising earlier ideas and experiences in the light of new understandings. To aid recall and access trainees' tacit understandings, trainees' perceptions of the factors affecting their development were drawn out from discussion of their conceptions and practices within specific situated instances of practice. To ensure trustworthiness, a representation of each trainee's developmental pattern and the factors influencing development was checked and further developed in the final interview. Following this, categorical analysis, first of individual cases and then across cases, was undertaken using NVivo qualitative analysis software. Individual and cross-case charts were constructed of the reasons trainees gave for specific conceptual and practice developments and perceived inhibitors to development. From this the main workplace, course and personal factors that promoted and inhibited trainee development were identified. A further thematic analysis was undertaken to explore the ways in which trainees' described the process of learning. The NVivo search function was used to test emerging hypotheses against the data and seek alternative explanations.

It is important to note that the data generated represents trainees' perceptions. This is crucial in

illuminating LSS trainee learning and the conceptual arguments being put forward in this paper. However, a fuller consideration of the complex interrelationships will require further research to generate data from informants in the trainees' workplaces and ITE courses.

Influences on LSS trainee learning

The purpose of this section is to advance our understanding of the factors influencing LSS trainee learning and the interrelationships between these factors. The conceptual framework outlined earlier (Figure 1) is used to draw together the findings of the case study research, other studies of LSS trainee development, and early career learning and school teacher development research with contextual similarities to LSS trainee learning. The workplace and ITE affordances that trainees perceived to be most significant for their learning and the ways in which individual factors affected trainees' interpretation of, and engagement with, those affordances are described.

Workplace affordances for learning

The main workplace affordances described by case study trainees were- teaching activity and relationships with learners, interactions with colleagues, and workplace resources and training. Case study trainees' access to workplace affordances was dependent on their specific workplace context, and for most was limited.

The strongest workplace affordance for learning to emerge from the data, which trainees perceived underpinned their conceptual and practice development, was *teaching experience and interactions with learners*. Opportunities to try out new practices and student feedback on those practices were important. For example, Julie's growing commitment to empowering learners and her adoption of a more learner-centred teaching style were underpinned by successful experimentation and positive learner feedback. Trainees also explained how immersion in practice and building relationships with learners led to conceptual and practice development. For example, Amy attributed her more sophisticated conception of motivation and better classroom management strategies to 'getting to know' learners, explaining that:

> it's understanding what level they're at and .., what experience they've got and how intellectual they are or ...., what level to pitch at for them to be motivated (Interview 3).

These findings align with Hagger, Burn, Mutton and Brindley's (2008) study of 25 secondary teacher trainees, where 73% of all instances of learning reported by the trainees were attributed to classroom experience. Hagger et al. explain that engagement in teaching is crucial in enabling trainees to reconstruct learning:

> Experience is vital since it is in the processes of planning, teaching and evaluation that all the other sources of knowledge on which one might draw come together and acquire meaning (p.166).

The importance of interactions with learners is mirrored in other research: Maxwell (forthcoming) drew attention to the ways in which LSS trainees constructed knowledge through engagement in participatory practices with learners; and Flores (2003) found student feedback, motivation and achievement to be a crucial factor in supporting change in early career school teachers' practices. However, although all the case study trainees highlighted the ways in which engagement with teaching and interactions with learners supported their development, some trainees only had the opportunity to engage with a one type of learner group and/or one level of teaching. This reflects a wider issue in LSS ITE, where the narrowness of some trainees' teaching experience has been a recurring criticism in inspections (Ofsted, 2008b).

The importance of *interactions with and support from workplace colleagues*, particularly through the establishment of relationships which provide emotional support (Hobson et al., 2008; McNally, Blake, Corbin & Gray, 2008), and the giving of feedback (for example: McCormack, Gore & Thomas, 2006), are recurrent themes in beginning and early career school teacher learning research. Hatch, White and Capitlelli's (2005) exploration of the first year of school teaching found that interactions with colleagues 'validate and challenge [teachers'] experiences and emerging hypotheses and connects [them] with a wide range of related research ideas and information'(p329), indicating that interactions are an important site for reconstructing learning. Informal 'on the spot' support is also particularly significant in early career learning (Eraut, 2004; McCormick et al., 2006; McNally et al., 2008). Most of the case study trainees recounted ways in which interactions with their workplace mentors had supported their learning. Kerri, Karen and Safiah described how they constructed practical knowledge as their mentors modelled practices and shared resources. Karen's mentor helped her reconstruct the advice she had been given by her ITE tutors: 'So when I saw [her mentor's planning documents], it was …. oh, gosh, that's what they [her ITE tutors] mean (Interview 3). Safiah explained how conversations and co-teaching with her mentor offered her different perspectives, such as different ways of approaching learners, and new teaching methods. However, in this study the isolation of most of the trainees from teaching colleagues, created variously by physical isolation of teaching in community venues, trainees' part-time and/or co-teaching status and departmental micro-politics, was striking. This sense of isolation was felt acutely by Karen, who wrote in her reflective journal - 'I feel like I am out on a limb with no support from anywhere'. This isolation limited trainees' opportunities to develop affective relationships and access feedback. Like LSS trainees in other studies (Bathmaker and Avis, 2005; Maxwell, (forthcoming), case study trainees had limited opportunity to access teacher communities of practice, so were denied access to an important affordance that could have supported them in developing subject knowledge and pedagogy (Bank, Leech & Moon, 1999).

Case study trainees described how *access to workplace resources*, such as lesson plans and teaching and learning resources, *and workplace training* supported their conceptual and practice development. However, trainees' access to resources varied. For example, Julie drew on the affordances offered by workplace training and access to other tutors' assessment materials to develop her understanding and practice of summative assessment, whereas Karen was unable to access any teaching and learning resources - 'If I knew how to get my hands on any OCN [Open College Network] ICT resources it would be easier'. (Reflective Journal, Semester 1).

The workplace affordances for learning identified by trainees of teaching experience, interactions

with colleagues and access to resources and training are specific representations of the broader affordances for learning provided by their organisation's culture and structure. For example, organisational cultures were team working, collaboration and cross-boundary communication are valued provide greater opportunities for interactions with colleagues. Similarly, the allocation and structuring of work determines: whether trainees engage in individual or collaborative activity; the extent and quality of opportunities to develop relationships that provide support and feedback (Eraut 2004), and the teaching experiences available.

ITE course affordances for learning

The main ITE course affordances perceived by trainees' course were observations of their teaching, course activities, and their experiences as a learner on the course. *Observations of teaching*, conducted in the trainee's workplace by ITE tutors as an integral part of the course, were perceived by all case study trainees to be the strongest ITE related affordance for learning. Trainees valued the direct feedback on their practices and guidance on how to develop. Trainees variously cited instances where they had: developed their planning; adopted a wider range of teaching strategies, increased the use of participative activities; begun to differentiate learning; and developed formative assessment in response to feedback. They also mentioned that observations created a pressure to change, introduced new conceptual ideas, built their confidence, and made tacit aspects of practice explicit. These findings align with a small, but growing, body of evidence indicating the importance of LSS trainee observations (Harkin et al., 2003; Maxwell, 2005).

Case study trainees described how *participation in course activities*, that introduced new concepts and practices and provided exemplar materials, supported their conceptual and practice development, as well as making them aware of aspects of their practices that they had previously given little attention to. Furthermore, trainees described how participation in course activities had led them to think more deeply about their practices, developed their understanding of the wider context and boosted their confidence. The specific developments emanating from course participation varied between the trainees. The most frequently mentioned development, identified by all trainees except Kelly, was increased understanding and improved practices in planning learning. As Safiah explained:

> being given now the tools to do it, …. we were given 101 types of [planning] templates ... There's a little more method now, a bit more pressure now … and there's much more explanation as to why I do particular things (Interview 2).

The trainees were ambivalent about the extent to which reading, undertaken as part of their course, provided an affordance for learning. They described instances where reading had stimulated conceptual learning, but felt that it did not provide them with 'answers' to teaching problems. This reflects the mixed views on the usefulness of theory in LSS ITE found in Harkin et al.'s (2003) study of the impact of ITE, and the low value secondary school trainees placed on learning from reading about educational theory and research (Hobson, 2003).

Trainees' *experiences as learners on the ITE* course provided important affordances. For

example, Liam carefully observed how his ITE tutors taught classes, so he could 'pick up different ways of getting things across' (Interview 2), and Safiah's attitude towards empowering learners developed as a result of her own empowerment:

> 'I came in to do the Post-graduate Certificate of Education, but … I learnt so much more about myself, … I have been empowered … by discovering these things about myself and how I work. …..and I feel that the less control a tutor retains and gives more control to the learners, ….. you might discover more than all these learning outcomes that you see on the board' (Interview 3).

Negative experiences also provided affordances for learning. Karen recounted how the difficulties she encountered in participating in group work on the course influenced her approach to managing group work:

> It .. taught me…. you've got to take into account personality…..What was hard, was coming up against a conflict in ideas from other members of the group. … I am very careful now about doing group work, and personalities (Interview 3).

The case study trainees also recounted how interactions with peers on the course generated knowledge, particularly where they shared the same teaching subject, and built their confidence as a teacher.

Individual factors influencing trainees' engagement with workplace and course affordances

There is a well established research base evidencing the significance of prior knowledge, skills and dispositions towards work and career on engagement in workplace learning (for example: Eraut 2007; Hodkinson et al. 2004). There is also a strong evidence base that attests to the strength and resilience of school trainees' beliefs, which together with prior experiences strongly influences their approaches to practice and their ITE course (Wideen, Mayer-Smith & Moon, 1998). Likewise, the case study trainees' beliefs and dispositions, prior knowledge, skills and experiences, confidence and sense of self-efficacy were important influences on their engagement with the affordances for learning offered by their workplace and course. Karen's strong beliefs about the need for learning to be relaxed and fun emanated from her negative experiences of schooling, and limited her willingness to develop her practices. While, through engagement in the ITE course, Karen came to recognise that learners had different starting points, she resisted changing her practices to allow learners to work at their own pace, fearing that it would undermine group camaraderie. Prior experiences also influenced Liam's engagement in his workplace. His negative experiences as a trainee fire-fighter led him to reject the military style approach to teaching that characterised workplace practice:

> I will never teach the way that they do [other fire service trainers] because I did the training … I hated it and I got nothing from it, … I'm taking it from my own experiences (Interview 2).

Both Karen's and Liam's accounts illustrate the powerful effect that negative prior experiences, which generated strong emotions, had on trainees' engagement with affordances for learning.

Case study trainees' attitudes towards their development affected their orientation towards participatory activity, with some deliberately seeking opportunities to engage in learning that they perceived would be valuable in future teaching roles. As trainees developed greater confidence in their abilities as a teacher, they were more willing to engage in a wider range of activities and interactions that, in turn, led to further development. Karen explained how her growing confidence helped her move from a performance to a more facilitative role:

> Sometimes you can mask insecurities by putting on a façade and presenting it, but it hides a multitude, …and I have stepped back and it has taken confidence to do that (Interview 3).

Experiencing positive responses from her learners to her more facilitative approach, in turn, led to greater use of participative activities in her teaching.

In this section, analysis of the case studies and consideration of the wider literature, using a conceptual model of relational interdependence between three bases of participation, has enabled LSS workplace and ITE course affordance for learning to be identified. While a larger scale study may illuminate a broader range of affordances, the affordances identified in the cases align with the dominant themes in the literature. Significant course affordances were teaching observations, course activities and experiences as a learner. The key workplace affordances identified by trainees, experience of teaching and interactions with learners, interactions with colleagues, and access to resources and training, are specific manifestations of the broader affordances offered by organisational culture and structure. For most case study trainees workplace affordances were limited. There was considerable variation in trainees' beliefs, prior experiences and dispositions. Their beliefs, experiences and dispositions determined the nature and extent of their engagement with course and workplace affordances, and ultimately the learning that was constructed or reconstructed.

The inter-relationships between workplace affordances, course affordances and individual factors and trainees' integration of course and workplace learning

While for explanatory clarity in illuminating LSS trainee learning, workplace affordances, course affordances and individual factors that affect engagement with these affordances were presented separately in the previous section, they are complexly inter-related as shown in the conceptual model. As Billett et al. (2004, p238) point out '[t]he bases of interdependence between individuals' agency and engagement in social practices are multiple, complex and overlapping'. Case study trainees usually attributed a specific conceptual or practice development to their engagement with a combination of affordances for learning, and interestingly, trainees who reported the same development often related it to a different combination of affordances. The complex interdependence of affordances and individual characteristics, and the ways in which they impinge on trainees' construction and reconstruction of learning across course and workplace settings, are illustrated in the following vignette.

Case Study Vignette

Kerri, a graduate aged 22, enrolled on an ITE course at same time that she began part-time drama teaching at a further education college. She had a positive attitude towards learning having enjoyed school, college and university. Kerri usually co-taught sessions with more experienced teachers. Using the conceptual and practice development continua proposed by Maxwell (2009), Kerri began the year near the beginning of the continua, in the phase characterised by developing a broader awareness of the teachers' toolkit and establishing a repertoire of strategies and skills to meet the most immediate needs of the teaching context. Over the year she began to move to the next phase, characterised by realising that different learners need different approaches and developing strategies and methods that begin to respond to learners' needs.

Kerri recounted how engagement with the course affordances of observations of teaching and course activities supported her development. Observation feedback helped her develop wider awareness of teaching approaches, such as the need to introduce variety in sessions, and provided her with practical ideas for planning and assessing learning. In addition to this cognitive learning, observation feedback supported Kerri's emotional development, building her confidence to engage further with the workplace affordance of experimenting with new practices:

> I was starting to feel … however hard I try I'm not moving forward with the practical side of things…. Since being given the observation feedback however, I feel a lot more confident and positive that the changes I have been making …have been worthwhile' (Reflections on Observation 2).

Kerri's engagement with course activities helped her develop understanding of learning, teaching and the wider professional context, which in turn boosted her confidence. However, she struggled to link theory and practice. While she found that reading helped her think things through, she found it difficult to find 'answers' to implement in practice:

> Whatever literature I read and however much I let it inform my lesson planning or classroom management, it still feels like I have to struggle through the actual lessons (Reflections on Observation 2).

Kerri's engagement with the workplace affordance of interacting with learners facilitated both conceptual and practice development. She found that 'getting to know' and developing relationships with learners enabled her to develop effective approaches to classroom management, and introduce more challenge into her teaching. However, workplace conditions in Kerri's college, and her position in relation to these, limited the workplace affordances available to her. Her co-teaching role limited her teaching experience - she was only able to engage in a restricted repertoire of teaching practices, had few opportunities to plan and manage complete learning sessions, and consequently was restricted in the extent to which she could experiment with new ideas and skills. Kerri received 'know how' support from interactions with, and feedback from, her mentor, and interactions with other colleagues. However, her part-time co-teacher status, combined with departmental micro-politics, restricted her access to departmental activities and teacher communities of practice.

Kerri's positive prior experiences as a learner were reflected in the enthusiasm with which she engaged with affordances for learning, even when she was struggling to develop her teaching. However, having been a student at the same college where she was teaching meant she had limited experience of the range of approaches that could be taken to teaching drama. It was only when she undertook a professional visit to another college, as part of her ITE course that she began to develop awareness of alternative approaches:

> it wasn't until I .. saw how they do things differently, that I started to feel a bit more inspired. I decided to introduce other instructional techniques… instead of giving all the information by handouts (Reflection on Observation 2).

The vignette has illustrated the complex inter-relationships between Kerri's beliefs, experiences and dispositions, workplace affordances and course affordances. It also describes how Kerri brought newly acquired experiences and dispositions, constructed in one setting, to her engagement and reconstruction of learning in the other setting. Limitations in the workplace affordances available to Kerri, and the difficulties encountered in reconstructing theoretical knowledge from her course within the workplace limited the progress she was able to make in her teaching.

Improving LSS trainees' learning – rethinking course and workplace integration

The case study research highlighted three important issues for LSS trainee learning, namely: some trainees do not have access to the range of workplace affordances necessary to support their learning; trainees struggle to integrate course and workplace learning; and there is variation in trainees' orientations towards, and engagement with, course and workplace affordances for learning. Although the case study research is small-scale and limited to trainees' perspectives, the alignment of findings with the wider literature base means that confidence can be placed in identifying these as important issues. This section proposes rethinking the approach to integrating LSS ITE course and workplace learning, in order to address the issues and therefore improve trainee learning. Firstly, the potential of an intentional workplace curriculum (Billett, 2002) as part of a more holistic and integrated ITE experience is explored; and secondly, the potential of using practical theorising (Hagger and McIntyre, 2006) to enable trainees to better integrate course and workplace learning is considered.

Guided participation in an intentional workplace curriculum

LSS trainees' workplace learning has been largely neglected by researchers and policymakers (Lucas and Unwin, 2009) yet it is a crucial site for trainee learning. To redress this neglect Lucas (2007) has called for the development of a 'pedagogy of the LSS workplace', based on Billett's (2002) conceptualisation of a workplace pedagogy. This comprises: the intentional structuring of participation in workplace activities and interactions; guided participation; and recognition that trainees will differ in how they elect to participate.

This paper has illuminated key workplace activities and interactions that need to be accessible to all trainees as part of an *intentional workplace curriculum*. Trainees require access to *teaching*

experiences where they can teach a range of learner groups, teach at different curriculum levels, and take full responsibility for teaching groups. This enables them learn by immersing themselves in practice, interacting with learners and experimenting with their practices. Trainees also need access to *workplace interactions*, with mentors and other colleagues that provide them with emotional and cognitive support, challenge, feedback and models of practice, as well as opportunities for participation in teacher communities of practice. Access to *workplace documentation, resources and training* is also necessary. Participation in these affordances would provide the opportunity for trainees to construct new learning as well as reconstructing learning for participation in the ITE course and prior experiences. Ensuing that these affordances are in place would entail significant changes in how LSS employers organise work, and necessitate the examination of the ways in which existing work practices, cultures and structures may be inhibiting trainee learning. However, such action would improve the affordances for learning through participation in work for more experienced staff, as well as trainees.

A pedagogy of the LSS workplace necessitates *guided participation*. Potentially trainees' mentors are positioned to play a central role in guiding trainees' engagement in an intentional workplace curriculum, by facilitating trainees' access to teaching experiences, interactions and documentation, resources and training that are appropriate for their stage of development. However, the LSS mentor role is unclear and contested (Tedder and Lawy, 2009) and is often restricted to sharing subject 'know-how'. Guiding trainees' participation through an intentional workplace curriculum would therefore require a re-conceptualisation of the mentor's role. Effectively planning and supporting trainees' access to workplace affordances also requires an integrated approach across the course and workplace. Teacher educators and mentors would require a good understanding of trainee development patterns and the ways in which trainees learn through engagement with workplace affordances. Mentors would need to understand how learning is structured on the ITE course and be kept up to date with their mentee's progress on the course. In addition, the ITE course content and support would need to focus more directly on guiding trainees in how to learn through workplace participation and review with trainees the learning generated from participation. Improving the integration of course and workplace learning in this way has the potential to help trainees more easily reconstruct learning from one setting in the other. This holistic approach would entail greater collaboration between teacher educators and mentors than currently exists. While, in the current inspection process (Ofsted, 2008a), there is an expectation that teacher educators and mentors will communicate on the progress of trainees this is not well established. Furthermore, the expectation does not address the mutual understanding required by mentors and teacher educators for guided participation.

Developing an intentional curriculum and guided participation are insufficient on their own to improve trainee learning, since trainees' beliefs, dispositions and prior experiences significantly influence their engagement with workplace and course affordances for learning. Teacher educators and mentors have a key role to play in enabling trainees to recognise the impact of these influences on their learning and in challenging them to break away from past beliefs and experiences. Current LSS ITE policy ignores the need for trainees to examine the influence of their beliefs, dispositions and prior experiences on their practices. While, the national standards for LSS teachers (LLUK, 2007) emphasise learning through reflection, reflection is narrowly construed as generating 'know- how' through individual evaluation of teaching sessions. A broader conceptualisation of reflection is needed if trainees are to engage more fully with the

affordances for learning available to them.

Practical theorising

The issue of the purposes and process of reflection is also central to addressing trainees' difficulties in integrating course and workplace learning. Traditionally, individual reflection on workplace practice has been regarded as the main mechanism for linking theory to practice and integrating course and workplace learning. While LSS teachers retrospectively place a high value on reflective practice in ITE (Harkin et al., 2003), other writers highlight limitations in the way that reflection is enacted in LSS ITE. Tracey (2006) highlights the 'mantric' and superficial way in which reflection is applied on some LSS ITE courses, while Parsons, Avis and Bathmaker (2001) criticise the focus on individual reflection, which they argue fails to challenge past beliefs and experiences. Furthermore, implicit within the LSS ITE model of reflection is the notion of a one way process where theory, learnt on the ITE course, is 'applied' to practice situations . This view over-privileges codified propositional knowledge and is underpinned by the transfer of learning metaphor. However, it was argued earlier that 'learning as becoming' provides a more adequate metaphor for trainee learning. This metaphor was further supported by the narratives of the case study trainees, which indicated that as they constructed and reconstructed learning in one setting it became embedded within their dispositions, and then influenced their perceptions of and reconstruction of learning within the other setting.

Hagger & McIntyre (2006) advocate using practical theorizing in school ITE, rather than reflective practice. Practical theorising involves 'both looking for attractive ideas for practice and subjecting these ideas to critical examination' (p58). Ideas are drawn from more experienced colleagues in the workplace, as well as from educational research, so trainees engage in critical review of both professional craft knowledge generated in the workplace and propositional knowledge generated through participation in their ITE course. Practical theorising assumes a fluid two-way relationship between course and workplace learning, where ideas from practice and training are equally valued. Incorporating a practical theorising approach in LSS ITE would help trainees integrate course and workplace learning and link theory and practice in the way advocated by Harkin (2005, p.174), whereby they construct professional knowledge based on experience, and professional knowledge based on codified theory to which experiential knowledge may be linked, so they can 'both *apprehend* what it is they do, and *comprehend* their professional actions'. Teacher educators and mentors would have a key role to play in developing trainees' skills in undertaking practical theorising, and in supporting them in accessing ideas from theory and research and experienced teachers' practice. To enable trainees to break away from past beliefs and experiences, teacher educators and mentors would need to engage with trainees in collaborative critical review of ideas for practice.

In summary, it has been proposed that better integration of course and workplace learning through guided participation in an intentional workplace curriculum and attention to the ways trainees choose to engage with this, together with the use of practical theorising has the potential to improve LSS trainee learning.

Conclusion

A conceptual framework for LSS trainee learning, drawing on Billett's (2008) concept of relational interdependence and Hager and Hodkinson's (2009) metaphor of 'learning as becoming' has been developed and used to examine the findings of a small scale study of LSS trainee learning and other empirical studies that illuminate trainee learning. It has been argued, conceptually and empirically, that the nature and extent of LSS trainee learning depends on the complex interrelationship between workplace affordances for learning, ITE course affordances for learning, and trainees' beliefs, prior experiences and dispositions which affect how they interpret and engage with those affordances. Teaching experience and the opportunity this offers to interact and build relationships with learners, interactions with colleagues and mentors and the access this provides to teacher communities of practice, and access to workplace resources and training were found to be key workplace affordances. However, some LSS workplaces offer limited access to these affordances, which are manifestations of the broader affordances offered by an organisation's culture and structure. Trainees perceived that observations of their teaching were the most significant course affordance for learning. Activities that introduced new concepts and practices, exemplar materials, and experiences as a learner on the ITE course also provided important affordances for learning. Trainees engaged in a transactional process of 'learning as becoming', constructing and reconstructing learning in both course and workplace settings. Further research is needed, in a wider range of LSS settings with trainees, mentors, colleagues, managers and learners, to further test and develop the conceptual model of trainee learning proposed in this paper.

It has been proposed that improving LSS trainee learning requires greater integration of course and workplace learning. Firstly, this would involve teacher educators, employers and mentors working collaboratively to establish an intentional workplace curriculum, and guide, support, and challenge trainees' participation in that curriculum. Secondly, it would involve teacher educators and mentors engaging trainees in practical theorising. These proposals would require major changes in the organisation of ITE, teacher educator and mentors' roles, and the organisation of work in LSS settings. Implementing such proposals would require political and employer will – however they offer the potential for significant improvement in trainees' learning, and through the improvements in workplace affordances they would necessitate, could also improve the learning of more experienced LSS teachers.

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Figure 1: Conceptual framework for examining LSS trainee learning

[pic]

Table 1: Case study participants

Case	Qualification Route	Age	Workplace	Teaching Area	PT/FT Teacher
Kerri	PGCE	22	FE college	Performing arts	PT
Amy	Cert Ed	23	FE college	Photography	PT
Liam	PGCE	34	Fire service training centre	Fire service training	FT
Karen	Cert Ed.	45	Community venues	Information technology / Personal development	PT
Safiah	PGCE	33	Community venues	Community development/ Introduction to teaching	PT
Julie	Cert Ed	40	Community venues	Islamic Studies / 'Help your child' classes	PT

Note: PCGE –Post-graduate Certificate of Education; Cert Ed. –Undergraduate Certificate of Education

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[1] LSS teaching roles may have job titles such as tutor, lecturer or trainer. 'Teacher' is used in this paper to encompass all these roles, and 'trainee' is used to refer to any teacher undertaking an ITE qualification.

Trainee
Beliefs, values, prior experiences and dispositions towards work and learning

Workplace
Activities and interactions

ITE programme
Activities and interactions