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Identity and knowledge work in a university tutorial

Abstract

In the contemporary university the large classes associated with many core units mean that tutorials are often taken by many part-time sessional who are typically employed on a casual basis, paid an hourly rate and not paid to attend the lectures. Given this situation, unit coordinators are often responsible for another phase in curriculum development, namely constructing written tutorial plans that outline the tutorial processes and explicate some of the central ideas and knowledge from the lectures. These plans are designed to be informative for the tutors as well as providing a guide for the teaching and learning in the tutorials.

In this paper, using analytical tools made available in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) I analyse a written tutorial plan as an example of a university curriculum text. The analysis opens up new ways of seeing these texts and for reviewing and critiquing my university teaching practice.

Key words: professional identities, knowledge, discourse, tutorials, university curriculum.

Introduction

This paper is drawn from a larger study investigating the relationship between curriculum, knowledge and identities in contemporary pre-service teacher education courses (Krieg,2008). The analysis presented here rests on the assumption that the language used in university curriculum documents communicates powerful messages about teaching and learning. I argue that paying attention to the language used in curriculum texts provides the opportunity to examine the relationship between curriculum and the professional identities of both teacher educators and student teachers.

The concept of the university curriculum is a complex and under-researched feature of

contemporary universities (Fraser & Bosanquet, 2006; Huber, 1999; Stark & Lattuca, 1997; Walker, 1990). Within the university context, 'definitions of curriculum have tended to evolve locally in the absence of any formal agreement' and although there might be curriculum committees in many universities, the term is used ambiguously among academic staff (Stark & Lattuca, 1997, p.8). For many academics, 'the university curriculum is the syllabus: the content of a specific discipline or the set of units actually offered to students, and the time frame in which they occur' (Stark & Lattuca, 1997, p.8). Sets of units are usually referred to as a program or course that cumulatively leads to accreditation. The nomenclature that is used to refer to 'units' (the semester long courses of study) that make up a course, is highly variable between universities. However, despite this diversity, there is always some outline of 'what' will be taught over a period of time and this is often loosely referred to as the curriculum.

Curriculum development within the university context is multi-layered. It can involve conceptualising new courses (over periods varying from 1- 4 years) or can refer to the development of a semester long 'unit'. Although I have addressed issues associated with course development in the larger study, in this paper I focus on the development of a unit and I analyse one written tutorial plan as an example of a university curriculum text. Tutorial plans are the notes developed by the unit coordinator as a guide for the sessional instructors. They outline the intended outcomes, key ideas or content and activities for tutorials. Unlike many other university curriculum documents tutorial plans are not published documents and they are given to the tutors rather than students. However, although not published widely, students often see sections of the notes that tutors transfer to PowerPoint slides.

Tutorial planning notes have assumed increased importance in the contemporary university. This is due to the large classes associated with many core units in teacher education courses that are often taken by increasing numbers of part-time sessional staff who are typically employed on a casual basis, paid an hourly rate, and not paid to attend the lectures (Coombe & Clancy, 2002; Anderson, 2007). Given this situation, the planning documents for the tutorials not only outline the tutorial processes but also make explicit some of the central ideas and knowledge from the lectures. In a sense, they are designed to be informative for the tutors as well as providing a guide for the teaching and learning in the tutorials.

Although I am analysing one written tutorial plan, it does not stand alone. Rather, such documents are networked with other texts through social practices and structures and, to use Fairclough's (2003) words, I need to continually ask: 'What social event and what chain of events is the text part of?' (p.191). Tutorial plans are best understood as being located along a 'curriculum continuum' rather than existing in isolation (Nichols & Cormack, 2001). At one end of the continuum is the official curriculum - the statements of intent by the university - and at the other end is the curriculum as experienced by the student teachers. In between these two extremes is the pedagogical enactment that mediates the desired institutional intent and outcomes. These phases of curriculum are linked through a process where key words and ideas are moved from one text to another as the different phases of the curriculum are enacted. This linking and moving of words and ideas within and between the curriculum texts both reflects and constitutes particular discourses. I view my analytical task as an examination of the 'knowledge that is formed as a result of that linkage' (Foucault, 1978, p.11). The analytical tools made available in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) opened up new ways of examining the relationship between language, knowledge and the development of teacher identities.

CDA is a multidisciplinary approach that analyses both the form and the function of language or, to use Rogers' (2004) words, 'the *hard* and *soft* structures of language' (p.8 italics added). The hard structures include aspects of the linguistic system such as adjectives, nouns, and verbs. Soft structures include the function of language ... and are called soft structures because of the level of abstraction required for conceptualising the ways language is being used (p.8). My task as an analyst involved 'describing, interpreting, and explaining' the relationship between these structures in the process of developing a better understanding of what language does and how it accomplishes the things it does. I drew from Halliday (1985), Gee (1999) and Fairclough's (2003) frameworks to study how the lexical and grammatical features of language worked together to achieve particular functions in the tutorial plans.

The tutorial plans analysed in this paper formed part of the teaching resources I developed for the weekly teaching of the unit. I was the unit coordinator responsible for developing the unit content, the lectures, readings and assessments and I was working with five sessional tutors. The curriculum under investigation is thus viewed from my perspective and is located in a particular time and place. I examine some of the 'filters' that operated in planning a new unit within a new

teacher education course (Apple, 1979). This story of reflective practice provides examples of how personal and institutional filters not only determine (in part) *which* knowledge is important but also explores the professional identity positions on offer to teacher educators and student teachers *in relation* to that knowledge.

In this paper therefore I am analysing the processes of which I am part. I am both the object and the agent of my inquiry (Middlewood, Coleman, & Lumby, 1999, p.9). My examination of this aspect of curriculum development involves complex, reflexive work for I am examining this curriculum from an 'insider' standpoint (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993). As both curriculum developer and curriculum analyst, my reflective comments are woven through the analysis.

Personal filters

Curriculum designs and organisations are a little like kaleidoscopic configurations of what we know, traces of what we have forgotten and suppressed, distributed through the echoes and shadows of life history, popular culture, and laced with desire (Pinar et al., 1995, p.859).

Part of my desire as curriculum developer working in teacher education was the result of my experience as a class teacher and school leader. After 30 years as an early childhood educator in disadvantaged communities, I had come to a position where I recognised that a repositioning of children in the educative process was necessary for teaching and learning that would achieve more equitable outcomes. I wanted to move away from the position offered by a purely developmental view where the child is constructed as 'becoming' and incompetent, or to use James et al.'s (1998) words, 'a defective form of adult' (p.6). Part of my intent, in designing the teaching and learning processes for this new unit was to contribute to more heterogeneous views of children, views that embrace a range of approaches to 'opening up and critiquing many of the certitudes that have characterised extant and current debates about children' (James et al., 1998, p.3). I wanted children to be acknowledged as having agency, of being socially competent participants in the process of learning and understood as 'social actors, shaping, as well as shaped, by their circumstances' (p.6).

The unit under analysis was titled 'Learning and Development' and was designed to engage students with contemporary and historically important theoretical perspectives regarding young children's learning and development. My thinking about the tutorials for the unit incorporated

ideas about how student teachers would be positioned in the process of learning how to teach. In order for student teachers to reconsider ideas about children in the learning process, their experience of teacher education needed to offer the opportunity for them to learn in many different ways. If student teachers were going to work differently with children, their teacher education needed to open up some new identity positions for them as future teachers. I wanted them to engage with a wide range of knowledge, and to contest and contribute to that knowledge, rather than be constructed as passive recipients of knowledge. Taking such a position in the contemporary context, where there is a move towards a more prescriptive and standardised view of teaching was highly problematic. My approach ran counter to a prescriptive, technicist view of teacher education in which learning to teach is seen as a matter of accumulating the appropriate type and amount of knowledge about teaching. With these ideas guiding my work, I began the process of curriculum development.

Describing teaching and learning processes

The university where I was working prescribed a standard format to be used for the development of new units. This format was named the 'Unit Outline' and consisted of sections with titles including: the unit outcomes, lecture schedules, reading and assessments. It is beyond the scope of this paper to address each of the sections for the new unit. For the purposes of this paper and as a preamble to the analysis of the tutorial notes, I draw attention to one part of the Unit Outline, a prose paragraph titled 'Teaching and Learning Processes'. As a relatively new academic with limited experience of university curriculum development, when I began the task of writing this section of the Unit Outline I looked at several Unit Outlines from different courses and drew many ideas from these examples.

The first sentence in this section of the new unit states that the unit processes involve 'lectures, tutorials, workshops and reading' and this statement is then expanded and elaborated.

The unit will be covered through the combination of lectures, tutorials, workshops and reading. Students will experience a wide range of strategies including individualised study (1), active participation (2) in group situations (3), working with other professionals (4), and working as part of a team (5). These processes will model the use of technology (6) to facilitate learning. Key ideas are introduced in the lectures, and students are guided through relevant literature (7) and reflection (8). In tutorials, students engage in dialogue, conversation and debate (9), as they present (10) their responses to key ideas and readings. Assignments and presentations require students to develop the key ideas of the unit through research (11) and critical analysis (12).

The first phrase in this paragraph states that the unit is something to be ‘covered’. This is an interesting use of language in a curriculum document for a unit that was designed to develop understandings about learning for the word ‘covered’ evokes a sense of something finite or a discrete, inert and definable body of knowledge. This vocabulary creates some dissonance with my espoused curriculum intent, namely, to engage student teachers with the possibilities of critiquing, contesting and contributing knowledge.

There are key words in this paragraph that provide further detail regarding the teaching and learning processes that were to be experienced and the ‘strategies’ that were to be used. These strategies included, reading literature, presenting ideas, researching and analysing key ideas. The first group of words in the descriptor (numbered 1-5) signal that learning experiences were to include individual, group and team situations. The second category of ideas (numbered 6-12) communicates the types of instructional methods that were intended. These included the use of technology, guided engagement with literature, dialogue, presentations, reflection and assessments requiring research and critical analysis.

The five references to students include the statements that ‘students *will* experience...’, ‘students are *guided* ...’, ‘students *engage* ...’, ‘... they (students) are to present their *responses* to key ideas and readings ...’, and ‘... are required to *develop* the key ideas...’. These statements provide examples of Bernstein’s (1990) ‘strong framing’ in that there is little evidence of control or choice for the student teacher in terms of the learning process. The picture of the student teacher that emerges here is one of reacting or responding to ideas and information rather than as an active initiator involved in constructing and deconstructing knowledge. For example, the last sentence signals that the purpose of the research and critical analysis (necessary for the assignments) is for students to ‘develop’ the ideas presented in the unit rather than challenge and critique these ideas and possibly open new understandings and perspectives. However, there are also signs of my intent to facilitate active inquiry into knowledge. In this section of the curriculum the words ‘debate’, ‘active participation’, and ‘research’ suggest the possibility for inquiry and contestation of knowledge. As has been discussed, in developing the unit I wanted to open up identity positions for student teachers as critical analysts and contributors of knowledge rather than as passive recipients. The linguistic resources I have used in this section of the new unit draw from and constitute some competing ideas about ways of ‘being’ a student teacher.

The tutorials: Identities on offer

In writing the week by week tutorial planning documents I referred to many of the ideas presented in the descriptive paragraph presented above. However, the analysis of the tutorial planning notes provides evidence of many personal filters operating at this stage of the curriculum development as I translated these ideas in pedagogical practice. There were also many institutional filters that provided the limits for what could be done in the tutorials. The 90 minute tutorials followed the lecture, each week, on the same day, in a particular room, at a particular time, with the same tutor.

The limits and possibilities in the ways the tutorials were enacted reflected many of the broad societal structures impacting on contemporary universities. For example, the marketisation of education has resulted in increased numbers and diversity of students alongside reduced funding. The total enrolment for the unit was in excess of 220 students and the university stipulated that the class size be no less than 30, so each tutorial had an enrolment of approximately 30 students. There were eight tutorial groups taken by five tutors who were employed on an hourly basis. As the unit coordinator, I was able to select and design the teaching and learning content and processes for the tutorials but it is important to recognize at the outset of this discussion and analysis that curriculum is rarely delivered exactly as planned. The large teaching team and the range of teaching experience in the team meant that there were likely to have been many interpretations of what was written in the tutorial notes and many differences in the messages that were communicated in the tutorials. The ways the tutorials were enacted may have varied, however, the variations occurred within certain boundaries and I argue that the planning documents played an important role in creating these.

I have selected the planning notes for the first tutorial for discussion and analysis for they provide a typical example of my planning. In planning the process and content for this particular tutorial my intent was that the students begin questioning some of the things that they might 'take for granted' in social situations by exploring the importance of nonverbal communication in social interaction. I also intended that students would understand that culture defines social meanings and in this case, what constitutes appropriate and accepted nonverbal communication.

The tutorial notes consist of instructions for the tutors regarding the activities and outline each

step of the processes involved. The notes also provide key points from the readings. The notes are divided into three sections related to the activities for this tutorial: an activity called 'Breaking the Rules' followed by a 'Jig-saw' process and lastly a section outlining the process for reflection. The first section begins with the following instruction.

Introductions, negotiate break/ tutorial time etc

This first instruction to the tutor communicates a message about their role. The word 'negotiate' signals that the tutor was expected to be involved in a social process that implied sharing power with the students. Negotiating an agreement regarding a break in the tutorial implies some student control over how the tutorial time would be organised.

The instructions for the 'Breaking the Rules' activity' are as follows:

Establish partners: Person A and person B
Bs leave the room and prepare a conversation about the most embarrassing social situation they have experienced
While Bs are outside the room, brief As about some nonverbals that break interaction rules e.g., fossicking in bag while person is talking, looking out the window, stand up and move chair etc
Bs return and begin their conversation. As enact some of the rule breaking behaviours discussed
Partners reflect on what happens
Some sharing back to whole group
Summary using 'Solder' Refer to attached sheet regarding some of these nonverbals
Ask students to observe listening behaviours in their prac classes (teacher: child, child:child). Bring these to next week's tutorial for discussion

The process to be followed for this activity is written in a way that does not allow for variation, there are no 'ifs' or 'buts' nor indications of causality or tentativeness. The text can be described as a knowledge exchange, a statement of what *will* happen. The dominant grammatical mood is imperative (Halliday, 1985, p. 68) implying that what is stated will be done.

Activities and identities

Many of the verbs used in the task descriptions in the planning notes provide information regarding the types of identity positions that are implied here. Silverman (2001) contends that many kinds of activities are common-sensically associated with certain social categories, and often, in identifying the activity, we may imply a social identity. Sacks (in Silverman, 2001) refers to the activities which imply identities as 'category bound activities' and the tutorial notes created these through both implicit and explicit messages about teaching and learning within this first tutorial. For example, in the 'Breaking the Rules' tutorial process, the student teacher was

expected to undertake activities such as 'establish', 'prepare', 'enact', 'reflect' and 'share'. These words imply an active participant in a socially interactive process. The student would be participating as a partner, actor, reflector, conversationalist and listener. However, despite these multiple opportunities for social roles, there were clearly defined boundaries around the interactions. There was no choice about the number of people the student was to work with, the first task for the tutor was to 'establish partners' and each person in the partnership was to be given a label, A or B. The instructions also state that the student teacher was to develop a conversation about a specific topic indicating that whilst there was some degree of choice, the choice was limited. Students could choose the event they preferred to discuss but the situation needed to be an example of an embarrassing social situation they had experienced.

Rereading these instructions now it seems odd to ask student teachers to prepare a 'conversation' as a solitary activity for conversation always evolves in an interactive process. According to the notes, while Bs were 'preparing' this conversation, the tutor was in the tutorial room briefing the As about their role which involved using nonverbals to 'break some interaction rules' during the 'conversation' with their partner. In retrospect, I now think this task was daunting as a first activity in the first tutorial for the unit. Student teachers were being asked to discuss 'the most embarrassing social situation they have experienced' whilst the person to whom they were talking broke some of the 'rules' of social interaction. This could have been very intimidating if the participants were not known to each other.

Although I intended this activity as a way of 'breaking the ice' and supporting the students to interact with each other, I now think the task risked thwarting the desired learning by creating embarrassment and stress. At the time this did not occur; students participated enthusiastically and it seemed to achieve the intent for which it had been designed. This success could be attributed to the compliance often evident in educational settings. It could be read as students knowing 'how to be' students in that when a teacher (educator) asks you to do something you do it, whether it makes sense or not.

After the conversation, student teachers were to 'reflect' on what happened and then share these reflections with the whole group. This instruction assumes that the student teachers would know what 'reflection' involved and that they would be able to do this with their partner. According to

the tutorial notes, the tutor was then to use the 'SOLDER' overhead projection (OHP) sheet to *summarise* some of the rules about nonverbal interaction at this point in the tutorial. This OHP is an acronym for aspects of nonverbal communication. Each letter is linked to a characteristic of 'effective' nonverbal behaviours.

'SOLDER (Acronym for: Square, Open, Lean, Distance, Eye-contact, Relaxed
*S*quare position when sitting
*O*pen body position
*L*ean forwards towards the person
*D*istance at a comfortable space from others
*E*ye contact with the person (but not fixed stare)
*R*elaxed appearance
These are non verbal cues which convey to another person that you are actively listening, attending and ready to communicate.

Figure 1: SOLDER Overhead Projection

The OHP was not sourced and in retrospect I am surprised I used it. The list presents a very western view of what constitutes nonverbal communication and this mono-cultural perspective contradicted my stated outcomes for the unit of exposing student teachers to diverse perspectives. After discussing this with the tutors working in the new unit, we modified the way we would use SOLDER in future. Rather than using it as a summary, we asked to students to critique the list from the perspective of cultural diversity.

Engaging with texts: The Jig-saw process

The tutor was instructed to ask the student teachers to observe listening behaviours in their practicum classes between teachers and children, and between children and children and one of the tasks in the tutorial focused on the topic of observation. This task was not concerned with teaching students 'how' to observe but instead raised some issues associated with this important aspect of teachers' work. The reading selected for this activity was intended to introduce student teachers to the idea that observation is subjective. The tutorial notes name the process that was to be used here as a 'Jig-saw process', a process often described and used as a collaborative learning strategy.

Jig-saw process: 'Do you see what I see?' Reid article

Intro to activity: Observation as a subjective experience. Use visual OHP's to introduce the topic of the highly subjective nature of interpreting 'reality'.

Process: Students in groups of 3, number off, etc

1s go to one table and read and discuss section 1 of the Reid article

2s read and discuss section 2

3s read and discuss section 3

Discussion centres around questions such as: What is the situation described in your reading? What do you think the writers are saying?

Return to mixed group and discuss what this article is about. Some feedback to whole group. OHP Summary

Students were to work together in groups of three to develop an understanding of a journal article by Reid et al. (1996). The article was divided into three sections and each group of three students split into 'expert groups' in which they read and discussed one section of the article. The notes provide some key questions for these discussions: 'What is the situation described in your reading? What do you think the writers are saying?' After these discussions and as 'experts' on their sections, students were to 'teach' their peers about their section of the article. It is relevant to note that the questions I posed as a framework for the reading of the article did not include any questions that would stimulate critique of the reading.

In this collaborative learning process the students were to take responsibility for interpreting the reading and then share their understanding of the article with their peers. The implied roles for the student teacher include reader, interpreter, presenter, expert and teacher. These are more diverse roles than those on offer to the solitary student reading and interpreting a set reading. However, as I have noted, in relation to the ideas or knowledge that the students were engaged with, the focus was on the students' understanding of 'what the writer was saying' rather than to critique or question the ideas. The final part of this process involved the tutor 'summarising' the discussions from the groups. This was to be done with the whole group of thirty students using an OHP to record the main points in a collective construction of the knowledge that had been generated by the group. This process was critically important in the tutorial for it is at this stage that the tutor could mediate between different positions taken by students, stimulate further questions, and synthesise the conceptual work that had been done - important aspects of teaching in a social constructionist process that informed my approach to teaching.

Reflection

Reflection was important in this tutorial. In the last section of the notes, the words 'reflect' or 'reflection' are used three times.

Back with the person you worked with for 'Breaking the rules'.
This time to practice attentive listening using non - verbals that show you are interested and listening.
As reflect about what they have learnt in the lecture and tutorial
Bs listen attentively. Talk about the difference nonverbals make in interaction.
Using the reflection sheet and the mapping the outcomes page in the Unit Outline, students discuss with partner and then spend at least 5 mins writing.
Suggest these reflections are stored in portfolios in section under Teacher professional knowledge.

Students were asked to get together with their partners from the 'Breaking the Rules' activity and to practice attentive listening whilst discussing what they had learnt from the lecture and tutorial. The notes state that they were to be discussing the difference non-verbals make in interaction as they do this listening and then to spend at least 5 mins writing their reflections on this activity. The tutor was to instruct students to store these reflections in a portfolio under one of the headings from the West Australian 'Teacher Competency' framework (2004).

The reference to the Teacher Competencies introduced and framed the reflection task in a particular way. This framing is best understood from Fairclough's (2003) perspective where texts are seen as drawing upon and articulating together the many different 'discourses, styles and genres' of the social structures and social practices of which they are part (p.25). The reference to 'Teacher Professional Knowledge' was a direct naming of a specific teacher competency from a departmental publication. The tutorial planning notes reaffirmed the status of a competency approach in this reflection task.

This reference to the Teacher Competency Framework illustrates the dialogic nature of teacher education and demonstrates how it is located at an important intersection in debates regarding teaching standards and competencies: an intersection between the academic orientation of the university and the authority invested in teacher certification standards by employers and teacher registration bodies (O' Meara & MacDonald, 2004, p.112). At the time I planned the tutorials, the university in which I was working had responded to the competencies by emphasising their importance. In this unit, whatever the student teacher had learnt in the lecture and the tutorial

was to be judged by how well it contributed to a ‘Teacher Competency’. This reflection strategy was a powerful way of re (in) stating the importance and dominance of the competency approach to teaching, an approach at odds with my espoused philosophy of the unpredictable, reflective and highly contextualised work of teaching.

Tutors and students: Reciprocal identities

My analysis of the activities described in the tutorial notes indicates the implied and ‘required’ roles for both the student teachers and the tutors in the tutorials. The following table compares the verbs that are used in the notes:

Table 1: Tutorial roles

<i>Student Teacher</i>	<i>Tutor</i>
Prepare	Connect
Reflect	Establish
Share	Brief
Practice	Refer
Show	Ask
Listen	Use
Talk	Introduce
Discuss	Suggest
Write	

The actions the tutors were directed to take in this tutorial constructs the tutors’ relationship to the student teachers and to knowledge. Process words such as ‘connect’, ‘refer’ and ‘introduce’ suggest a mediating role, working between the known and the unknown, making connections to ideas and knowledge. The tutor was expected to be referring and connecting the student teacher with knowledge about teaching. The verbs ‘ask’ and ‘suggest’ contribute to a picture of the tutor as a negotiator and contributor to the learning process, as distinct from a didactic role.

Some of the activities required the student teacher to work *in collaboration* with other students and the tutor while others suggested that the students would be working alone. For example, ‘partner’ and ‘listener’ imply that other people are involved in the learning process whilst reader, reflector, analyst, decision maker, synthesiser and writer suggest solitary activities. A comparison of the implied identity positions reveals that of those identified, there was a fairly even distribution of roles that could be described as *interactive* alongside roles that could be carried out alone as an individual process. The messages that are being communicated in the tutorial notes about teaching and learning are that constructing meaning and deep understanding

is not a process of ‘transmitting’ information and knowledge ‘across’ social situations in a monologic dialogue, but that learning is a shared, ‘interactive process where meaning is constructed and negotiated *within* the social situation’ (Light & Cox, 2001, p.30).

Of the identity positions implied in the tutorial notes and on offer for student teachers, many relate to cognitive processes. Tasks such as ‘reflect’, ‘read’ and ‘analyse’ imply a cognitively competent person, able to comprehend, make decisions and synthesise ideas. However, these attributes are to be demonstrated within particular boundaries. The topic, time-frame, group size and sequence of the tasks were not negotiable.

Finally, it is important to note that the tutorial planning notes draw from and contribute to a mixture of discourses about teaching, learning and knowledge. Using Smith’s (1999) words, the planning document ‘hooks in’ to other discourses by picking out passages of other texts. The ‘Breaking the Rules’ and ‘Jig-saw’ processes draw from uncritical/ liberal collaborative learning discourses, from texts including Bennett, Relheiser-Bennett and Stevhan’s book ‘Cooperative Learning’ (1991). The article by Reid et al. (1996), used in the Jig-saw process, takes a poststructuralist perspective with its emphasis on multiple ‘ways of seeing’ and resistance to the idea of the ‘objective’ researcher (p.100).

In summarising my analysis of the curriculum texts, it appears that the knowledge, ideas and processes being introduced in this aspect of the unit offer some diverse understandings of teaching and learning. The opportunity to work collaboratively and to construct and test knowledge offers the student teacher dialogic ways of engaging with content and experiencing learning. There still appears to be a very clear distinction between tutor and student teacher roles in that the tutor was not required to participate in activities, but was expected to lead and facilitate them. However I would argue that the tutorial processes planned for new unit were offering some diverse ways of ‘being’ learners and teachers.

Creating new spaces for teachers and learners

If student teachers are to reposition children in the learning process their experience of teacher education needs to offer them some different positions as learners. Many of the linguistic resources used in the tutorial planning notes draw from and contribute to a discourse of the student teacher as an active inquirer. Many words work together to create a sense of the student

teacher as an engaged learner involved in a process of learning. The language often contributes to a picture of the student teacher as part of a process of shared meaning making: a social constructionist view of learning. This view is aligned with that presented by Van Huizen et al. (2005) who argue that a Vygotskian perspective offers the potential for student teachers to participate in teacher education programs in ways that enable professional learning through:

...evolving participation in social practice. Participation involves being drawn into a setting that includes a programme directed to the realisation of values and goals, forms of social interaction and cooperation in an institutional context, and the use of cultural resources. In such a setting, productive action and understanding are dialectically related (Lave and Wenger, 1991, in Van Huizen et al, 2005, p.274).

This principle of learning through participation has the potential to reduce some of the tensions identified by Britzman (1991) between theory and practice, schools and the university, knowledge and experience. Learning as members of a shared process addresses the common situation where the university and the 'field based elements in preservice programs often represent different and competing notions of the process of learning to teach' (Van Huizen et al., 2005, p.278). Situating learning about teaching as a shared process of 'making meaning' offers new identity positions for both student teachers and teacher educators and offers a way forward in the debates and often polarised positions regarding teacher centred and learner/child centred learning that have characterised and stymied educational debates in the past. For the student teacher working within a framework of a shared purpose, identity positions such as co-constructors of knowledge are on offer, and the teacher educator has the opportunity to work in much more reciprocal partnerships with students.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have argued that the tutorial planning notes as curriculum texts both reflect and produce discourses about teaching and learning that not only constitute knowledge, but also the 'social practices, forms of subjectivity, and power relations which inhere in such knowledges' (Weedon, 1987, p.108). The analysis demonstrates the ways that ideas and meanings are linked together in the notes constitute the limits and possibilities for professional identities. My discussion and analysis of one example of curriculum texts within a unit from a new course indicates that whilst at times these texts reiterate traditional positions regarding knowledge, teaching and learning, they also create some divergence from a view of university teaching as

‘transmission’. The divergence relates to a repositioning of the learner and knowledge. As the analysis demonstrates, this divergence contributes to different understandings of what it means to teach.

The process of examining the texts as social practices enabled me to better understand how the written language I used as a teacher educator played an important role in either limiting or expanding the professional identities on offer for both student teachers and teacher educators. Understanding the curriculum texts as social practice provides valuable conceptual tools for examining my own practice, and ‘leads beyond replication’ to a situation where I am able to ‘challenge my own practices’ (Kress, 1988, p.128). I am now more cognisant of how I ‘mediate the relation between the ‘knower and the unknown’ and the ways I ‘stand between the student and forms of knowledge’ (Grumet, 1978, p.38). At times, it seems that through the language I used in the notes I invited student teachers to be part of a shared, interactive process, whilst at other times I retained and enforced authority and power. At times I presented knowledge as finished and complete, whilst at other times I invited the student teachers to assume the identity of ‘co-constructor’ of new knowledge. However, I contend that these multiple, sometimes dissonant discourses are not surprising for, as Kress (1988) argues, I brought to the task of writing the documents in the university institution the ‘experience of many institutions’ including family, church and schooling, and the meanings that were available to me as a writer ‘were affected by my specific history of these’ (p.111). In this analysis, many of the ‘filters’ identified by Apple (1979) are evident. My personal and professional histories created some of the filters that operated in the process of developing the new curriculum as I negotiated, and renegotiated meanings at each stage of the curriculum process. This process led to writing that was characterised by multiple discourses that often included competing versions of what it means to teach.

In this paper, I have made public some aspects of my teaching practice and have demonstrated how the analytical tools made available in Critical Discourse Analysis enabled me to see my teaching practice from new perspectives and open up new ways for thinking about my everyday work as a teacher educator. It is my hope that the paper provides enough detail to make it recognisable to other academics and that they use some aspects of my research to consider what it means to teach and learn in contemporary times.

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