

Title of the paper:

Further education teacher educators' narratives of their journeys and professional identities

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Abstract:

The study of teacher educators is relatively recent with Ducharme and Ducharme (1996) asking pertinent questions about their roles, competences, professional development and their knowledge. Since then, teacher educator, as a field of study, has been carried out internationally (e.g. Cochran-Smith, 2005 in US; Clandinin, Downey & Huber, 2009 in Canada; O'Dwyer & Atli, 2015 in Turkey) and in England (Murray & Male, 2005; Ellis et al., 2013). Significantly, published findings in the further education (FE) sector in England are scarce with few exceptions (e.g. Noel, 2006). The findings of this study aim to redress this issue in particular the routes/journeys taken by these educators and their professional identities.

This paper relates to a larger project on FE teacher educators with five research questions on: the routes to becoming teacher educators, training, types of knowledge needed, professional development and their perceptions as professional. Of the five questions, the relevant ones for the purposes of this paper are: what are the routes to becoming teacher educators/trainers in the sector and how do view themselves?

It reports on the findings of a project where eight researchers (of whom three are presenting here) from teaching settings of higher education institutions, further education colleges and private providers voluntarily collaborate on capturing data of nearly 30 participants using quantitative (from a questionnaire survey) and qualitative (from one-to-one semi-structured interviews, documentary sources and 'Talking Heads') research methods.

The literature review relates to the routes/journeys and professional identities by researchers of teacher educators. The review includes: Bullough (2005) on the four identities of 'I', 'D', 'N' and 'A', Murray and Male (2005) on two identity issues, Noel (2006) on the routes, Clandinin, Downey and Huber (2009) on 'spaces', Ellis et al. (2012) on 'relational maintenance', Williams (2014) on 'third space', Pereira et al. (2015) on 'the four role types', and White, Dickerson and Weston (2015) on the 'dual role' of teacher educators.

The analysed findings are discussed in relation to the typologies reviewed from the literature sources. The findings also draw on some characteristics of the FE sector in relation to teacher educators and their impact on the existing typologies. Finally, the paper discusses the contributions of this project and its impact on certain stakeholders such as teacher educators, related teaching institutions in higher and further education and private providers, and policy-makers of teacher education.

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