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THE PRACTICUM AS WORKPLACE LEARNING: A MULTI-MODE APPROACH IN TEACHER EDUCATION

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This paper has as its focus the portrayal of, and justification for, a multi-modal practicum curriculum which is directed to address the needs of qualified teachers. The subject "The Reflective Practitioner in the School" is one which takes the concept of workplace learning most seriously. For too many years teacher education has treated the practicum curriculum as a pre-service "practice teaching" subject sequence and has not concerned itself with ways in which in-service professional development can be constructed as continuous with the pre-service practicum program.

The challenge in the Bachelor of Education degree at the University of Technology, Sydney was to develop a range of practicum structures which would be appropriate for those who were only just embarking upon teaching and those who had many years of experience. The practicum was seen as a site which would allow students to investigate current workplace conditions; internal and external factors influencing current structural/organisational features; and the impact of school planning processes on classroom practices in relation to curriculum, evaluation and pedagogy.

Our papers traces the reasonings behind the design of the subject, the ways in which it has been operationalised and our own reflections on ourselves as adult learners in the process.

Introduction

Imagine for a moment a common scenario. Serena comes home from school and is asked "What did you learn today?" The laconic reply is "nothing". As educators we believe that Serena would have learned a great deal; both those things which her teachers intended she should learn and those which were the results of the myriad interactions she had experienced during her day. All the same it came as some surprise to us when we asked a similar question of a group of teachers. "What have you learned at school this year?" They looked from one to the other puzzled and curious, even nonplussed. We pressed a little further, "Does your teaching change, or always remain the same? On what grounds does it change? What influences the changes? Do your ideas about teaching change? Why? Do your professional relationships within the school change or do they remain static?" Each was asked to record briefly something which had been learned that year. Now there was animation and activity.

Some wrote tentatively, some enthusiastically, as we did ourselves. The ensuing discussion revealed that much is learned in the workplace. Such learning results from: observation; interactions with students, with fellow teachers, with parents and community members**;** struggles with policy documents; professional reading. Much learning was intended, some unexpected. As sentient beings, teachers, like their students, are learning all the time.

Moore Johnson (1991:1) notes that teaching and learning are interdependent, not separate:

Teachers are primarily learners. They are problem posers and problem solvers; they are researchers; and they are intellectuals engaged in unravelling the learning process both for themselves and for the younger people in their charge.

And yet it is curious that when first asked about their own learning, as practitioners, teachers are uncertain as to how they might respond. It is as if their experiential learning counts for naught. Teacher educators have long struggled with the design and implementation of the pre-service practicum curriculum, where experiential learning is paramount; however, less work has been undertaken in the conceptualisation of experiential learning in what may be regarded as the inservice practicum curriculum. This paper seeks to address the challenge of recognising and building upon workplace learning in several ways. It first asks the question: what is the relationship between adult learning and continuous professional improvement? It then progresses to explore ways in which a practicum curriculum for teachers in the field may be developed. The paper gives an account of just such a subject currently being taught at the University of Technology, Sydney and finally and reflexively asks the question "and what, as teacher educators, have we learned?"

Adult learning and continuous professional improvement

Much of the literature upon adult learning has placed it in the context of lifelong education (Gelpi, 1984). Wain (1993: 59) draws upon the work of Dewey to argue that lifelong education is a "constant reorganising or reconstructing of experience" with an intention of improvement. At its best, lifelong education becomes a continuing attempt to better understand our human condition and its relation to the natural world. Adult learning, in this sense, is the means by which we assimilate the essence from each new experience and progressively accumulate a critique of human action. There are no ready-made solutions: instead, all interpretations must be argued for in terms of justice and ethicality. Thus the organising principles for professional adult learning, in terms of teaching, must be to do with creating conditions for continuous professional improvement wherein the participants and their experiences are valued and respected. At the same time none has the right to see that his or her utterances are the most valid or conversely the least likely to be challenged. Each proposal is evaluated on its merits and must be considered as tentative and capable of being rethought and recast.

For many teachers continuous professional improvement, in the context of the school as a learning community, is determined to a great extent by the degree to which the school itself is a dynamic site, generative of serious intellectual questions about the nature of teaching and learning. Rosenholz (1989) coined the metaphors "stuck" and "moving" schools. She found that some of the schools which she studied were highly collaborative and responsive to both

teachers and students while others were noteworthy for the mutual isolation of teachers and students.

Rosenholz's findings focused upon the importance of the principal working supportively with teachers to utilise the school as a site for adult learning as well as student learning. The goals of principals in "moving schools", as effective workplaces, were to transform the overall culture of the school. It is clear that this means taking a kind of inventory of the ways in which the school inhibits or facilitates learning in the workplace.

A study by the National Board of Employment, Education and Training contrasted conditions for workplace learning. It argued, *inter alia,* that facilitating conditions emphasised a personal communal ethos in the workplace; problematic approaches to reform; a recognition of the relationship between differentiated personal and professional dimensions in teachers lives; and a view of the school as an educative workplace bent upon improvement. By comparison inhibiting conditions were ones where the ethos was bureaucratic; only students were viewed as learners in the school; professional development was fragmentary; and teachers were isolated in their classrooms (NBEET, 1994: 26).

We wanted to develop a practicum curriculum as a form of in-service teacher education which emphasises the type of adult learning outlined above. The challenge was to see whether we could develop facilitating conditions which drew upon the range and variety of teachers' experiences and which were of a reflective and collegial kind, given the claims in the literature that such a context is supportive of positive professional development.

Collegial professional development

There is little doubt that the most effective collegial conditions are those which evolve within the school itself. The process is one of mutual support and collaborative problem solving. Such a process meets some of the notions of collegial professional development proposed by Little (1990) and Hargreaves (1992). Little (1990: 14 - 15) argues that the collegial work that has the greatest potential to support whole school staff development involves:

... encounters among teachers that rest on shared responsibility for the work of teaching ... collective conceptions of autonomy, support for teachers' initiative and leadership with regard to professional practice, and group affiliations grounded in professional work. Joint work is dependent on the structural organisation of task, time and other resources in ways not characteristic of other forms of collegiality.

Hargreaves (1992) is cautious regarding constructs centred on collaboration and collegiality. He argues that more often than not schools are "Balkanised", that is, the school culture is made up of competing groups like loosely connected and often antagonistic city states. Who has not been in primary school staffrooms and seen the infants teachers sit apart from the primary teachers, the young apart from the old, the male from the female, the support staff from the regular classroom teachers? Similarly, in the universities there are divisions and intrigues; ideologies and epistemologies clash, paradigm wars abound. Cliques and affiliations are probably inescapable in any large organisational culture. One great advantage which we have, as teacher educators, is that we are not bound by the particularities of the

school, while, paradoxically, we recognise that the collegial relations built in a university course may be of a contrived kind.

Contrived collegiality, in Hargreaves's terms, is characterised by a set of formal, specific, bureaucratic procedures to increase the attention being given to joint teacher planning and consultation. It can be found in initiatives such as peer coaching, mentor teaching, joint planning in specially provided rooms, formally scheduled meetings and clear job descriptions and training programmer for those in consultative roles (1992: 229).

Such contrived collegiality can be seen as a positive move towards the creation of longer-term, more enduring and grounded collaborative relationships. However, Hargreaves has three main reservations: (i), you cannot legislate a collaborative culture into existence; (ii), you may fall to recognise existing soundly-based collegial relations; and (iii), the process may lead to a proliferation of unwanted meetings and documentation. As designers of a practicum curriculum we needed to take care that we did not fall into the contrived collegiality trap. At the same time we needed to be cautious that we were not merely providing a set of prescriptions, loosely held together, which would become detached from any sound theoretical base and acted upon in non-reflective ways. We needed to balance theory and practice, process learning and content learning.

A variation on standard views of teaching as a profession is that proposed by Huberman (1993): the teacher as independent artisan. Using the work of, among others, Elizabeth Hatton (1989), who researched primary teachers' work in Queensland, Huberman (1993: 16) sees the teacher first of all as *bricoleur*, that is, a sort of tinkerer who creates and repairs learning activities on the run:

Teaching, like other highly complex, unstable and furiously interactive tasks, poses … "wicked problems", problems whose solutions are not inherent in the problem space itself and thus which need to be progressively transformed into simpler problems for which the solutions are likely to be appropriate.

Huberman recognises the dangers and difficulties inherent in such a representation. The implication is that teaching is so idiosyncratic and pragmatic that developing some kind of language with which teachers may communicate about their work becomes very difficult. It is rather like the expert cook who tells one to take a pinch of this and a handful of that and work with it until "it looks right", whatever that may mean! One of the major tasks of the proposed subject was to address this challenge. We argued that teachers must have a language for talking about their work in such a way that they could make it and its improvement explicit. We might call this task "developing a learning conversation".

The learning conversation

Within a learning conversation it is possible for issues to be explored tentatively, for a variety of interpretations to be generated, discussed, discarded, refined, recast and so on. There is an authentic attempt to understand, rather than to prematurely judge.

Nonetheless, it is important that the process is seen as transformative, that as a result of the interaction, areas are identified for strengthening and improvement. After all that is the nature of learning, that a change occurs, that things do not remain static and routinised. In other words the conversation results in action, action which is grounded in the principles of authentic adult learning through critical conversations which go beyond dealing with the "how to" questions. Authentic adult learning is about addressing the "why" questions prior to those concerned with "how to". Why has there been a national trend to outcomes-based education? Why have we seen schools being evolved as small businesses? Why is it that some children settle into school with confidence, while for others it appears to be a frightening and threatening place? Why do some children act out while others remain invisible? Why do some parents appear to be alienated by schooling practices? Why are some teachers so set in their ways? These questions need to be addressed prior to those concerned with changes in pedagogy, parent-teacher interactions and classroom management.

The "why" questions need to address institutional concerns. Why are we doing what we are doing in these particular ways? The organisation of the timetable; the allocation of children into grades and teachers to classes; the segregation of special purpose classes ... all of these practices and those like them also deserve attention and analysis. During our planning of the in-service practicum subject we were primarily aware that the conditions under which teachers work are the conditions under which children learn. An adult community of learners needs as a cornerstone of enquiry a responsibility to investigate institutional arrangements and to question what may have been long-unexamined practices.

The conditions which foster adult learning, which seek to improve the work of schools are not dissimilar from those which foster learning for the student in the school. They are conditions which permit the "why" questions to be raised, irrespective of status; which recognise that not all "why" questions can be easily resolved, that indeed new questions will arise; and which expect the enquiry which follows will be conducted in open and ethical ways. As well, and importantly, there is an implicit belief that just as we would argue that all students can learn, so too can all adults continue to learn. The classroom teacher or school principal who claims that there is nothing new to learn about the practice of education is moribund.

Finally, in considering adult learning within a community of learners we should eschew the finding of the "best" solution to the myriad problems and challenges faced by the school. As Madeline Hunter (1990: xiii) so clearly puts it:

We should stop seeking one simple solution for working with the most complex structure in the known universe: the human brain. The silliness of arguing whether discovery learning is better than direct teaching; whether cooperative learning is better than concept attainment; whether Hands on is better than observational learning; whether cognitive psychology is

better than social or physiological psychology; is tantamount to arguing whether aspirin is better than penicillin. Each has its own specific function .... There is no one *best way of teaching. There is no* one *best way of coaching. There is no* one *best way of learning.*

A practicum curriculum for in-service teachers; "the reflective practitioner in the school"

The Context

It is important to first consider the context in which the subject "The Reflective Practitioner in the School" was devised. The School of Teacher Education at the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) was formerly the Kuringai College of Advanced Education. Following the creation of the unified tertiary sector, the College, along with the former Institute of Adult and Technical Education (ITATE) amalgamated with the newly-formed UTS and a Faculty of Education was brought into being. The effects were many, but principal among them were two major reconstructions: the faculty needed to be developed in recognition of existing and emerging cultures; and the School of Teacher Education needed to reconsider its various courses. This involved both structural change and subject redevelopment.

Concurrent with the faculty development a new Bachelor of Teaching degree was constructed and the Bachelor of Education degree was reconstructed. The Bachelor of Teaching practicum curriculum was redeveloped upon a set of principles which foregrounded the field experience as a site for learning (Groundwater-Smith, 1994). The introduction of a fourth year full-time program largely for students with little classroom experience yet qualified to teach, along with its part-time counterpart largely for experienced practising teachers to upgrade their qualifications, raised questions regarding the most appropriate practicum experiences for those who were already qualified to teach.

How then did we conceive of a subject which would be appropriate for meeting the adult professional learning needs of a diverse group of qualified teachers? Clearly a number of modes would need to be developed to reflect this diversity. The outcome was the development of fine modes which are explained in the following sections. Importance has been placed on workplace learning and the fostering of lifelong learning as a goal for **all of our students** and thus the development of an in-service practicum curriculum for teachers at different stages of their teaching career has emerged.

The Reflective Practitioner, Mode A: the Associate Teacher Program

Our first challenge was to consider those who had most recently completed their first degree, the Bachelor of Teaching and who wished to continue in their course full time. There was still much that they needed to learn about schools and their own professional roles in them. However, they had met the pre-service practicum requirements and scarcely wanted "more of the same". Thus the Associate Teacher Program was conceived*.

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* For a discussion of the changing context of teacher education, see Williams, Deer, Meyenn and Taylor (1995). The paper sets out both the ways in which higher education has been restructured and the effects of State initiatives. Clearly, this paper does not detail the complex and overlapping arrangements which were made as the subjects emerged and were trialled. While the full -time B.Ed. course was being implemented for the first time the existing part-time course remained relatively untouched. Suffice to say the rationalisation between the two parts took three years overall.

In 1992, the Associate Teacher Program (ATP) was developed in response to the need to strengthen the relationship between theory and practice and to provide students with an opportunity to experience a wider and fuller range of roles and responsibilities commensurate with the holistic nature of working within a school environment.

The program provided graduating students who had decided to continue into their fourth year of study with an extended in-school teaching experience enabling them to take on the responsibilities of teachers within an environment which provided time for reflection and which could be considered as safe for the beginning teacher. The emphasis in this program, along with the development of sound professional practice, was the collaborative aspect of working with experienced colleagues who would provide valuable guidance and support.

The idea of an induction program for students who were completing their studies was relatively new at the time of its introduction. Because of the innovative nature of the program it was initially designed as a two-year pilot study. Taking account of the financial constraints surrounding the payment of teachers for taking on the role of colleague teacher and the different duties to be performed by these teachers new guidelines and agreements had to be negotiated both with the employing authorities and the teachers' union. A significant outcome of the negotiation process was the emergence of a strong and enthusiastic partnership between these key stakeholders, the participating schools and the university. Roles, responsibilities and expectations of each party were to be clarified and put in place.

A major evaluation was undertaken of the first year of the program with funds provided by the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training. The report (Sharp, Squires, Lockhart, Cresswell and Groundwater-Smith, 1993) highlighted the successful features of the program and pinpointed areas that need modification or change. The outcomes of the first year of the pilot study provided valuable information on which to plan future programs of study.

The ATP is currently conducted in schools in two phases with a seven-week intensive academic component at university in between. While in the school, students are referred to as "associate teachers" to distinguish them from preservice student teachers. As graduates with recognised teaching qualifications it was necessary to make a distinction between this practicum experience and those embedded in the Bachelor of Teaching course. It was important for **all** participants (including associate teachers, colleague teachers and tertiary advisors) to recognise this distinctiveness for the program to be a success.

Reflective inquiry should not be restricted to beginning teachers. Experienced teachers, casual teachers and those in executive positions need to continually question their own practices and the beliefs in which they are grounded. While the ATP laid the groundwork for the compulsory subject "The Reflective Practitioner in the Schools", other modes quickly followed.

Because it was the first of the modes to be developed, the ATP provided the linchpin for the other modes as they emerged. Workplace learning, systematic reflection, the nature of professional development and collegiality were the key attributes of the program and were to inform the design modes B, C and D.

The Reflective Practitioner, Modes B and C

In designing the expanded practicum subject it was important to recognise the varying experiences of participating teachers. Clearly the ATP was designed to meet the needs of the beginning teacher, still engaged in full-time study. Mode B was directed to part-time teachers who are also beginning to teach, who may indeed be in casual teaching positions, but are not yet in permanent employment. Mode C accommodated full-time experienced teachers, whose range of experience might be from two to twenty years and whose roles ranged from casual teaching to school principal.

The expanded Reflective Practitioner subject was implemented for the first time in 1994. The subject was the equivalent of one-sixth of a full-time load (8 credit points of a 48 - credit point course) and took a full year to run. This detail is significant, as it indicates the importance placed on the subject by the university*.

The face-to-face structure of the subject is an interesting one. Briefing meetings were scheduled on three nights (which happened to be Fridays) in each semester; the major contact was on Saturdays, two per semester. Having day long meetings allowed for both formal and informal interactions to occur. As well there was variation in the day so that there could be both whole-group inputs and small-group discussions.

The subject was designed cooperatively by the team of four who are the authors of this paper. A major challenge was to design learning assignments which would meet the different needs of the students who were enrolled. For the associate teachers, the major assignment was, in effect, the classroom work. But for teachers in Modes B and C (and Mode D, which will be discussed further), the assignments needed to arise from work they were undertaking as part of their employment.

The three assignments set for this subject are a way of giving an understanding of the manner in which it was tailored for the different needs of the students. The first required a critique of two pieces of professional development literature. Students were free to make their own choices of this literature after an early lecture had reviewed one article and suggested ways that the literature could be critiqued. Individual discussions by appointment were also available with the lecturer responsible for the subject. For many students this assignment not only gave them the first opportunity to engage with published material in a more critical way but also to review the professional development literature *per se.* Participants were accustomed to being a part of professional development courses offered by their employers and consultants but they had not had access to the research **about** professional development.

* The only other compulsory subject for part-time B.Ed. students was one which centred upon contemporary issues in education. Policy issues in relation to school management, the curriculum and community involvement in schooling were widely aired in this subject. It was seen that there should be a clear relationship between this subject and the content of '"The Reflective Practitioner". The Friday and Saturday sessions focused on restructuring in the workplace; reflecting on own learning; ways in which the workplace may be changed; own learning in the workplace; recognising the learning needs of novice and experienced teachers; and professional development activities that work and the needs of teachers.

The second assignment gave opportunities for either work arising from the participants' abilities to carry out a professional development activity in their own school (if the students were members of a school staff) or to conduct a survey of the professional development

needs of a school staff with whom they had had contact (either through casual teaching or prior practicum experiences). This assignment presented a considerable challenge to the students as they were required to present their findings in the form of a poster session and to speak to their posters as is done now at many conferences. Students were required to condense their findings, determine the salient points, present these in poster form and talk for no more than 10 minutes to the poster. This unexpected method of presentation became a learning experience in its own right. Students came to recognise that just as there are many intelligences in the classroom; there are also different orientations among adult learners.

The third assignment required students to write about their second assignment in a publishable form, drawing on relevant literature from their work in the first assignment. For many students, this provided an opportunity to revisit, polish and improve upon earlier work, to systematically engage in "reorganising and reconstructing experience".

Thus it may be seen that the Modes B and C both drew upon the workplace learning of students, but also enabled them to engage in learning conversations, one with the other, in small groups and with a team of academic staff.

As well as all of the students described above we also have a small intake of experienced, overseas-trained students. These students had their own special needs and we created for them a fourth strand to the subject - Mode D.

The Reflective Practitioner, Mode D

The majority of overseas-trained students seeking to take out the Bachelor of Education qualification are those who have worked in non-English speaking cultures, or those where English is clearly a second language. They have teacher education qualifications and have often taught for a number of years. These students not only have to come to terms with instruction in English (although their own English language skills may be excellent) but also need to recognise and understand the cultural differences in the ways in which schooling is conducted.

Basically the students undertake the components of modes B and C, but in addition have a school placement for four weeks which is primarily designed to familiarise them with the Australian classroom. In their assignment work they are encouraged to be reflective regarding similarities and differences with respect to primary schooling. As they are participating in the seminars and workshops with other experienced teachers they have opportunities to hear of their colleagues' experiences and to contrast these with their own. In this way the benefits are reciprocal.

We believe that these brief sketches give some access to our subject "The Reflective Practitioner in the School". We have been careful, in this first year of full implementation to gather evidence from the students regarding their learning experiences and to engage in our own reflection regarding the efficacy of the innovation. It is to our own reflections as adult learners that we now turn.

What, as teacher educators, have we learned?

While a great deal of our learning came about as the subject progressed it is clear to us that the actual writing of this paper has acted as a focus for our reflection. We had to consider not only what we had learned, but the ways in which we might make our understanding available to others. The very process of writing was itself a learning. As each part of the paper was written it was revised in the light of our own learning conversations. We realised, for example, that the idea of a learning conversation itself is an emerging discourse within our School of Teacher Education. Several colleagues are using the notion in their research with children, and others of us are seeing the potential for research into educational change.

Being reflective takes time. Not all of the insights in this paper were immediately available to us. For example, when we discussed the metaphors of "stuck" and "moving" schools we considered how they might apply to university faculties and departments. How and why might we become "stuck"? What helps us to become revitalised? We considered the idea of resistance; some of the students in the subject were quite resistant to the change. So, too, were some of our colleagues. Why was this so? We debated the nexus between intentions and implementation. What is the best balance between being responsive and being unfocused?

The implementation literature (see, for example, Fullan and Stiegelbauer, 1991) argues that when a new curriculum is designed its focus, purposes and strategies seem quite clear. However, it is impossible to lay out with any exactness what will eventuate. Just as the working script results in the play, with all of its richness and depth, the curriculum in action is a far more complex and dynamic undertaking than the planning suggests. Lieberman and Miller (1986: 98) make the following point: "Linear expectations of policy makers give unrealistic messages to local school implementations", a point which, we believe, can easily be neglected in the development of a university subject or course, where we ourselves are in the role of policy makers.

There are many interactions that occur in a teaching/learning enterprise - for example, between teacher and learner, learner and learner and teacher and teacher in a team taught subject. As well the roles of teacher and learner are themselves interchangeable and many faceted. Our experience of "The Reflective Practitioner in the School" in its four modes proved no exception to the literature. Smyth (1991: 83) writes:

... that schools are not tidy rational organisations, and that change as a consequence is an ad hoc *piecemeal process.*

Many of our students did not initially perceive the subject to be one of great value to them. After all, why would one engage in a practicum subject, when one is already an experienced teacher? No other student in the School of Teacher Education had ever studied the subject, or one like it, so it had not accumulated the kind of reputation built up over time which core subjects normally develop. There was no "grapevine" about it. Rather there was a feeling of "why complete this extra compulsory subject when previous groups needed only to state that they had been employed as a teacher for a given time to meet a practicum requirement?". As well, not all members of the academic staff were convinced regarding the need for the

subject. They held a view of the practicum as "practice teaching" and found the broadened interpretation of experiential professional learning a difficult one with which to deal.

Professional learning has many dimensions. But there is an increasing recognition that making experience explicit and problematic has the potential to lead to significant reform and change. The point has been made (Rudduck, 1988: 213).:

... that professional learning ... is more likely to be powerful in its engagement with fundamental issues in education if teachers have constructed their own narrative of the need for change. This view recognises that in situations where routine and reproduction of sameness are prevalent, practitioners need help in getting a grasp of the worthwhile problematics of teaching,

This view has been supported by our own experiences. **In effect, this paper is our own narrative of the subject, its purposes and outcomes**. The assignments in the subject and the learning experiences conducted by us and by all students, provided support for the students (who, as mentioned earlier, had varying lengths of teaching experience) to engage in professional learning of a powerful kind. As learners in the subject ourselves, we learnt to collaborate with each other, but also to see new realities in the working lives of our students. We heard their stories of triumphs and frustrations in working in "moving" and "stuck" schools, in dealing with rapid structural and curriculum change and in understanding the ethos of the profession taking greater responsibility for collegial professional development.

We learnt as well the values and pitfalls of making our own pedagogy explicit. Since part of that pedagogy was to be responsive to student feedback this meant that there were departures from the original subject outline. For some students this generated uncertainty, a condition which they found difficult to deal with.

We found that there were unintended consequences of introducing novel forms of assessment. The poster sessions revealed students one to the other. In most tertiary subjects students undertake assignments in privacy. The posters were very public affairs. However, in summative feedback, the majority of responses to the question "What did you like particularly in this subject?" were directed to the assignments, their design and coherence.

Finally, our reflection led us to consider the time frame of the subject. Extending "The Reflective Practitioner in the School" (in Modes B,C and D) over a full year gave students greater opportunity to write and re-write. We ourselves had more time to read and respond to assignments which were to be built upon, rather than treated as discrete events. Even as we write this we can see that the privilege of time is not one accorded to the students in Mode A, the Associate Teacher Program. We now need to further consider whether this mode requires change. It might, for example, be important to include the associate teachers in the poster sessions. Subject development is a continuous activity: as we go on learning about our tertiary teaching so do we continue to attempt to improve and refine our work.

We began this paper with an account of the student coming home from school claiming to have learned "nothing". We refuted the claim and related the anecdote to workplace learning. We now return to the school, to the kindergarten to be precise, and use it once again as a touchstone for adult learning.

Conclusion

Most of us, if we search hard enough, can remember the experience of starting school. Those of us with children of our own certainly know something of the mixed feelings with which youngsters leave home, excitement and anticipation going hand in hand. Even those who have been to pre-school, or have visited the school with their parents, older brothers and sisters and friends still experience uncertainty and apprehension. "How are things done?" "Will I find friends?" "What are the teacher(s) like?" Will I be able to find my way about?" The teacher himself or herself wonders " What surprises does this group have in store for me?". All of these questions apply just as well to beginning a new university subject, for academics and students alike. And, just as the kindergarteners return to the school in later terms in the year with increased confidence and understanding, so, too, did we. Our students found roles and responsibilities became clearer and more understandable and our mutual professional work more satisfying.

Finally, it is our belief that the practices in teacher education outlined in this paper, conform to the recommendation which Jenny Gore developed (1995: 26) in her discussion regarding emerging issues in teacher education: that is, that "teaching and learning to teach need to be conceived as lifelong processes which exist on a continuum".

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