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The pedagogy of teacher educators: revealing practical wisdom through explicit modelling

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Getting started

What does ‘modelling’ in teacher education mean to you?

Write down your ideas and briefly share this with the person next to you…
The aim is to investigate an important strategy widely mentioned in research on teacher education and often referred to as 'explicit modelling'.
The education of (student) teachers (curriculum and practice of teacher educators) is in line with the principles that are preached.

Swennen, Korthagen & Lunenberg, 2004, p. 17
Explicit modelling

It is modelling the processes, thoughts and knowledge of an experienced teacher in a way that demonstrates the ‘why’ or the purpose of teaching:

it is not creating a template of teaching for unending duplication

Loughran & Russell, 1997, p. 62
Teacher educators need to make their teaching explicit, so the modelling is brought to a conscious level of the student teachers. This requires a high level of meta-cognition, it is verbalizing the reflection-in-action, (Schön, 1983) the tacit part of professional knowledge in teaching.
Definition for this research

Explicit modelling is a strategy whereby the teacher educator openly unpacks her practice for the benefit of student teachers or peers.
Why use modelling?

Provides student teachers with:

- Examples of preferred teacher behaviour and values
- Insights into pedagogical reasoning behind teacher decisions
A model for explicit modelling

**LEVEL 1:** Implicit modelling using congruent teaching

**LEVEL 2:** Explicit modelling of critical reflection on practice

**LEVEL 2a:** Building from explicit modelling, the teacher educator considers how their practical wisdom relates to public knowledge

**LEVEL 2b:** Building from explicit modelling, the teacher educator encourages reconstruction by student teachers
Participants and context

- Jane: secondary education - part of University of Applied Sciences - subject Dutch
- Mary: primary education - part of University of Applied Sciences - subject visual arts
- Martin: primary education - post 1992 university - subject mathematics
- Gary: primary education - post 1992 university – subject literacy

All between 10 and 20 years of experience as teacher and at least 8 years experience working in higher education
Videotaping teacher education taught sessions

Video process recall interviews with the teacher educator as they view and select incidents or themes from the video of their session
Differences between the teacher educators

Apparent role
Jane: subject teacher
Martin: teacher educator and subject teacher
Mary and Gary: subject teacher and teacher educator

Addressing their students
Jane: as experienced teachers lacking subject knowledge
Gary as student teachers who need to develop specific aspects of their practice
Mary and Martin: as novice teachers lacking pedagogical knowledge and subject knowledge

Using school practice during classes
Jane: emphasis on what pupils must learn
Mary: emphasis on how pupils may learn
Martin and Gary: emphasis shared between what and how pupils may learn
LEVEL 1: implicit modelling using congruent teaching

Jane: playing out examples, addressing students perceived needs, practice during class, teaching to the test.

Mary: lesson content is a pedagogical model. Many examples from practice are used to explain the model. Process aspects are emphasised complementing school’s attention on products. Methods used are also useful at school.

Martin: the lesson design is intended to illustrate the learning intentions, students complete learning activities that are also used in school classrooms and these are then discussed

Gary: seems alert to the impact his own teaching behaviours can have in shaping and influencing his student teachers
LEVEL 2: explicit modelling of critical reflection on practice

Jane: hardly at all, insights during interview

Mary: deliberate reflection is part of her own lesson planning, practical examples are explained in class. Explicit modelling of how to act is mostly done in individual or small group conversations. Expert knowledge from outside is deliberately brought into the classroom

Martin: no evidence in this session of explicit modelling but claims to have explained the approach to student teachers at start of module

Gary: is seeking to model good teaching but holds back from critically reflecting on his own teaching
Teacher educators often use congruent teaching but in varied and complex ways...

Teacher educators have varied and often restricted views and practices of explicit modelling...

The quality assurance context of teacher educators may influence their modelling...
Discussion questions

• Is it feasible and useful to differentiate between congruent teaching and explicit modelling: in research or/and in practice?

• To what extent are teacher educators able to model the processes, thoughts and knowledge of an experienced teacher?

• How might we develop our research project most usefully from this initial stage?
