

How do lecturers learn to teach?

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Researching practice Introduction

Practice is understood at 3 levels

Macro- the policy making, competitive arena/field

Meso- institution /college level

Micro- the practitioner's space

The macro 'field'

Introduction

- The Bourdieusian 'structured field'
- 'Academic Capital'
- 'Vocationally orientated colleges' versus 'Academically orientated colleges'

Researching practice

Introduction

Themes used to investigate practice

1. Work orientations
2. Workplace organisation
3. Work content and quality
4. Work intensity
5. Learning and training for work

ITT in case-studies

ITT

Narratives from two case-study colleges A and C

What novices said....

- 'I've the attitude, I'm just getting a qualification now. I'm not learning anything here. Quite frankly I haven't learnt anything that I haven't picked up myself in the classroom.'
- 'Its pure common sense that they've managed to compartmentalise.'
- 'They'll teach you, you've got be careful when you're dealing with pens, because it can be embarrassing if you get an ink splodge on your shirt. I thought, 'what am I doing here learning how to keep the pen lid on?' ... I wouldn't even teach it to my level 2 students!'

What HR and Staff Development managers said.....

- 'I think the autonomy that lecturers used to have has gone and I think it's right that [ITT] standards have come in, because I think everyone should be working to high standards.'
- 'The feedback has been very positive and they really appreciate the opportunity to have the ITT training and to have it paid for.'
- 'The big bucks in teacher training need to be spent in terms of what's supporting where the college needs to get to.'
- 'You're not looking at a pupil/teacher relationship anymore and that the bottom line on the customer/supplier relationship is very different than it is on a pupil/teacher relationship.'

ITT in case-studies

ITT

Narratives from case-study college B

What novices said....

- 'My PGCE was quite funny, they push you away from where you want to be. I thought you had to do it this way. It took me a few months to forget what they told me on the PGCE and go back to what I wanted to do before that'
- 'I think I was observed twice every half term then twice every term'
- 'My reviews asked about a lot ofdo you say thank you to your colleagues? Do you work well in a team? A lot of quite personal questions. That's the biggest thing..... That staff are nice to each other when they're not teaching'

What HR and Staff Development managers said.....

- 'I do make a point of talking to new lecturers, they do actually quite enjoy ITT. They'll say, "module 2...I've had a boring module, it wasn't very exciting". Others will say that another module was really good and they learnt about e-learning'
- 'People tell me the education team are very supportive, because some people who are getting a teaching qualification are also working and contributing a substantial amount of hours to the teaching in the college. So they've got a heavy workload and the education team are very flexible. On occasions, there may be a situation where a lecturer needs to interrupt for a short period of time. So they support that and bring them back on board when they can.'

CPD in case-study B

CPD

Narratives from case-study college B

- 'For Staff Development Day agendas, we've priorities that come from the SD group, that do the planning as well. So we have some central priorities, but we also have individual appraisal needs. So we try and meet [all].' *SD manager*
- 'There is a working party, which decides CPD and that's made up of academic and support staff.' *HR manager*
- 'I think that's an ethos that's running across the college to be reflective on our practice all the time. I think that comes at all levels. We constantly have groups of people who meet in different situations, who will look at something and say, "look, can we do this better?".' *Head of Team*

CPD in case-studies A and C

CPD

No solutions from these colleges!

- 'I think well it would be nice if these people had a bit more informed knowledge about the reality of the job.' *experienced lecturer*
- 'We do not get invited to...we used to, to put on things. It's all given to us now, it's what...it comes from a higher agenda and so the CPD will be things like, how funding mechanisms work, the Every Child Matters agenda, that sort of stuff.' *experienced lecturer*
- 'I went on training on differentiation and it was appalling. They didn't have a grasp on what our college setting was'. *experienced lecturer*
- 'We've forced everybody to attend SD on that [VLE] and there's been different sorts of success.' *Vice-P*
- 'We're now down to a handful of people who are really resistant to doing any sort of training and we're dealing with them'. *HR manager*

CPD in case-study B

The informal learning environment in college B

- 'It's very much about: "if you need to see me, come and see me and feedback", to discuss any issues, problems, areas of concern.' *line manager*
- 'When I joined the college, the amount of support I got, I feel that its my job to give that back to other staff. So, it's management that has established this [ethos].' *experienced lecturer*
- 'What I see [in staffrooms] is people working and somebody else looking over their shoulder and thinking, "Oh, that's a good idea". So, they're not necessarily wasting time in workrooms.' *line manager*
- 'One guy didn't have the opportunity for those very important and valuable 5 minute chats in the corridor, or during coffee break - where a great deal of experience and valuable info is exchanged - and so we reorganised it [the workroom] this September along subject lines.' *line manager*
- 'Each year the Principal sees new staff in the autumn term and in the spring term, to see how things have gone.' *Vice-P*

Why is lecturers' learning more effective in college B?

- College B translates external demands into specific arrangements that benefit its situation
- Attitude of SMT is that investing in staff is a strategy that will ensure future stability and success
- SMT focuses on generative¹ resources
- College B is academic capital rich whereas colleges A and C are poorer
- An academic capital poor situation does not excuse people management that can be insensitive and inadequate - as emerged in colleges A and C
- ¹Moldaschl, M. (2002)

Benefits of improving lecturers' opportunities for learning how to teach

Conclusions

- Actions taken in college B do not cost necessarily more – most of it is about SMT's approach/attitude towards lecturers as professionals
- Actions in college B may actually improve efficiency as members of staff are not resentful, not stressed as found in colleges A and C
- College B has
 - low staff turnover, good morale
 - well motivated teaching body, willing to go 'that extra mile'
 - novices take on the dispositions of experienced lecturers regarding learners and their cooperation with colleagues
- Lecturers can flourish in many dimensions of their practice, hence lecturers and learners engage successful educational relationships

• References

- Moldaschl, M. (2002) 'A resource – centred perspective' in P. Docherty et al., (eds) *Creating sustainable work systems: emerging perspectives and practice*, London and New York: Routledge
- Parfitt, A. (2008) 'The construction of FE lecturers' practice'. Unpublished thesis, University of Bath