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Do as we do and not as we say: teacher educators supporting student teachers to learn on teaching practice

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This paper reports data from a larger study into the ways in which Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE) students engaged in professional learning during teaching practice (TP) in Ireland. The study comprised one umbrella case study of Greendale University, schools and PETE students that consisted of five individual cases: tetrads of PETE student teacher, cooperating teacher (CT), University tutor (UT) and School Principal (SP). Each tetrad was defined as a unique community of practice located within the wider structures of school, education and university policies on teacher education. Data were collected over one academic year using qualitative research methods and grounded theory as a systematic data analysis tool.

Findings indicate that in each of the five cases, support for PETE student learning was, to some degree, dysfunctional. In particular, it became evident that there were two conflicting teacher-learning curricula in operation. The official curriculum, expressed in policy and by SPs, UTs and CTs (also referred to as mentors), valued a PETE student who cared for pupils, had a rich pedagogical content knowledge, knew how to plan for and assess pupils' learning, valued reflection, and was an active member of a community of practice. The unofficial but essentially more powerful enacted curriculum, encouraged PETE students to draw upon their own resources to learn pedagogical content knowledge in an isolated and unsupported manner.

The data highlight the force of the unofficial curriculum and the ways in which PETE students were guided to the core of the dysfunctional community of practice by untrained CTs (mentors) and untrained UTs. PETE students in this study learned to survive in a largely unsupportive professional learning environment and, just as theories of social reproduction intimate, indicated that they would reproduce this practice with PETE students in their care in the future.

The findings suggest that in cases similar to those studied, there is a need for teacher educators in Ireland, (in both universities and schools) to critically interrogate their personal practices and implicit theories of teacher education and to engage in training for their role. There is also evidence to suggest that PETE students in Ireland could benefit from the development of school–university partnerships that act as fundamental units of high quality professional learning. In the cases studied, this may have led to a stronger focus on the intended or official curriculum of TP, led by the revised maxim: 'Do as we say *and* as we do'.

Keywords: *Official and unofficial curriculum; Teaching practice; Professional learning; Mentoring; Physical education; School–university relationship*

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Introduction

Teacher education remains a black box. We do not know what effective teachers do, know, believe or build on nor do we know what conditions make it possible. (Cochran-Smith, 2005, p. 8)

There is, currently, intense interest in evidence-based teacher education research in an ‘intentional and systematic effort to unlock the black box of teacher education, turn the lights on inside it and shine spotlights into its corners, rafters and floorboards’ (Cochran-Smith, 2005, p. 8). The spotlights in this research were directed at PETE students’ professional learning on TP, and the ways in which the process of TP supervision supported and, at times, hindered student learning. Underpinning this research is an understanding of the conceptual and practical complexity of learning generally and PETE student learning in particular. Choosing to focus specifically on PETE student professional learning responds to the dearth of research in this area in Ireland.

According to Barab and Duffy (2000), there has been a shift in the emphasis of learning theories from cognitive theories that highlight individual learners to anthropological or situative theories that focus on the social nature of learning (p. 26). In situative theories, learning is associated with an increase in the ability to participate effectively in the practices of a community; thus learning is conceptualised as collaborative social practice, located in communities of practice and occurring through legitimate peripheral participation (LPP) in those communities (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Lave and Wenger (1991) argue that:

To be able to participate in a legitimately peripheral way entails that newcomers have broad access to arenas of mature practice. (p. 110)

Lave and Wenger’s view of learning has obvious implications for learning in Initial Teacher Education (ITE), particularly in understanding the ways in which TP supervision is constructed to enable old-timers to move apprentice teachers (newcomers) from LPP to full participation in the community of practice (1991). Applied to the school environment and to training PETE students, viewing learning as a social practice highlights the need to examine how the school context into which a PETE student is placed for TP can be described as a supportive community of practice. Ideally, such a community of practice would comprise work colleagues, CTs (mentors), student peers and university tutors, and would facilitate PETE student learning through ongoing discussion and collaboration on commonly valued issues and concerns (Mawer, 1996). In this way, teacher professional competencies would be developed in authentic settings (Fenwick, 1999) and in ‘school conditions that make it possible for new teachers to take advantage of the resources available to them’ (Cochran-Smith, 2005, p. 9).

This study investigated the ways in which cooperating teachers (CTs), university tutors (UTs) and school principals (SPs) worked as expert teacher educators to support Irish PETE students to learn within the five case study schools. The research took place within the context of TP in order to capture its authentic conditions.

Communities of practice within teaching practice

Communities of practice, according to Wenger (1998) are everywhere and we are generally involved in a number of them; they are an integral part of our daily lives. Lave and Wenger (1991) describe this intersection of communities of practice as follows:

A community of practice is a set of relations among persons, activity, and world over time and in relation with other tangential and overlapping communities of practice. (p. 98)

Teachers are part of a community of practice within their school that includes administrators, students and parents (Kirk & Macdonald, 1998). There are decided advantages to describing the activities of teachers as ‘communities of practice’ because by using such a framework, it is possible to identify the social and cultural factors that impinge on what is learned and how learning takes place (Kirk & Macdonald, 1998).

A Community of Practice is a persistent, sustained social network of individuals who share ‘social capital’ (Putnam, 2000); i.e. a knowledge base, set of beliefs, values, history and experiences focused on a common practice and/or mutual enterprise (Barab *et al.*, 2002). They encompass a shared repertoire of communal resources that include:

Routines, words, tools, ways of doing things, stories, gestures, symbols, genres, actions, or concepts that the community has produced or adopted in the course of its existence, and which have become part of its practice. (Wenger, 1998, p. 83)

More than this, the community is defined by its practice in which explicit and implicit knowledge, or curriculum, are negotiated; that is, meaning is constructed through what the community actually does. The official curriculum is primarily the knowledge, skills and understanding that teacher educators *intend* PETE students to acquire. The unofficial curriculum consists of what PETE students learn from their participation in ITE but which is not planned in the official curriculum. The unofficial curriculum exercises a profound influence on PETE students. It can be a vehicle for achieving both desirable and undesirable ends (Hargreaves, 2001, p. 494), yet it can be overlooked. Therefore, the real impact of ITE lies in how the images of teacher, learner, knowledge, and school curriculum are subtly communicated to prospective teachers through the processes of the unofficial (and sometimes hidden) curriculum of teacher education programmes (Bartholomew, 1976; Giroux, 1980; Popkewitz, 1985; Ginsburg, 1988). T.S. Eliot’s description of the ‘shadow’ captures this notion of the juxtaposition of the official and unofficial curriculum:

Between the idea
And the reality
Between the motion and the act
Falls the Shadow . . .
Between the conception
And the creation
Between the emotion

And the response
Falls the Shadow ... (*The Hollow Men*, T.S. Eliot 1961)

Clearly, the unofficial curriculum, or 'shadow' of ITE, operates in tandem with the official curriculum.

Situated learning and teaching practice

Situated learning theory is the theoretical framework underpinning the concept of Community of Practice. It implies that learning is social in nature and it occurs throughout our daily lives (Lave & Wenger, 1991) in a process during which newcomers and old-timers learn from each other in a multidirectional process within the community of practice. The notion of Legitimate Peripheral Participation explains the movement of newcomers from the periphery of the community of practice to become full participants at its amorphous core, and how newcomers move in and old-timers move out in 'reproduction cycles' as the community of practice evolves (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Thus, this movement from the periphery to the centre means becoming progressively more engaged and active in the practice of the community. If Legitimate Peripheral Participation is the process by which newcomers become old-timers, newcomers must realise that they have to negotiate formal access to the core, and also earn access to the concealed transcript of the back stage. As Goffman (1959) argued, the newcomer craves access to front and back stage. In this metaphor, knowledge of both the 'front and back stage' represents full participation in the community of practice. Clearly, therefore, studies which adopt a situative perspective must focus on:

The individual teacher (including the teacher's biography, values, goals and capabilities); the act of teaching; the physical, social and cultural school environment. (Rovegno, 2003, p. 296)

Legitimate peripheral participation within teaching practice

Legitimate peripherality is a complex concept, implicated in social structures involving relations of power. Thus, peripherality can be a 'place of power' as the newcomer moves toward more intense participation (Heaney, 1995) or where 'one is kept from participating more fully-a disempowering position' (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 36). Heaney (1995) describes peripherality as having the 'dynamic and at times chaotic energy which is experienced on the edge where the frenzy of transformative learning is more likely to occur' (p. 3). As Mezirow (1991) argued, transformative learning occurs when learners change their 'meaning schemes ... and engage in critical reflection on their experiences, which in turn leads to a perspective transformation' (p. 167). However, as has already been intimated, legitimate peripheral participation is not always a positive experience. It can also be:

Disempowering, decentering, and dehumanizing in the conflict across borders and within communities as various constituencies compete on an unequal field of power. (Mezirow, 1991, p. 3)

Clearly, being positioned at the border or on the periphery describes a space and time dimension of tremendous potential energy, yet this can be both constructive and destructive. Where there is destructive energy, newcomers can experience difficulties in accessing the community of practice. This is something more than simply the initial 'benign community neglect' that allows them to acclimatise to the periphery of the community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 93). Instead, Becker (1972) describes detrimental happenings when structural constraints in work organisations limit or prevent apprentices' access to the full range of activities of the job, and hence to possibilities for learning.

Importantly for this study, Merriam *et al.* (2003) describe how the trajectory of participation mutually reinforces the learning trajectory (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 36). Along this learning trajectory, the 'interplay of conflict and synergy is central to all aspects of learning in practice' (*ibid.*, p. 103). It is important to recognise that conflict may have a stifling effect on learning at the periphery, thus curbing the trajectory of learning into the core of the community of practice.

Clearly, viewing learning from a community of practice perspective has implications for views on how teachers can be trained effectively. Ideally, new teachers (newcomers) would be members of overlapping communities of practice comprising student peers, supportive work colleagues, CTs (mentors) and their university tutors. Within such a community, there would be ongoing discussion, sharing and collaboration on commonly valued issues and concerns (Mawer, 1996). Newcomers would, then, engage in a process of meaning-making to form both their personal and pedagogic identities (Zukas, 2006). It is evident that the newcomer needs to be both self-motivated and supported by old timers to harness the potential energy at the periphery and thus move along the learning trajectory from legitimate peripheral participation to full participation in the community of practice.

Teaching practice in PETE

Recent understandings of learning have shifted towards a social, situated and contextual view and existing literature on PETE programmes suggests that TP, or clinical experience is a central aspect of quality PETE programmes (Behets & Vergauwen, 2006). In spite of this, in Ireland TP placement is often based on availability rather than suitability with schools sometimes providing difficult contexts for the PETE student e.g. poor facilities and untrained CTs (mentors) (McIntyre *et al.*, 1996). It is through TP that the PETE student learns the 'rub between theory and practice' solidifying teachers' professional knowledge, encompassed in the generic term pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) (Amade-Escot, 2000). McCullick (2001) emphasises the importance of teacher educators having a clear and shared understanding of the curriculum of ITE and their role in promoting this on TP. Existing research in teacher education indicates what differing parties in the process identify as good practice:

A strong core curriculum taught in the context of practice and grounded in knowledge of child and adolescent development and learning, an understanding of social and cultural contexts, curriculum, assessment, and subject matter pedagogy. (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 305)

School and university personnel should clearly understand and fulfil their respective roles, thus delivering a shared, logical programme of teacher education (McIntyre *et al.*, 1996; Hardy, 1999; Kiely, 2005). This study examines practice from an Irish perspective by analysing the school–university partnership in TP from the viewpoint of all the parties involved and, in particular, impact on PETE student learning in specific areas. This research examined the nature and quality of PETE student learning within a community of practice framework during a seven-month TP placement and was led by the following questions:

- (1) How are PETE students supported to learn effectively during TP within the existing partnership model?
- (2) How do cooperating teachers (mentors) and university tutors view their roles and the nature of learning within the current model of TP supervision?
- (3) What is the nature of the PETE student learning that takes place on TP?
- (4) How does school-based learning link to other strands of the teacher education programme in supporting student teacher competence?

This paper reports one key finding that is important in all four questions i.e. in each of the five cases, support for PETE student learning was, to some degree, dysfunctional. In particular, it became evident that there were two conflicting teacher-learning curricula in operation. The official curriculum, expressed in policy and by SPs, UTs and CTs (mentors), valued a PETE student who cared for pupils, had a rich pedagogical content knowledge, knew how to plan for and assess pupils' learning, valued reflection and was an active member of a community of practice. The unofficial, but essentially more powerful enacted curriculum encouraged PETE students to draw upon their own resources to learn pedagogical content knowledge in an isolated and unsupported manner.

Methodology

The study from which these data are drawn analysed one umbrella case (university and PETE students and the schools) that comprised five individual cases: five tetrads of PETE student, CT, UT and SP. Through this vehicle, the phenomenon of how PETE students experienced learning support from CTs, UTs and SPs during TP was studied over a seven-month period. There were *five* individual case studies (CS1, CS2, CS3, CS4, CS5). The identity of all participants and universities in this study were protected through the use of pseudonyms. The case studies were selected, initially, by offering all 17 Graduate Diploma students (15 females and 2 males) on a one-year Graduate Diploma in Education (Physical Education) programme at Greendale University, an opportunity to participate in the research. These PETE students had completed a five-year non-teaching degree programme at Brightwater

University in Health, Fitness and Leisure Studies. Thereafter, they enrolled on the one-year Graduate Diploma in Education (Physical Education) programme at Greendale University. Of the group of 17 students, 5 female PETE students volunteered to take part in this study. The UT, CT and SP assigned to each of these five female PETE students on TP were asked to engage in the study and thus having assented became part of each case study, resulting in five individual case studies each comprising of four individuals: PETE student, CT, UT and SP. It is important to recognise at the outset, therefore, that the PETE students (Aoife, Barbara, Carol, Dara and Edel) at the core of each case study were self-selected research participants.

It has been argued that the over-riding purpose of case study research is to study a small number of cases in considerable *depth* (Hammersley & Gomm, 2000). This is in contrast to, for example, social survey which investigates many cases (individuals) and gathers a comparatively small amount of data on each. In this study, an in-depth, detailed analysis of five cases was undertaken to build an insightful picture of each case to ascertain how each of five PETE student teachers was supported to learn within TP. Generalisability does not derive from the representativeness of this sample, but from the way in which the concepts and experiences are likely to be applicable to, and shared by, relevant other settings and groups. Importantly, the data analysis process (outlined below) was systematic and transparent, allowing the reader access to the researcher's reasoning.

In order to add to the depth of understanding of the research questions, a variety of data collection methods and approaches was used. The process of triangulation (Begley, 1996) allows the researcher 'to determine how various actors in the situation view it' (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 44). More recently, the image of crystallisation (Richardson, 2000) has been used to capture this notion. The methods used in this study, to allow such crystallisation (*ibid*) within the case study framework were Open Profile Questionnaires (used at the outset of the study with PETE students and CTs to gain biographical information), recording key events through participant observation (utilised with UTs, CTs and PETE students), focus groups (employed with PETE students and UTs), collection of artefacts (used with PETE students and UTs), in-depth interviews (utilised with all participants) and reflective journal writing after each data gathering session (as an aide memoir for the researcher).

It is important to note that in this study, the researcher (Dr. Chambers) had an 'insider/outsider status' (Minichiello *et al.*, 1995, p. 182) because she had studied as an undergraduate in similar circumstances and currently has a professional role in teacher education. Thus, it was her concerns about the ability of key personnel to support PETE student learning in Ireland that led to an interest in the research. In other words, she cared deeply about what and whom she was studying (Toma, 2000, p. 177). Strauss and Corbin (1998) claim there are positive things to say about this complex inter-connection of the personal and the professional in research:

Choosing a research problem through the professional or personal experience route might seem more hazardous than doing so through the literature route. This is not

necessarily the case. The touchstone of one's own experience might be a more valuable indicator of a potentially successful research endeavour than another more abstract source. (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 38)

The argument, essentially, is that having acknowledged the 'insider/outsider status of the researcher' (Minichiello *et al.*, 1995, p. 182), a case can be made that reflexivity 'where researchers engage in explicit, self-aware analysis of their own role' (Finlay, 2002, p. 531) can acknowledge and mediate for the bias in the study. Through a reflexive process, the researcher's humanity is accepted and celebrated. After all:

Researchers are not information gatherers, data processors or sense-makers of other people's lives; rather they are expected to be able to communicate with individuals and groups, to participate in appropriate cultural processes and practices and to interact in a dialogic manner with the research participants. (Bishop, 2005, p. 120)

Added to this was the independent insight of the second author (Professor Armour) that was utilised at each stage of the research. Through joint discussion, the authors determined the pathway of the research after each phase of data collection and analysis in order to mine the case studies for rich data.

The data analysis was undertaken using Strauss and Corbin's (1998) Grounded Theory. Grounded Theory is an inductive process of discovering theory from data (Pidgeon & Henwood, 2004); essentially the qualitative researcher has 'grounded their theory in data and validated their statements of relationship between concepts' (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 5). This process provides the researcher with a systematic and structured analysis, generating transparency in the process and confidence in any conclusions drawn.

Grounded Theory is underpinned by the process of 'constant comparison'. Harry *et al.* (2005) extrapolated Strauss and Corbin's grounded theory technique and proposed a six level approach, in an attempt to make the methodology as transparent and robust as possible. In this study, the decision was taken to follow Harry *et al.*'s (2005) six stages in the process of data analysis:

- *Levels one and two: Derivation of open codes and conceptual categories* (i.e. Open and Axial coding) from initial interview data. During Open Coding the researcher labels events and actions (coded) in the data comparing them with one another to determine which data belong together (Harry *et al.*, 2005). During Axial Coding, categories are related to their sub-categories. In other words, the codes are grouped according to what they have in common or clustered according to axes or points of intersection (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). It was key here to capture the essence of the five case studies in a fluid, flexible manner, so that the product is not 'clinical' (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 129). Thus, data from each case study remained true to the 'authentic setting' (Fenwick, 1999) of each PETE student's TP experience. In this step, the researcher was already beginning to abstract meaning from the data (Harry *et al.*, 2005).
- *Level three: Developing themes* (selective coding). This mechanism formed the thematic findings of the study (Harry *et al.*, 2005). In essence, the clusters were

related to each other to determine the story or theme that they told (Harry *et al.*, 2005).

- *Level four: Testing the themes.* Here, the researcher interpreted the data and moved towards inducting theory, and engaged in member-checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) by viewing findings from a number of participants' perspectives. This is also known as crystallisation (Richardson, 2000) and it was important in this study because the researcher was a relative insider in the field.
- *Level five: Interrelating the explanations.* The themes were refined to become explanations and these were examined in an effort to identify contradictory explanations. What is interesting here is that no theme or explanation can stand in isolation from other themes; they are essentially interrelated.
- *Level six: Delineating the theory.* Glaser and Strauss (1967) identified two types of theory; formal and substantive. Formal theory is that which can be applied to a broad range of topics. Substantive theory implies that the theory only applies to the context being studied. In this research, it could be argued that evidence about the official and unofficial TP curriculum represents substantive theory. At the same time, evidence from the wider literature on teacher education suggests that elements of it could be developed to the level of formal theory.

Findings: reporting and analysis

This study found that each PETE student learned important lessons about the official and unofficial curriculum of their community of practice. The official curriculum, expressed in policy and by SPs, UTs and CTs (mentors) set about developing PETE students who: (a) cared for pupils; (b) had a rich pedagogical content knowledge; (c) knew how to plan for and assess pupils' learning; (d) valued reflection; and (e) were active members of a community of practice (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 1989). The unofficial curriculum often conspired to undermine this by propagating a very different understanding of what it was to be a professional in practice. The findings have been organised around the aforementioned five official curriculum areas.

PETE students care about their pupils

McCullick (2001) asserts that PETE students need to have 'a genuine concern for the welfare of their students [pupils]' (p. 41). In addition, the PETE student must enjoy being around people, especially children and exhibit a gregarious personality which should encourage pupil learning (McCullick, 2001). Wubbels *et al.* (1997) suggested that effective teachers have strong pupil-teacher relationships and are empathic, but in control.

One UT, Claire, wanted to see that PETE students exhibited a strong commitment to the pupils in their care, before, during and after classes:

And then their . . . their commitment to kids. I mean, you know, are they interested in the kids? Do they enjoy the kids? I mean it's just . . . do they simply enjoy being around the kids? Can you see the way that they interact with the kids? And particularly in a gymnasium when class is over or before class starts. (CS2, CS3 & CS5, UT, Claire, Tutor Focus Group, 17 January 2007)

John (CT) wanted PETE students to get to know his pupils as individuals (CS2, CT, John, Interview 3, 12 February 2007). John's School Principal, Mr. Cotter, agreed asserting that the PETE student must develop both as a person and as a teacher in order to understand and empathise with pupils (CS2, SP, Mr. Cotter, Interview Principal, 12 February 2007).

However, the unofficial curriculum seemed to mitigate against this view. It became clear that PETE students were not learning how to care for their pupils in the community of practice. Mr. Noonan (SP) was concerned that PETE students did not seem to have a duty of care toward their pupils: for example if a school tour bus returned 10 minutes before the final school bell, PETE students would not supervise the pupils and would let pupils 'wander off home' (CS5, SP, Mr. Noonan, Interview Principal, 16 February 2007).

Data suggest that while the official curriculum of the community of practice placed a high value on the professional skill of caring for pupils, the unofficial curriculum failed to develop such skills.

PETE students have a strong pedagogical knowledge (PCK) in physical education

Dara described how Greendale University admitted the PETE students onto the Graduate Diploma in the belief that they were fully skilled in PE PCK during their undergraduate degree programme at Brightwater University. Therefore, the programme at Greendale University included very few practical courses (CS4, PETE student, Dara, Interview 3, 16 February 2007). Four CTs (CS1, CS2, CS3 and CS5) in this study appeared to expect PETE students to have adequate PCK when starting TP, perhaps because they believed that TP was an opportunity for PETE students to practise PCK, not to learn it. This finding supports Kay's (2004) study, where CTs showed a lack of empathy for PETE students who did not have adequate PCK. It seemed that CTs believed it was the role of the university, not the school, to teach PCK to the PETE students. There was evidence that the schools felt their role in teacher training was secondary to their responsibility to pupils (Williams & Soares, 2002, p. 105). As a result of these circumstances, PETE students struggled with their level of PCK on TP:

Aoife (PETE student) displayed crucial gaps in her PCK and knowledge of safe learning environments:

And again, the safety issues . . . with basketball, when she started with basketball, both myself and Imelda were there. She started with something like a 12 against 12 games with one ball. There are 24 balls. (CS1, CT, Louise, Interview 2, 4 December 2006)

John (CT) described how Barbara (PETE student) couldn't plan for the optimum amount of content in her soccer class and was too 'ambitious' (CS2, CT, John, Interview 3, 12 February 2007).

Overall, in this study, four CTs were either unable or unwilling to support their PETE students in their PCK learning, so students Aoife, Barbara, Carol and Edel, turned to reference books and the Internet for this knowledge. Aoife (PETE student) described mechanisms for bolstering her PCK by reading relevant books and the Internet and using the technique of visualisation:

I do practice out the skills and I read the points and actually visualise myself doing it on a practical setting. (CS1, PETE student, Aoife, Interview 2, December 2007)

Louise, her CT noticed this, but did not offer to help Aoife learn PCK.

In effect, both CTs and UTs abdicated responsibility for teaching PETE students PCK. So, while the official curriculum asserted the importance of high quality PCK, the unofficial curriculum encouraged PETE students to learn PCK in an isolated and unsupported way using any resources they could find.

PETE students are responsible for management and assessment of pupil learning

Van Der Mars (2006) posits that teachers create opportunities for pupil learning in the classroom through both classroom management and instructional planning. During ITE the PETE student learns this skill. In addition, PETE students learn to assess pupil learning which is defined as:

A variety of tasks and settings where students [pupils] are given opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge, skill, understanding and application of content in a context that allows continued learning and growth. (Siedentop & Tannehill, 2000, p. 179)

In this study, Claire (UT) asserted that the PETE student should learn a variety of skills including the planning and executing of classroom management, instruction and assessment. More than this, Claire (UT) wanted PETE students to learn to justify their planning in relation to their pupils and overall school policy:

And, I suppose, genuinely, I have very little tolerance for students who are not prepared to plan. And have they thought about why they are going to deliver in a particular way and why that would facilitate what they are about? So, it's not just the content. And a lot of times we get ... we get caught up in the management issues and that's fine, it's their survival. But, have they given thought to the instructional aspects of it? (CS2, CS3 & CS5, UT, Claire, Tutor Focus Group, 17 January 2007)

In reality, however, classroom management was an area where PETE students were lacking in expertise, in particular in operating within timetable constraints and 'As a PE teacher management of time is the most critical thing they have to do' (CS5, SP, Mr. Noonan, Interview, 16 February 2007).

The PETE students received many conflicting messages on this issue. The university asserted the importance of planning, instruction and assessment of pupil

learning. However, the school contended that time management was the most important PETE student skill to ensure that school timetables are not disrupted. This was confusing for the PETE students because it seemed to them that they had to prioritise one set of skills for the university and another for the school. This finding links to a study by McCullick (2001) who found that divergent expectations of PETE students by university and school can lead to tensions. Such conflicts have been reported to have adverse effects on PETE student learning (Kahan, 1999).

PETE students are reflective practitioners

Tsangaridou and Siedentop (1995) contend that reflective practice during TP is a core element that prepares PETE students for the unexpected in the classroom. According to Behets and Vergauwen (2006), the critical role of reflection for teachers is shaped by the emphasis on reflection within the ITE programme. In this study, three UTs, one SP and one PETE student identified the importance of reflection. Liz (UT) defined reflection being something that progressed and deepened learning: 'Dara needed genuine reflection to take her on' (CS4, UT, Liz, Interview Tutor, 4 December 2006). Noelle (UT) described how through reflection the PETE student would develop their own teaching style and become an autonomous teacher:

Actually making their own identity or remit as a teacher and not following particular rules or routes that we think they want you to go. And I like . . . I think the most rewarding is, that people [PETE students] can actually make a case for the way that they actually are teaching. (CS1, Noelle, UT, Tutor Focus Group, 17 January 2007)

Edel (PETE student) knew that not all PETE students found the reflective process helpful as they said 'it was a drudge' although she felt it had helped her to 'grow as a teacher' (CS5, PETE student, Edel, Interview 2, 11 December 2006).

So, even though the UTs realised the importance of reflective practice and it is something that was emphasised at the university during ITE, just one SP also acknowledged its value. This SP did note, however, that he could see 'little evidence of it in teacher education' (CS2, SP, Mr. Cotter Interview Principal, 12 February 2007). Moreover, none of the CTs in this study referred to reflective practice. This finding needs to be set in the context of Byra's (1996) assertion that the supervisory process on TP is crucial in promoting PETE students' reflective skills.

PETE students are members of learning communities

Claire (UT) asserted the importance of PETE students becoming members of a community of practice:

Their ability to see themselves as part of a school, as part of a commitment to a profession. Do they ask questions about that? Are they interested in that? And do they see their connection beyond the four walls of the gymnasium? (CS2, CS3 & CS5, UT, Claire, Tutor Focus Group, 17 January 2007)

In this study, all five PETE students were legitimately peripheral to their respective community of practice. The key mechanism by which old-timers (CTs, SPs) brought newcomers (PETE students) centripetally to the core (Maynard, 2001) of their community of practice was through School Induction programmes.

Although there is no legal requirement to do so, some schools in Ireland put in place an Induction Programme to help orient student teachers and new teachers to the school setting. In these cases, a member of the teaching staff is usually assigned to manage the Induction Programme. In this study, three of the five schools had an Induction Policy. In one of these schools, Barbara (PETE student) was very impressed by the programme in place and she found the Induction Coordinator to be both supportive and available:

And she came up and sat down with us and said, if you ever... if you have any problems or you need to talk or anything like that, just come look for me. (CS2, PETE student, Barbara, Focus Group, 29 March 2007)

In contrast, two schools had no formal Induction Programme in place for novice teachers; instead they were expected to learn as they went. The following data excerpts illustrate the situation in these schools.

Mr. Kelly (SP) in TowerHill School commented that his school did not have a formal Induction Policy in place. He asserted that student teachers were inducted to his school mainly by *not* being segregated and by being allowed into the staffroom: 'There is no separate room or anything like that for them. They are up in the staff room where they are with everybody' (CS1, SP, Mr. Kelly, Interview, 13 February 2007).

In TreeTops School, Carol (PETE student) felt very isolated reporting that there was 'no Induction Programme for student teachers' (CS3, PETE student, Carol, Interview 3, 16 February 2007). Carol was not even invited to the Staff Christmas Party 'I wasn't invited, but I wouldn't go, anyway' (CS3, PETE student, Carol, Interview 2, 4 December 2006). Carol reported that as far as she could ascertain, no one in the school had time for her: 'I kind of sneak off. Nobody even knows I exist... they don't even know my name' (CS3, PETE student, Carol, Interview 2, 4 December 2007).

The findings indicate that UTs and SPs were overt in their support for the notion of community of practice membership for PETE students. For these PETE students, however, being positioned at the border or on the periphery of the community of practice seemed to be fraught with contradictory energy, illustrating Becker's (1972) concerns described earlier. As has been illustrated for one PETE student, Carol, the energy was so destructive that she remained on the periphery of the community of practice. The remaining four PETE students all learned the unofficial curriculum of their communities that advocated resilience, resourcefulness and autonomy to enable them to survive, largely unsupported, on TP.

Discussion

Terroir is a term unique to the French language and French wine making. It refers to the sum of all the external influences on grape growing, often translated as a 'sense of

place'. The interplay of soil, bedrock, sun and wind exposure, water table, climate and farming methods come together in a unique expression in the wine, which is specific to a particular region. The theory of *terroir* encompasses the almost metaphysical circle of soil, nature, appellation and human activity. Culture is etymologically related to *terroir*, as it has at its root the latin *colere*, meaning to till. Culture, therefore, is akin to *terroir*.

Lave and Wenger's (1991) 'situated' perspective on learning seems to have strong parallels with the concept of *terroir*. Just as the characteristics of wine are influenced by the *terroir* that they, in turn, influence, so too is the person by the culture in which s/he is located. The view of learning as 'situated', therefore, incorporates a number of linked theories that centre on the whole person and on the relationship between that person and the context and culture in which they learn (Resnick, 1994, p. 16). This study adopted a 'situated learning' perspective in order to investigate how the culture and context that comprised TP influenced PETE student learning. From a situative perspective, learning occurs whenever individuals interact that, in the case of this study, is characterised by interactions within each case study tetrad; i.e. between the PETE student, CT, UT and SP. Data illustrate the ways in which the cultural fabric within each of the tetrads influenced the pedagogical identity (Zukas, 2006) of the PETE student determining how, what, where, when and from whom the PETE student learned during TP.

This study provides support for Fenwick's (1999) warning that the situated view of learning encourages participation in the existing community of practice: 'it provides no tools for judging what is deemed "good" in a particular situation' (p. 1). It is, thus, important to acknowledge that the mere existence of a community of practice does not mean that the community is a well-functioning social entity or a positive catalyst for effective learning; it can also be dysfunctional in ways that subvert the quality of learning (Wenger, 1998; McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001). Wenger (1998) outlined how the core characteristics of a community of practice can be dysfunctional:

Most situations that involve sustained interpersonal engagement generate their fair share of tensions and conflicts. In some communities of practice, conflict and misery can even constitute the core characteristic of shared practice ... A community of practice is neither a haven of togetherness nor an island of intimacy insulated from political and social relations. Disagreement, challenges and competition can all be forms of participation. (p. 77)

The community is defined by its practice in which explicit and implicit knowledge or curriculum can be official or unofficial. In this study the unofficial curriculum was very powerful. Each of the five PETE students experienced the rhetoric of TP (official curriculum) but, because the CTs, SPs and UTs either did or expected something different, they learned the unofficial curriculum in order to survive.

It can be argued that effective ITE programmes possess a range of key characteristics, one of which is placing value on the strength of the school–university relationship in supporting PETE student learning (Darling-Hammond, 2006). McCullick (2001) discovered that conflicts between school and university

personnel are related to the curriculum of the school and university that are often developed through misunderstandings about learning to teach. Findings in this study supported this.

If the fundamental unit of Irish PETE is a dysfunctional community of practice that does not support PETE student professional learning during formation of their pedagogic identity (Zukas, 2006), this has clear implications for the quality of PE teacher being educated for Irish classrooms and ultimately for pupil learning. More worryingly, just as theories of social reproduction intimate, CTs who had themselves experienced unsupported learning on TP reproduced this practice when they became CTs. For example, John (CT) describes his personal experience as a PETE student the level of CT support on his first TP:

They were very good if anything, even the smallest problem, be it equipment or if there was a difficult kid. They'd be straight in to you to give you the technique to work it but they wouldn't sort out your problem for you. They'd go away again. (CS2, CT, John, Interview 1, 9 October 2006)

Similarly, John advocated a 'hands-off' approach to mentoring students, and so did not feel it appropriate that a 'teacher [CT] would be stuck in a lesson with them [a PETE student]' (CS2, CT, John, Interview 1, 9 October 2006).

Conclusion

This paper highlights the potency of the unofficial curriculum of teaching practice; the curriculum as practised rather than the curriculum advocated in policy documents. It has illustrated the ways in which PETE students became members of a dysfunctional community of practice that advocated an official curriculum but in reality did little to foster its development with PETE students. It is argued that in order to support PETE student learning more effectively in Ireland, school and university personnel must work in an effective partnership to educate PETE students in the intended or official curriculum of TP. These changes could be underpinned by the revised maxim: 'Do as we say *and* as we do'.

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