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AUTHOR	Loughran, John; Berry, Amanda; Tudball, Elizabeth
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ABSTRACT

This paper examines some of the social aspects of teaching about teaching that are important in shaping the nature of communication among teacher educators and their student teachers when sharing in the process of learning about teaching. The focus of this study is a third year, double degree subject, "Developing Pedagogy," that is team taught. The paper largely focuses on the students' perspective of the subject. Through developing and teaching this subject, the teacher educators have come to better understand the value of explicitly modeling particular aspects of teaching and how to purposefully "unpack" such experiences through honest and professional critique. An important aspect of this subject is paying careful attention to learning how to critique teaching actions rather than personally criticizing individuals. However, trust is a pivotal point to all aspects of such work. (Contains 17 references.) (Author/SM)

Developing trust in teaching: learning to help student-teachers learn about their practice

John Loughran, Amanda Berry and Elizabeth Tudball

Faculty of Education

Monash University

Australia

Correspondence: john.loughran@education.monash.edu.au

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Abstract

This paper examines some of the social aspects of teaching about teaching that are important in shaping the nature of communication amongst teacher educators and their student teachers when sharing in the process of learning about teaching. The focus of this study is a third year double degree subject "Developing Pedagogy" that we team-teach together and this paper largely focuses on the students' perspective of the subject. Through developing and teaching this subject we have come to better understand the value of explicitly modelling particular aspects of teaching and how to purposefully 'unpack' such experiences through honest and professional critique. An important aspect of this subject is paying careful attention to learning how to critique teaching actions rather than personally criticizing individuals. However, trust is a pivotal point to all aspects of such work.

Context

In the Faculty of Education at Monash University, one of the teacher preparation pathways is a 4 year Double Degree program (eg. B.Sc./B.Ed.; B.A./B.Ed.). In recent times, we have been collaborating in our teaching of a third year subject (EDF3002: Developing Pedagogy) within the Double Degree program, in which intensive peer teaching experiences are used as one way of helping student-teachers begin to learn about their own teaching. Through this collaboration some of the assumptions that underpin our approach to teaching about teaching have been challenged as we have been confronted by some of the difficulties of implementing risk-taking approaches in our own (and our students') teaching (see Berry & Loughran, 2002).

In our conceptualization of Developing Pedagogy, we organized our teaching with the explicit purpose of modelling particular aspects of pedagogy (Loughran, 1996) for our student-teachers and to also 'unpack' these aspects of teaching through honest and professional critique. However, this purpose carries with it the requirement that we also focus student-teachers' attention on the need to concurrently learn to critique teaching actions rather than unwittingly engage in personal criticism of individuals. As a consequence, we initiate such learning by creating situations through which professional critique can be modelled; starting with our own practice.

In the first two sessions one of us teaches some specific content (for example, using a POE – White & Gunstone (1992) – to explore the nature of air pressure). Then the episode is publicly de-briefed in order to highlight particular aspects of the teaching and to model approaches to critiquing practice. This initial foray into critiquing practices is organized as a serious pedagogical experience itself (such that) as we are attempting to illustrate how careful questioning of a teacher's purposes and practices can offer insight into the pedagogical reasoning and the feelings that accompany the decision-making and shaping forces during a teaching and learning episode. Through the critiquing experience, the colleague conducting the critique explains the thinking that underpins his/her questions and also gradually invites class members into the practice by asking them to raise their own questions and, where appropriate, helping to illustrate ways of re-shaping questions in response to the spirit of critique, as opposed to personal criticism.

These initial sessions are followed by a 2:2 teaching experience whereby pairs of student-teachers teach a pair of Year 7 (first year of high school) students. In this

situation, one student-teacher teaches while the other observes. After the teaching, the observer interviews the students in an attempt to access their perceptions of the experience. Through this experience, the student-teacher pairs collaborate in planning the teaching and de-briefing and together engage in a process of critique of their own practice, hopefully reflecting the learning about such critique from the early sessions in the subject. The 2:2 is formally completed through their joint construction a Reflective Assignment about the experience highlighting their practice, their views on their critique, the feelings associated with both, as well as their understanding about their learning.

Following the 2:2, the majority of the subject then proceeds through video-taped peer teaching experiences whereby groups of student-teachers teach their peers. Just as we modelled in the initial stages of the subject, the focus of the peer teaching is the teaching rather than the content to be taught so that the use of a diversity of teaching procedures is encouraged. For this peer teaching, student-teachers are organised into small groups (3-4) to prepare the teaching for one hour sessions. Each group is responsible for collaborating in the planning, teaching and de-briefing of the experience. And, as in the 2:2 experience, the group also collaborate in completing their 'write-up' of the experience which includes their response to viewing the video-tape and, responding to the verbal and written feedback provided by all participants in the class (students and lecturers). This approach to learning from experience is designed to encourage participants to begin to recognize the value of alternative perspectives on situations by helping them to access learners' views and to be cognizant of their own feelings and actions at different times and in different roles throughout the session.

Finally, student-teachers participate in a short school practicum – during which they teach some lessons and attempt to push the boundaries of their learning about teaching through collecting feedback about the effects of their teaching on their students' learning from a variety or perspectives. The practicum is designed to build on the processes from their classes at the university with an explicit emphasis on 'appropriate' post class de-briefing on their teaching actions. The lesson(s) they conduct are, whenever possible, organized around the placement of a peer in the same school so that again the supportive and collaborative nature of the experience is reinforced, but if this is not possible, then the supervising teacher is advised of the purpose of the teaching and learning through written and verbal explanation (see Appendix 1) in an attempt to maintain a focus on critique rather than personal criticism, or, in the case of a supervising teacher, the well intentioned and somewhat inevitable 'teach like me' approach to de-briefing. There is a clear intent then for our student-teachers to feel encouraged to take risks with their teaching, and to be prepared to learn from both positive and not so positive experiences. Following the practicum experience, the subject concludes with an emphasis on the 'learning about teaching' that has occurred.

This paper is organized around the use of student-teachers' own writing about Developing Pedagogy (constructed from their reflective reports during the program and presented as vignettes) and from focus group interviews and open-ended questionnaire responses (conducted one year after they had completed the subject) that offer different participants' perspectives on their experiences (i.e. each quote is

from a different participant). This paper is designed to illustrate aspects of Developing Pedagogy from these student-teachers' perspective.

Developing Trust

One aspect of our understanding of learning about teaching hinges on the need to effectively differentiate between 'telling' and 'teaching'. Hand in hand with the need for such differentiation is the view that teaching (as opposed to telling) is based on an understanding of oneself and others (see for example, van Manen, 1991), thus, teaching is about relationships. Building relationships involves both an understanding of individuals and the ways they interact and develop within their group. And just as each individual learns and develops, so too the group (which comprises those individuals) develops as the relationships within the group evolve in response to these changes.

From our perspective as teacher educators, we consider that building relationships requires a genuine concern to listen to, and be aware of, the changing nature of the classroom context, and to be interested in, and responsive to, the needs of students (as individuals and as a group). The development of trust, which is so important if learning is to be more than knowing and if teaching is to be more than telling, therefore becomes a two-way process that is equally important from both the teacher's and learners' perspective. And, just as Mitchell (1992) found through PEEL (Project for the Enhancement of Effective Learning, see Baird & Mitchell, 1986; Baird & Northfield, 1992) that trust was an important factor in shaping changes in students' approaches to their learning, so too we have found that trust is equally important in teaching and learning about teaching.

Building confidence

For both student-teachers and teacher educators alike, confidence matters. For example, consider Mandi's response to an opening session whereby critique of a colleague's teaching is the introduction to the subject.

> Having one of us prepared to demonstrate her vulnerability and show that we genuinely cared about the learners' responses gave students the confidence to engage in honest critique of their experiences of the teaching. An excerpt from my journal illustrates [this point]: *What is interesting is that it feels to me like we are exploding the idea that creating a learning community in which students take safe intellectual risks takes a long time. One student commented at the end of the first session, "I felt comfortable enough to say what I thought." The fact that we could create this learning experience together so quickly both surprised and excited me.* (Berry & Loughran, 2002, p. 24)

However, this notion of confidence carries different meaning when considered from a student-teacher's perspective because, commonly, many see teaching as an uncomplicated act of telling students what to learn - a consequence of years of uncritical observation of their own teachers at work (Britzman, 1991; Pajares, 1992). Consequently, beginning teachers may enter pre-service programs with an expectation that they can be told how to teach and therefore appear to be in search of a recipe for teaching. This recipe may well comprise a set of practical teaching strategies that will 'ensure their success' in the classroom and they may therefore be critical of their teacher preparation program if this does not occur (Britzman, 1986). Hence, recognizing these perspectives influences our understanding of our student-teachers' particular needs and concerns and we see this as crucial in shaping learning to teach (in ways similar to that which Korthagen et al., 2001 outline in their Realistic Teacher Education Program).

We extend this point by asserting that in teaching about teaching, being aware of the *feelings and* expectations that student-teachers have about learning to teach is important as it reminds us (their teachers) of the impact that the demands and expectations of the subject will have on them and their practice. Thus, confidence emerges as a search for balance[1] as confronting some of their needs and expectations through the processes and practices of Developing Pedagogy could, if not carefully thought through, shake their confidence. We therefore pay careful attention to finding this balance through the way student-teachers respond to the situations they encounter in the subject. We use a variety of means of keeping in touch with our students' (and our own) responses to the subject[2], both throughout and after the subject is completed. The open ended questionnaire responses, below, were gathered from students in the year following their experiences of Developing Pedagogy, and illustrate their retrospective understanding of the subject.

> Overall, I feel the subject was useful especially for actual confidence building for teaching. (Open-ended questionnaire response)

> When I began the subject, I really needed a confidence boost, just to prove that I was going to be able to stand up in front of a class. This subject gave two memorable opportunities – the peer session and the 2:2 – which eased my fears considerably. It provided a non-threatening 'testing-ground' environment. (Open-ended questionnaire response)

[1] This balance is in us being sensitive to the competing demands of these elements as being important for the development of student teachers' confidence and to feel confident they have to trust that it is worthwhile to do.

[2] Throughout the semester, we meet a regular basis to discuss the teaching that we plan and the sessions that we have taught. Generally this involves a weekly discussion after class but also includes maintaining journals, electronic communication and our interactions through team teaching. We also maintain close contact with our students through individual and group discussions after their peer teaching sessions, e-mail and the range of reflective papers they develop during the subject. Further to this, much of the data for this paper is drawn from a study of these participants' understanding of the subject one year after they had completed it in order to understand their perspective of the influence of the subject on their developing pedagogy.

> I was very unsure about teaching after 2nd year. The help I received from [my tutors] was integral in helping me 'turn the corner', and build up my confidence. This subject was extremely important to my development as a teacher. (Open-ended questionnaire response)

The 2:2 experience is another way in which we aim to create a teaching and learning situation that will build confidence while at the same time gently challenging some of the preconceptions our student-teachers hold about the nature of teaching. We offer the following vignette of one student-teacher's response (pseudonyms apply) to the 2:2 experience to illustrate this beginning point in building confidence and creating a 'stepping off point' for further development.

45 Minutes in the Life of a Teacher

> To create a task for students whom you have never met, that you will only meet for one period and that you know you're going to have to write a report about, is not easy. I suppose that highlights just how important it is to know your students, their likes and dislikes, their strengths and weaknesses and of course their personalities. I don't mind admitting that I found it difficult to engage the two students who had to undertake my task, but in the end, it felt as if I had achieved my purpose.

In the beginning...

Standing around in the car park of the Secondary College, waiting to be granted admittance doesn't really inspire confidence, nor does it make one feel like a teacher. Perhaps my expectations were too high, but I suppose it doesn't really help when you have already visualized exactly what is going to happen, the students, the setting and the possible perks and pitfalls of the task. In hindsight there is both a trap and an advantage in envisioning the class prior to its commencement – One runs the risk of being caught off guard when something unexpected occurs, but on the other hand, a well thought out task does not so much need a step by step plan to be adhered to at all costs, but rather a clear purpose that may be reached by many means, means that may very well change at any second.

The students...

It was more than a little awkward having to choose your students from a group, awkward for both them, and for us. Whether we like it or not popular social conceptions influence how we act toward other people, either consciously or unconsciously, we are drawn to the beautiful, smiling, perky people, to the detriment of the self confidence of the less attractive or differently gifted people. This instance is no different, and it raises an issue that may very well play a part in the classroom.

While who is in your class cannot be controlled, human nature dictates that in most cases, even trained professionals will inherently favour those whose countenance is more appealing. In the classroom this is a major danger. It would be all too easy to dote on the students who complete your tasks without fuss, the ones who give you the answers you desire and make you feel good as a teacher. Sadly, it is often those students who really need the expertise of their teacher who suffer most from the favouritism of the *brighter* students.

In this particular instance, the students that we happened to choose seemed to fit into the latter category, and while I am loath to affix stereotypical labels, I am well aware from personal experience that often they are correct.

As it happened, Jude was shy, hanging back from the assignment of student teacher process with an apprehensive expression. When approached and asked if there was any one he would like to accompany him, he responded with a bashful murmur that would to me indicate that he thought himself to have few friends, or was unsure if those who he did consider friends felt the same way. The second student, Joshua, presented himself with an indifferent sort of confidence, seemingly resigned to the torture he thought he was about to endure. He spoke down into the table and rarely made eye contact that I found strange for a young man with such sure opinions which, I might add, he shared liberally and with great conviction.

The task and its purpose...

Compared to some of the other lessons I suppose mine was up there among the most mundane. However, to put it bluntly, students aren't always going to like what has to be taught in class – It's all in the way that it's approached, that makes it interesting and engaging. (Point in my own defense – While the two students said they had done my task before, they both said that in the end they had enjoyed the lesson).

The task I had devised was the kind of task that an English teacher would set their year seven class at the beginning of the year. Its purpose is to allow the teacher some sort of insight into the student's

likes and dislikes, hopes and dreams, as well as being a way to assess their strengths, either in writing or in drawing.

The task consisted of two choices – The students could either write a brief story about their ideal future, or draw and label a picture of their ideal future. I had hoped that at least one of the two students would choose to do the writing task, however this did not occur.

In the beginning, they seemed a little apathetic about doing the task, stating that they had done something similar in other classes.

Direction and deviation...

Admittedly, it was unsettling to find that no discussion was necessary before the task was begun, and Jude and Joshua launched straight into their drawings. On this point, I realise that it is difficult to predict exactly what is and is not appropriate in terms of the difficulty of a task. With experience I am sure that this becomes easier - having been so long removed from high school doesn't really help. Also, what my idea of easy for someone of year eight age and what actually *is*, are often two different things. The passage of time has dulled the memories of my own experiences, and the white noise of my current abilities only confuses the matter more.

As time progressed I got the distinct impression that the boys were becoming bored with the task. In a normal classroom I am well aware that boredom is the mother of chaos and is to be avoided at all possible cost. I hadn't really planned for discussion to take place in the middle of the task, but found it necessary to prompt both boys to continue their drawing by questioning what they had already drawn. As it turned out, Jude wants to build a laser powered rocket that can travel faster than the speed of light, and wants to work for NASA in order to achieve that goal. Joshua on the other hand had decided that he wanted to conquer Mars and be ruler of a city there. I found that it was he who needed the most prodding and that he was easily distracted by the constant banter.

Speaking to the boys he helped me realise another thing about teaching that I, in particular, should pay close mind to. People often talk about things that they no little of, and students are no exception. It is really hard not to correct someone when they voice something incorrect and even more difficult when they defend it to the bitter end.

At one point, I found myself grinding my teeth to prevent myself from rebuking everything Jude said and putting him straight, but realised the only thing that that would achieve would be to put a dent in his self esteem or incite rebellious argument that would detract from the lesson. I also understand that in a classroom environment,

telling students that they are wrong flat out is a sure-fire way of putting them off offering opinions in the future.

During the lesson, conversation quickly arose and turned to what weaponry Joshua's shuttle might have, and that in turn led to weapons used in computer games, and that led to computer games in general. I felt as if the lesson, and my task was losing its footing, but it quickly occurred to me that during the discussion, the actual purpose of the task was being fulfilled. I had wanted to know the students a little better, and by the end of the period I felt I knew a considerable amount.

The inquisition...

What can I say? It's reassuring, at the end of a lesson, to know that students felt you weren't a complete and utter ogre. It is also about this time that I did think it might have been easier to be the interviewer than the teacher. Even though we planned the lesson together, I still had to teach it and therefore felt more compelled to defend how it went and how the students responded to it.

The De-briefing...

Between Emma and myself the de-briefing was short and sweet. I was very much relieved to hear that Joshua and Jude had deemed me to be a half-decent teacher, as far as one can conclude after so brief a relationship. I was glad that even though they had done similar tasks like mine before, that they still said it was good to be given the choice to write or draw, a particular plus for myself who likes to be creative.

Another point of contention with me is that I sometimes come across a little intimidating. I was pleased to be informed that not only did my conscious effort to be less intimidating pay off in that both boys were not intimidated, but that they thought that it was good that I talked about things that they were interested in.

Emily and I agreed in the end that the lesson had been a success despite the deviation from the actual task in favour of conversation. This illustrates that the set task need not be followed to the letter order for the purpose of the lesson to be fulfilled, and that a teacher needs to be prepared to accept this, and sometimes abandon their plans in favour of something that the students are more likely to be engaged in.

In the end...

Overall I feel good about the experience, good because everything went smoothly despite the slight deviation from my lesson plan, good because the students finished with a reasonable opinion of me, and

> good because I still want to be a teacher. Sounds all rather selfish doesn't it? Well, I guess I wouldn't be doing teaching if I didn't think I would get anything out of it. I'm not sure that I learned anything about teaching that I did not already know, however, this exercise brought them sharply to my attention, and now gives me a great many things to consider when planning my next lesson.

The last paragraph of this vignette is important. The student-teacher felt good about herself and although she was, "not sure that she learned anything new", she had come to see some aspects of practice that she *now* understood differently. For us, this is an important 'stepping-off point' in learning to teach because the recognition of a need to see the 'taken-for-granted' differently is an important catalyst for reframing (Schön, 1983) and is an intended outcome of our approach to teaching about teaching; yet requires a confidence to do so. Another student-teacher expressed the feelings derived from directly experiencing the role of teacher in the following way.

> I think because it affects you personally and you have that experience and I guess...you look at yourself. You look at that experience you have had and you go, I wasn't so good there and I should have done that differently, and I think that is so much more effective rather than thinking I might do it this way, I might do it that way. (Focus group interview)

As noted earlier, we take seriously the differentiation between telling and teaching. Teaching leads to a greater likelihood that student-teachers will learn about themselves and their practice in meaningful ways so that they see value in their own learning. The 2:2 experience is purposefully designed to offer an invitation to reframe instances of learning about teaching so that personal development will be initiated. As we trust we have made clear, we are intent on building student-teachers' confidence in what they are doing as well as aiming to extend their view of practice so that their growing confidence encourages them to push ahead, not simply remain comfortable with their existing practice. Inevitably then, such an approach must be embedded in

personal experience and as such, the manner of the experiences created through the subject needs to change in light of the learning outcomes. Hence, the transition into extended peer teaching.

Creating a 'safe' environment

> I think it [2:2] definitely helped me with confidence. I was so nervous about doing peer teaching...[but] nobody laughed, nobody did anything crazy. My peers have watched me teach. That was OK, it wasn't a disaster...[but] it is an environment where you feel safe in class. I think we did have that in our tute group. We were fairly open with each other. (Focus group interview)

The extended peer teaching is structured in such a way as to create an environment in which 'intellectual challenge' can be seen as an important factor in development without stripping away the confidence necessary to engage in risk-taking in teaching and learning experiences. The development of trust is ongoing, it is not something able to be 'front loaded' and then forgotten. Trust is crucial in helping student-teachers recognize that as a result of their growing confidence, that which they are comfortable with in their teaching can also be a powerful support in taking risks in order to grow through learning in new and different situations. Obviously, we need to be very conscious of (and explicit about) this point as we move from the 2:2 to the extended peer teaching experiences as the changes in the nature of the task as well as the roles of the teachers and learners change along with the dynamics of the situation.

The first few microteaching sessions can create the most anxiety for all of us (teacher educators and student-teachers). Naturally, student teachers approach the task trying to do a good job in their teaching and wanting to be seen as able and capable teachers. Accompanying this is their peer's implicit sense of a need to be supportive;

not making the microteaching experience more difficult or uncomfortable than it already is. Our concern, as teacher educators, is that we want substantive issues to be raised in ways that cause all of us to confront particular situations as they are occurring so that we can all 'feel' what it is like and thus, through appropriate intervention, learn together about teaching and learning through these experiences. We are therefore very conscious of the need to continue to develop trust as an overt feature of practice.

In order to help create a sense of these peer teaching experiences we offer the following vignette constructed from one group's Peer Teaching Report (pseudonyms apply) which highlights some of the issues they recognized through being involved in teaching the rest of the class. The vignette is designed to bring to life this aspect of the subject and to illustrate how it influences learning about teaching. The vignette is also a form of backtalk (as described by Russell, 1997) that offers access to the thoughts and feelings of participants through their own teaching and learning experiences.

Our Peer Teaching Report

Krista, Edith, Beth & Lidia

> ***What we planned:*** We wanted to do something with the class that was engaging so decided to do a technology exercise: to build the tallest possible free-standing tower using 5 sheets of newspaper and a roll of sticky tape. The aim was to promote teamwork and innovative thinking and we thought each group would need a team leader who would be responsible for ensuring the team worked together and listened to everyone's ideas. It didn't take long before we realized that although we knew what we expected of the team leaders, it was far from clear to those who took on the role. They were unsure of what was expected of them and that is where our lesson really started to create challenges for us as the teachers.

What happened: Needless to say, the lesson didn't go as planned. Not that we didn't cope with what happened and adapt to things, but there were hitches. There were groups that were willing to share ideas and groups that were not. We were confronted by off-task students and we started to wonder what this would mean in the de-brief. Questions arose at almost every turn. "What should we do with students who did not contribute?" "What about groups that were unwilling to devise their own tower and just wanted to copy others?" "What about the groups that used up all their material, finished quickly and then sat around with nothing to do?" This was not as easy as it seemed when we were planning the lesson.

At the end, we intended to get a member of each group to explain the reasoning behind their structures, but we ran out of time and instead we talked about their towers and told them what we thought they did. That ran us into the de-brief. That was not what we planned to do.

The de-brief: During the de-brief, and later when we were going through the written feedback, it became clear that several members of the class had viewed our lesson as having no clear purpose. People were left wondering about the point of the activity. We quickly realized – well we certainly had it pointed out – that in a school classroom, this lack of direction would've caused many problems. Another point discussed was our role – or lack thereof – as teachers. Our purpose was to encourage groups to be independent and not to interfere. Many said they wanted an example of a tower but at the same time others wanted to be creative and didn't want us around at all. However, the idea that not doing something (does a teacher ever really not do anything?) is non-teacherly was a big issue. It was hard to find a balance between being in the way and directing everything and hanging back and letting the learners take control. It was also interesting to hear group leaders talk about not being comfortable with the role we gave them and groups disagreed a lot about the need for, or not, of group leaders and how that role should be performed.

Our perspective: At the time, we actually thought the lesson was quite productive. It was obviously a difficult lesson to explain, our objectives were not linked to the end product (tower) but rather to the group work and the problem-solving skills. This point proved to be completely lost on the class. There was much disagreement about what we did and a question was raised, "As teachers, do we encourage students to learn for the sake of learning: or think for the sake of thinking?" that was very interesting. It seems many students do not see the value of this type of lesson; they want a concrete skill or outcome. Some of us (teachers) also found it quite difficult to teach together, team-teaching is not so easy, and we didn't have enough to do when the students were building their towers. Finally, we also ran out of time and so became quite defensive about what we

were doing and why and tried to justify why the lesson was valuable and tell them what they should've learnt.

We weren't scarred by the experience, but watching it on video was hard. You see so much that you do that you don't realize you are doing at the time. Why is it that we do some things when we don't mean to and we do others things that we mean to happen but they don't come out the way we planned? This was an interesting lesson for us but we're not so sure about the students!

From a learner's perspective, we believe that trust involves knowing and believing that individuals' ideas, thoughts and views can be offered and explored in challenging ways but that such challenge must be professional not personal (building up, not breaking down relationships). This requires a trust in the care for others as persons, and it has as its basis a need to maintain and develop one's self-esteem through the critique/challenge. The learner also has a need to trust that the teaching and learning environment is a 'safe' place to raise and pursue issues, concerns and the development of understanding. This calls for a genuine commitment to the notion that 'challenge' is not a personal attack but a search for clarification and understanding.

It was a great opportunity to develop my own style and to practice teaching in a friendly, comfortable environment while still being questioned and challenged. (Open-ended questionnaire response)

The way in which they [tutors] created a safe risk taking environment really promoted our learning. What we did was not the main importance, but what we learnt about what we had done was. (Open-ended questionnaire response)

As mentioned the atmosphere of the class was extremely positive, which has a lot to do with its teaching/teacher. Feedback and interactions were helpful. (Open-ended questionnaire response)

The purpose though of having a safe environment is to enhance learning about teaching so it is important to focus on how participants view the value of exploring

teaching and learning in an environment created for experimenting with their teaching.

> I think the most important thing for me and the most challenging was reflection. Just reflection in general because I felt that developing that was something I had never really done, never really looked in depth at myself, especially with teaching, and just getting reflection from both my peers as well as then looking back like what you said in that video, it was a good way of seeing things from other people's eyes and seeing things that you don't usually see about yourself and that you don't notice about yourself until it is pointed out to you. (Focus group interview)

> I was aware of the importance of adapting to unforseen circumstances and reflecting my own teaching. (Open-ended questionnaire response)

> Without the subject, I probably would not have understood the degree at which students need to experience to learn. As this happened to me personally. (Open-ended questionnaire response)

> To effectively debrief it is important to pay close attention to practice – or what actually happens – I think this has helped reinforce the importance of thinking a teaching strategy through to the end. (Open-ended questionnaire response)

Encouraging risk-taking

Trust, however, goes beyond this issue alone, for there is also a need to trust that learning through experience is valuable and this is not possible if the teacher educator assumes a role of 'expert' in total control of the direction of inquiry, losing sight of, or not acknowledging individuals' needs. For participants to be able to genuinely raise issues or concerns, they must be able to trust that in so doing their queries will be fairly addressed.

> Brigid: If we had lecturers or tutors that weren't very focussed on the reflection and their self-reflection then it [Developing Pedagogy] wouldn't be as useful.

> Astrid: Yes, I agree. I think one of the most important things in all of that is the debriefing sessions and discussions that weren't cut short. We were allowed to toss ideas around with [tutors] and with ourselves. They were the places where we learnt the most. So you have to find staff who are open to that style I guess...[maybe] it was just the class dynamics that we had...and our groups that it was really open and it was OK to talk and toss open....I suppose that is one thing to be aware of.
>
> Interviewer: Anything else?
>
> Brigid: I was going to say I don't know how you could do it any other way because you couldn't have somebody, you couldn't stand up and say that is wrong, you shouldn't do it like that. The lecturer couldn't do that because there is no one-way to teach. I mean that if we had a lecturer telling us there was only one way to do something then it wouldn't work. There are so many different ways of doing something in a classroom that subject [Developing Pedagogy] wouldn't work if there was a lecturer dead-set on there is only one way to go about things. Do you know what I mean?
>
> Astrid: I didn't really feel that [happened in] the course because I felt [tutors] were providing more a guidance. They did step back a lot and let us have our discussions and let us do a lot of stuff. When I look back I don't remember them overpowering the course in any way. I just saw them on par with us. I didn't see that we were "oh we have to be like them". I just saw it as they want to help us find our own way.
>
> Brigid: Which is how I felt. And they gave us the opportunity to provide a rationale of why we did something in a particular way.
>
> Astrid: Yes, they would say why did you do this, and why did you do that. And I would think, "Why did I do that?" (Focus group interview)

Without such a trust, there is little incentive to take the risk to speak up. This trust is particularly important in the de-brief sessions whereby alternative perspectives are constantly being sought in order to shed light on different viewpoints rather than simply highlight that which the teacher educator regards as the 'essential learning'.

> The feedback from our peers was very helpful. (Open-ended questionnaire response)

> Without EDF3002 I doubt whether I would have purposely critically reflected and looked for evidence that my teaching practices were achieving what I thought [my] teaching practices were achieving. I also did this with more understanding. (Open-ended questionnaire response)
>
> The open and honest approach [of our tutors] was integral to the subject's success. (Open-ended questionnaire response)
>
> I think if there wasn't any debriefing the subject would not have had the depth it did. It certainly helped me in learning to debrief my own teaching in an analytical way, which is essential to becoming an effective teacher. (Open-ended questionnaire response)

Accompanying the development of trust is the need for 'critics' to withhold judgment – and that can be a difficult task; even a skill to be developed. Learners are less likely to pursue their own understanding or to reconsider others' views if they have a sense of being judged, or if they are responding to questions or situations by trying to "guess what is in the teacher's head". The need to withhold judgment, to be conscious of one's own wait-time and to *want to hear* from others is a key to building relationships that enhance a diversity of learning outcomes and reinforces the value of teaching as opposed to telling (Loughran, 1997).

> The way in which the debriefing was approached never made me feel I was being "attacked". Consequently my acceptance has been raised of having my teaching reflected upon by my supervising teachers [in school]. I also realised the importance of critical reflection by ourselves and others. (Open-ended questionnaire response)
>
> It allowed constructive criticism in a positive learning environment. (Open-ended questionnaire response)
>
> Taught me not to take things too literally and to not be too critical on others or myself. (Open-ended questionnaire response)

Through our shared adventures in planning, teaching and reviewing Developing Pedagogy, we have come to better understand what it really means to develop trust

(and its many forms) in a classroom – especially when students are being encouraged to be risk-takers. The extended peer teaching calls on approaches to teacher education that are different and demanding to that which is associated with what Korthagen et al (2001) describe as traditional teacher preparation programs. For example, knowing when or how to *intervene* in a session in order create a situation that might help to make explicit for all what we (as their teachers) might want participants to 'see' or 'feel' in a situation is not something that can be easily planned or scripted in advance. Therefore, appropriate intervention is an important and considered aspect of our pedagogy. It is one that demands a trusting environment so that the confidence necessary for risk-taking might be developed and is crucial to teaching as opposed to telling as a way of informing participants.

Purposeful interventions

We have come to see that there are approaches to intervention that are important in shaping our actions and informing us about the value of such actions, but, the purpose for so doing must be clear to all. Consequently, we have adopted descriptors that remind us of the purpose of some forms of intervention. These descriptors are derived from our reflection on the recurring issues that have consistently attracted our attention. These descriptors are: problem recognition; confronting pedagogy; and, students' learning (described in detail in Loughran, Berry & Tudball, 2002; Loughran, 2002). Each of these labels help us to be conscious of what we are doing and why, as well as reminding us that our interventions create 'feelings' despite our concern for positive learning outcomes and that such 'feelings' may include discomfort or unease. In fact, the belief that valuable learning comes from uncomfortable situations is one

factor that impacts on our understanding of the meaning underpinning these descriptors.

As a bold generalization, it could be argued in teacher education, that in the normal course of events, avoiding uncomfortable situations actually diminishes the possibilities for learning and, such avoidance is often due to a lack of the very trust, confidence and sense of relationship that we see as so important in teaching and learning about teaching. We explore this view through the following excerpts from one group's peer teaching report through which the three descriptors are recognizable in the actions of the interventions. In this case, Binh, Adrian and Katie prepared their peer teaching so that Binh and Adrian would team-teach the session and Katie would be responsible for the de-briefing.

> Adrian: Binh and I decided early on that the teaching strategy we would use would be direct instruction and Binh took control. In the session, it didn't take long before I realised how many minor details can become big issues when you are out the front. It started with the ice-breaker game we had, the cards were stuck together and I had trouble pulling them apart, I immediately felt under pressure as I started to stumble. All of that before I'd even got to the introduction to the content we were going to deliver...The teaching strategy, being a mini lecture aided by the use of the overhead project caused me more trouble. I made the mistake of reading straight from the overheads and there was too much information on them and the writing was too small. I might've got away with it but [my tutor] put his hand up, upsetting my flow of words, and complained that he couldn't read what was on the overhead and asked if they [class] were supposed to copy it down. I knew exactly what was happening as he did this to me, but somehow I thought it wouldn't happen to me.

This intervention was about making clear to Adrian a *problem* that he may well have recognized, but had he not been publicly questioned about it, would not have 'felt' what it was like to have to deal with the situation. By raising the issue, not only was

Adrian no longer able to ignore the problem, but by highlighting the problem through question(s), other members of the class began to respond (calmly) in a like manner, thus pushing Adrian to begin to move away from the overhead projector which then led him to lose sight of his script for the delivery of his information. He said, "I learnt for the first time how hard it is to take the floor and instruct. Trying to maintain focus on the material, listen to what you are actually saying and preparing for what's coming up next is not easy. Dealing with diversions and people who do not agree is also an issue I need to come to grips with, how do I answer questions that go against the grain? Thankfully the video showed I didn't look as bad as I felt!" After some discomfort, Adrian handed over to Binh to deliver the main content of the session.

> Binh: From the outset, Adrian and I gave no clear instruction about the lesson content or its focus...and students were unable to understand what we expected of them...there were a few bewildered faces. Therefore we learnt early it would have paid for us to concentrate more on structure and less on content – too late then, not now though! As I powered on, I got lost in the content because, honestly, to us, it was not clear that interaction was the key to this sort of thing...students had little prior knowledge of the content and we overlooked the interaction component. We know now how important it is to facilitate learning instead of just listening. I was confronted with a barrage of comments, questions and opinions that really put me on the spot up there in front of the class – maybe rightly so. Certain questions and opinions did unnerve me [tutor's interventions in particular] but I think I deserved it. However, I think it was better to have it happen now than out in a school with a middle school class! Instead of thinking on my feet, I tried to push on with the lesson but it came at the expense of the students' learning and it ended up a rather disjointed and somewhat confused lesson. As it turned out we had too much content to present and I felt like I was too many times, avoiding questions, only because I felt that I couldn't answer them in the fullness of the lesson. I may have looked like I was wearing a brave face but at times I felt as if the lesson was simply falling to pieces. The lesson relied on students assimilating information through learning, they were to be passive and I would direct everything. Although I may have seemed to retain my cool under pressure, I seriously need to have a look at how to deal with problem students [like our tutor!] and to maintain interest when the lesson gets sidetracked.

> In the de-brief, one of our peers commented that, "we let a huge opportunity slip by", in terms of having the chance to flesh out various strategies and practising dealing with the situation rather than stumbling on, my initial reflection on the lesson makes me admit, rather ashamedly, I am partial to her opinion. However, after we had a chance to think about, maybe we didn't let an opportunity slip by because what happened showed us that in trying so hard to get the content across that we were actually successful in revealing to ourselves what is so very important to teaching; learning to shift the emphasis from ourselves to that of our students and their learning.
>
> I think my biggest problem was that I thought I could walk into the classroom and teach a class about a topic that I was confident about. What I overlooked was that the students are far from simply passive in this context. I need to learn to facilitate learning as a teacher and I will need to foster this now in the development of my own pedagogy.

The *confrontational pedagogy* employed in this situation was that of disruption through questioning the purpose of the teaching, highlighting the difficulties with the content and generally drawing attention to the misunderstandings being created through the superficial delivery of 'slabs of information'. Again, in the normal course of teacher preparation, such confrontational pedagogy might not be employed. However, in Developing Pedagogy, we are always conscious of this approach as one way of helping student-teachers feel what it is like to deal with difficult situations in ways that are not apparent by simply talking about them. It is through experiencing the situation that learning genuinely occurs. Trust, confidence and relationships are vital if this approach to teaching and learning about teaching is to be valuable rather than harmful; we are ever conscious of this factor and feel it as much as the student-teachers feel it. We continue the exploration of this session from Katie's perspective.

> Katie: My initial reaction to this class was that it was 'messy'. The overheads appeared as chunks out of a textbook with little thought of what they actually conveyed. They were read through very quickly and many had difficulty with unfamiliar terms and concepts that were not explained...There was simply too much to get

> through. The de-brief showed that generating a comfortable, expressive environment doesn't just happen because you want it to and say that that is what you want people to do. It takes deliberate strategies to try and set it up...Most importantly however, in terms of not setting up the environment for discussion, it was clear that it was Binh and Adrian's manner. It very much appeared that they set the tone of instruction and they had the one right way, and it gave a clear message about others' views not being valuable. This came through in two strong instances. The first was when some quite deep and personal comments were not treated with much sensitivity – and they weren't written on the board like others' comments. The second was in the way Binh questioned, he said, "That makes sense" with an explicit tone of "doesn't it", who would disagree!
>
> A threat to the comfort of students as well as to Binh and Adrian's authority and control over the topic came from the questions and comments of a particular class member [tutor!]. His continual outbursts were a rejection of the comfort Binh and Adrian wanted and they practically ignored them because they didn't know how to handle them...I agree that sometimes unwanted comments can be ignored, and that it may be the best way of putting a stop to them, but, if they are persistent, they have to be addressed. I believe the de-brief highlighted for all of us that we have to learn how to convey our understanding in accessible ways; we have to be sensitive to those less confident than us; we have to plan and be clear of our intent; if we want something to happen in the classroom, we need to realise that we need to help nurture it; and we can't ignore or switch off unexpected or unwanted things that happen – they need to be addressed.

Katie makes clear that *students' learning* in this case encapsulates the student-teachers as learners of teaching and the students that these student-teachers will be teaching in their own classes in school. She highlights a number of related and important outcomes from the session that although under different circumstances might well be discussed and noted, in this situation become real and unavoidable instances of meaningful learning.

Conclusion

Student-teachers' interactions, the manner in which they approach their teaching, their responses to our teaching and their approaches and practices in critiquing teaching

and learning all offer insights into what we consider to be important social aspects of teaching and learning about teaching that are easily overlooked in a traditional teacher education program.

This paper has been organized to offer insight into ways in which student-teachers experiences of learning to teach might be enhanced through purposeful interventions and approaches to pedagogy that challenge the status-quo in teacher preparation. However, simply creating intellectual challenge, encouraging risk-taking and introducing pedagogy that creates a 'feel' for what it is like to be in problematic teaching and learning situations is not sufficient. There is a genuine need for a commitment to the development of trust, confidence and relationships in ways that support such approaches in meaningful ways; and meaningful is a most important adjective for as Berry (In Press) notes:

> ...teacher educators who lecture about the importance of group learning; who espouse the importance of reflection while presenting teaching as a technical act; or, who assert the need for establishing caring relationships while at the same time maintaining emotional detachment from their students, undermine the very ideas they wish their student teachers to learn because they are not seen to be practicing them themselves. Russell (1998, p. 5) acknowledges this contradictory nature of teacher educators' work: "In teacher education, what and how we teach are interactive, and we ignore this interaction at our peril. Just as actions are said to speak louder than words, so how we teach may speak more loudly than what we teach.

Through the approaches to teaching about teaching that we employ, we purposefully expose practice (ours and our student-teachers') to scrutiny through honest but professional critique. There is little doubt that such an approach confronts the normal rules of teaching and learning about teaching that shape the ways in which student-teachers and teacher educators discuss one another's practice. Such an approach to

honest 'critique' requires an appreciation for the thoughts, feelings and perspectives of others and therefore demands a commitment to caring in accord with the sentiments espoused by Noddings (2001). However, caring is important regardless of the pedagogical approaches developed but the need for caring is further enhanced through our approach to teaching about teaching such that we are constantly aware of the need to explicitly and genuinely demonstrate our care for our students and not to assume that it will simply be taken-for-granted. Through a focus on these social aspects of teaching and learning about teaching, we hope that our student-teachers will look into their own thoughts and actions in honest and open ways so that they can respond to the problematic nature of teaching in positive ways. It might also then be translated into their own practice when they are teaching their own students.

> You know the teaching round activity we had to do where whoever else was at your school had to watch your lesson. I think that was good because I sort of kept that in mind when I was doing my teaching round. I was more aware of how I was coming across because of the activities we had done, because of all that peer feedback. I was aware of how my supervisor might see me and I was aware of mistakes as I was doing them...More self-awareness than anything else. You suddenly understand what it is like to be an observer of the teacher because you have done that and you have other people observing you, and that becomes part of your teaching. (Focus group interview)

> Not being afraid to try new ways of presenting information. Not being afraid to stop or tackle something in a different way if it's not engaging students. That's what I've learnt. (Open-ended questionnaire response)

> In most ways I feel more confident, but in some ways EDF 3002 opened my eyes to the increasing complexity of teaching – Sometimes these complexities give me feelings of inadequacy. (Open-ended questionnaire response)

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A paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, April, 2003.

Appendix 1

INFORMATION ABOUT SCHOOL TEACHING EXPERIENCE: 3RD YEAR DOUBLE DEGREE, SEMESTER 2.

Please show this information sheet to your school supervisor.

This school experience is the last one before the teaching rounds of fourth year (Dip. Ed.) and as such is designed to encourage student-teachers to 'experiment' with different teaching procedures in order to sensitize them to their own approach to teaching and to 'feel' what it is like to work through a particular teaching procedure with a group of students.

It is not expected that student-teachers take a normal teaching load as per Dip. Ed./4th year teaching rounds (2 lessons/day) but rather that they teach some classes, small groups, etc. in order to broaden their understanding of their teaching and to begin to recognise how it influences students' learning.

Each student-teacher will therefore need to organise an appropriate teaching allotment with their school supervisor and to do so with a real regard for both their own confidence and the manner in which the classes are organised during their school experience.

The assignment for this school teaching experience also helps to illustrate what we see as the purpose for this time in school and we trust that student-teachers will make the most of this opportunity to do some teaching across a range of contexts.

Yours Sincerely,

Amanda Berry, John Loughran and Libby Tudball.

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