

**CATHY GOWER ABSTRACT FOR PAPER AT ECER CONFERENCE, AUGUST  
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**PROPOSAL INFORMATION**

This paper presents findings from a research project, conducted in the context of Initial Teacher Education (ITE) in England, which explored the potential contribution of more formative and democratic pedagogical approaches to support pre-service teachers to think critically about their practice. The research question was: 'How might the use of video stimulated reflection and bio-pedagogical narratives as pedagogical approaches in ITE support pre-service teachers to think critically about their pedagogical practice?' Pedagogy in the context of this study was defined as the act of teaching together with the ideas, values and beliefs by which that act is informed, sustained and justified (Alexander, 2008).

The pedagogical approach to ITE involved the use of a type of narrative account referred to as a bio-pedagogy, which explores the connections between personhood and pedagogy in order to identify and understand the relationship between our life experiences and teaching and learning (Camacho and Fernandez-Balboa, 2006). The bio-pedagogical narratives were combined with a process referred to as video stimulated reflection (Powell, 2005), which is based on the concept of stimulated recall (Lyle, 2003) and facilitates cognitive processes through which participants can recall, when prompted by a video sequence, their associated thinking during that event.

The two approaches used sought to explore the pre-service teachers' thinking and feelings about aspects of their own pedagogical practice through dialogic interactions between the pre-service teachers and their tutor as they observed captured video footage during their ITE programme. The pedagogical approaches facilitated a space for the pre-service teachers to notice the impact of their pedagogy on young people as part of a process of consciousness raising so that they better understood difference and diversity in learners and developed more responsive teaching. This exploration of the concept of noticing drew on previous research by Edwards and Protheroe (2003); Sherin and Van Es (2005 and 2008); Youens et al., (2014); Grant and Kline (2010); and Harford et al., (2010) in the field of teacher education.

The use of bio-pedagogies alongside video stimulated reflection was selected in order to disrupt and challenge some existing hierarchical pedagogical approaches within ITE specifically in relation to lesson observation and give more voice to pre-service teachers in the critical analysis of their own practice. The study responded to calls from Arnold et al. (2012) to provide more detailed studies on the links between teacher professionalism, critical approaches to teaching and learning and the democratic production of knowledge by participants. It provided an in-depth longitudinal study of a group of pre-service physical education teachers and the use of the pedagogical approaches aimed to connect the participants specifically with identified issues in their subject culture around how pupils with diverse needs experience physical education in schools.

## **METHODOLOGY, METHODS OR RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS USED**

The research approach used was situated within the field of illuminative evaluation (Parlett and Hamilton, 1972) and explored how an innovative ITE approach operated; how it was influenced by the institutional situations in which it was applied; how those using the innovation regarded its advantages and disadvantages; and how the participants were affected in different ways by its use. Parlett and Hamilton also argue a case for illuminative rather than agricultural botany type evaluation because it seeks to understand the broader conditions in which the educational experience is occurring for all participants, facilitated in this case by the use of bio-pedagogical narrative interviews and an accompanying analysis of the evolution of the policy context for ITE in England. The bio-pedagogical interviews and video stimulated reflective dialogues served a dual purpose as both pedagogical approaches and also as research methods and data gathering instruments in this study. An initial bio-pedagogical interview was conducted with the participating pre-service teachers at the start of their one year ITE programme which asked them to 'Tell me about yourself'. The data from this interview was coded in relation to different intersecting dimensions of the self the pre-service teachers referenced when talking about themselves and their journey into ITE. The pre-service teachers were then video recorded twice teaching physical education lessons in two separate

schools during their ITE programme. After each set of footage was captured, a video stimulated reflective dialogue was conducted where the pre-service teachers discussed the footage and the pedagogical process with their ITE tutor. During the observation, the footage was paused by either the pre-service teachers or the tutor and the associated dialogic interactions were captured on a recording device. The study built on a growing body of international research on the use of video technologies within teaching and teacher education (Maclean and White, 2007; Borko et al., 2008; Sherin and Van Es, 2005; and Van Es and Sherin, 2008; Hennessy and Deaney, 2009; Grant and Kline, 2010; Quennerstedt et al., 2011; Blomberg et al., 2014; Youens et al., 2014). Data was collected through the video stimulated reflective dialogues and analysed in relation to the concept of noticing and on the potential value of using this pedagogical approach in ITE.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The research revealed that these more formative and democratic pedagogical approaches in ITE supported pre-service teachers to problematise the roots and origins of their practice and raised their consciousness of how various intersecting dimensions of the self had shaped their pedagogy. The pre-service teachers were able to notice where their own pedagogical practice was contributing to issues of inequity and discrimination in the learners' experiences and began to identify structural inequalities in curriculum provision and subject culture. The ability of the pre-service teachers to notice and then critically analyse their practice was contingent on the quality of the dialogic interactions that took place during the video stimulated reflection sessions and the research highlighted that, for such pedagogical approaches to support critical thinking and potential praxis, those involved in supporting and developing pre-service teachers should engage in a carefully configured preparatory programme as part of the mentoring process. The research highlighted the need to recognise and embrace teaching as an emotional act and that the use of such pedagogical approaches must be sensitive to the temporal, relational and spatial features of learning to teach.

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