

Geographies of Enquiring: Contextual Questioning

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Claire Whewell



Enquiring as a professional

- Naturally enquiring;
- Tweaking or Playing with practice;
- Anecdotal awareness of change;
- Lack of framework or discourse to support a narrative of the change process.

Moving towards Professional Enquiry (1)

- Is there any difference between an enquiring professional and professional enquiry?
- Professional enquiry is an active, more structured process that involves explicitly asking questions of practice that can then lead to a proposed change in practice.

Vignettes

- “..gave me the opportunity to grow and see things from the wider perspective, with solid background knowledge.”
- “I was always a “reflective” teacher, but had a limited sphere in which to reflect upon...”

Moving towards Professional Enquiry (2)

- Learner-focused;
- Evidence seeking;
- Structured, professional dialogues supported by a relevant discourse;
- Connections and the exchange of ideas;
- Ethics of care;
- Talkback: the professional support structure.

Vignettes

- “I feel I now have a valid tool with which to test and evaluate the directives given me from the Scot.Exec and Local Authority. I have the confidence and evidence with which to challenge decisions made by SMT..”

Professional Enquiry and traditional views of research

- Different forms of knowledge production
- Where does research and academic texts sit with teachers?
- Are we in danger of overemphasising traditional research skills and the objective distancing of the researcher?
- Absorbing the process of looking at learning into the context of learning while questioning that learning.

Vignettes

- “I was wary of other courses based on academic research which did not necessarily have any bearing on my teaching.”
- “...watching the research actually take place before my eyes in the classroom through the actions of my pupils....my pupils enjoyed these excursions into the areas I have never gone into before and I really enjoy observing them....the interaction that takes place between us is second to none, invaluable and way beyond the theorist’s descriptions.”

Contextual Questioning

- Situated;
- Deeper questioning: gap analysis of practice;
- Not a tick-box mentality;
- Emerges from watching and listening to learners;
- Collaborative support networks

Vignettes

- “...for me at least having the support of fellow students and also helping to support others was very important.”
- “the course included primary and secondary teachers from a range of schools and stages. This as beneficial as I could work with colleagues from very different places in the profession and still focus on developing my own practice.”

Spatiality and Enquiring: the merging of difference

- Space of professional enquiry develops within the connections that emerge: interactions and interrelations;
- Workplace as a space for knowledge creation: the focus on the local ensures that change is problem-focused and context relevant;
- Critical actioning that impacts on practice: connected spaces in which this can take place.

Vignettes

- “The CT course has been transformational. It has allowed me to critically reflect on my practice and consider how to improve it. It has given me space to develop as a teacher and to become ready to stand up to external pressures on my practice. I can now confidently produce evidence to justify my practice and position, and feel I can evaluate policy and respond accordingly.”

Professional Enquiry Partnership

- <http://pep.escalate.ac.uk/>

Next event: An Enquiring Profession?

Thursday 31 May 2007

<http://pep.escalate.ac.uk/1243>

cpw1@stir.ac.uk

