

TRACKING BEGINNING TEACHERS' DEVELOPING EXPERTISE WITHIN THE PRACTICE OF PRIMARY SCHOOL MATHEMATICS TEACHING

Peter Winbourne, London South Bank University

In this session I will report on the second year of a three-year research project in which I have been working with five beginning primary school teachers. In the first year of the project I followed the students through their one year post-graduate training course (Winbourne, 2002a), and in the second year I have been following them through their first year as newly qualified teachers (NQTs).

I have worked with the participants both to elaborate my theoretical perspective, essentially that of situated cognition (Lave and Wenger, 1991, Wenger 1997, Winbourne and Watson, 1998, Winbourne 2002b), and to refine a narrative methodology for probing their development as teachers of mathematics in London primary schools. These aims have been shared with participants and this sharing has led to particularly powerful discussion about the practices within which their development has been situated. The scope we should allow ourselves for the construction of personal narratives and identification of practices has been explicitly discussed (Clough, 2002). For some NQTs these narratives and practices are essentially bounded by school or university; others have recognised a personal need to refer to aspects of their lives extending well beyond these boundaries.

Thus substantive differences emerge not only in the content of the stories the teachers tell of their development, but also in their changing perception of the legitimate boundaries for their stories. For example, one participant can trace quite specific aspects of her developing mathematics teaching to the influence of a close friend who was a teacher; another can point to the influence of a mathematics teacher father.

The hermeneutic nature of our joint enquiry (Van Manen, 1990) has allowed us to make this variation the subject of further interpretation and explanation.

References

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