

Learning from Exploring Narratives of Practice using Educational Theories and Research

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter is to support teacher educators' professional learning around research literacy in a way that enables them to explicitly model to teachers the interplay between research, theory and practice. Explicit modelling is a signature pedagogy of teacher educators, yet often teacher educators do not link practice with research or theory when they model. Narratives of experiences 'on the ground' in teacher education are a helpful resource for unpacking the theory behind teacher educators' practice. Exemplar material demonstrates how specific narratives can be opened up and reveals the benefits of using theory to interrogate practice. Provocations and suggestions are provided to show how narratives of practice can be explored using educational theories and research in order to learn and develop practice. This professional learning can support teacher educators' work of developing teachers' research literacy.

KEY WORDS: explicit modelling; research-informed practice; educational theory; teacher educator

Introduction

This chapter is designed to enable teacher educators in universities, colleges and schools to use narratives of practice to interrogate their approach to modelling and to develop the way they model links between educational theories, research and practice. The intention is for teacher educators to use the narratives as a tool to examine and develop their own practice of modelling in order to support their work of developing teachers' research literacy, rather than to use the narratives with teachers. Teacher educators might use this form of modelling with teachers in different settings, for example, with student teachers in initial teacher education and with qualified teachers in the context of professional learning and development.

Teacher educators model their practice whilst they are working with teachers. Modelling is more effective when it becomes part of the dialogue, as the teacher educator 'steps out' of their teaching to explain their rationale (Loughran, 2006). This can provide beneficial learning opportunities as the teacher educator's practice can be related to what teachers might experience in their own teaching. Additionally, teacher educators can use modelling to link practice with theories (Lunenberg *et al.*, 2007). However, this linking process is challenging, and there are multiple interpretations of theories and practice. This chapter provides resources to support teacher educators' professional learning about modelling the interplay between research, theory, and practice so that they, in turn, can support teachers to develop their critical thinking and research literacy. Based on teacher educators' narratives of practice, these resources include examples and provocations so that teacher educators can learn about and then use similar approaches to support teachers to develop their research literacy.

One incentive for developing teachers' and teacher educators' research literacy arises from the 'Age of Accountability' in which they are employed (Boyd & White, 2017). Teachers are increasingly positioned as technicians rather than professionals, being highly accountable for 'delivering' curricula that might not match their professional values, using pedagogies they do not always believe in. In this context, the potential of developing research literacy can be appreciated, empowering teachers and teacher educators to articulate research that informs their approaches to teaching, leadership, curriculum development and other aspects of practice. Clearly, 'teacher education, both initial and advanced, needs to equip teachers with the essential skills and

knowledge of educational research literacy so that they have the professional tools required to contribute to curriculum development and develop research-informed practice' (Boyd & White, 2017, p. 123). Therefore, teachers and teacher educators need to develop their ability to critically evaluate the published professional knowledge base, including empirical research, practitioner research, theoretical concepts, and professional and policy documents (Eraut, 1994; Boyd *et al.*, 2015). Teacher educators and teachers need to engage in these discussions around research, theory and practice and contribute to developing the body of professional knowledge in their field.

As they develop their practice, teachers and teacher educators might use the traditional model of trying to apply theory to practice *in situ*, but this is rare and appears to be rather ineffective. Guskey (2002) suggested there is a causal path from teachers learning about a theory or idea from a professional development event, to a change in their classroom practices, which causes change in pupils' learning outcomes, which in turn changes the teachers' beliefs and attitudes. When actions bring about the desired learning outcomes, there is positive reinforcement leading to the teacher adopting the practice and growing in their acceptance of the theory, because it works for them. More reflective approaches to help teachers to integrate theory and practice, include a 'realistic approach' to teacher education (Korthagen & Kessels, 1999). Often the starting point is the teacher's practical wisdom, situated in their own context, together with some ideas from the practice of others or from professional learning opportunities, through a trial-and-error approach, developing their practical wisdom further. This leaves the challenge of being able to relate what is happening in practice to published research or theory, and to work in the zone of interplay between practical wisdom and public knowledge (Boyd *et al.*, 2015). Such 'public knowledge' could include 'learning theory, research evidence, professional guidance or policy' (Boyd *et al.*, 2015, p. 58). Personally held theories need unpicking to understand more deeply the underlying knowledge base. Teacher educators need to surface underpinning theories, so that this understanding can be modelled explicitly to teachers, helping them to understand the benefit of having a theoretical framework to use as a lens to analyse the complexities of practice to further develop practice. Swennen *et al.* (2008) suggested that as well as modelling, teacher educators should 'explain the choices they make while teaching (meta-commentary)' and 'link those choices to relevant theory' (p. 531). In this chapter, Eraut's (1994) definition of educational theory

is used; such theory ‘comprises concepts, frameworks, ideas and principles which may be used to interpret, explain or judge intentions, actions and experiences in educational or education-related settings’ (p. 60). This broad definition may help teacher educators to demonstrate that ‘there is nothing as effective as the interdependence between theory, research and practice’ (Bargal, 2011, p. 43).

The idea of theory can be daunting to teachers and teacher educators and there are challenges to linking theory to practice. For example, having time to stop and think what theories there are that relate to practice; having knowledge of relevant theories, especially where their use is not explicated; it takes a bit of searching to find relevant theories/literature; and lack of confidence about whether the literature that is found stands up to current critique. Also, in some settings academic literature is not readily available. The same concerns can apply to the idea of research. However, significant benefits can be gained from contributing to discussions about research, theory and practice and until time is given to engaging with the literature, teachers and teacher educators can end up not developing their practice and becoming stuck. This process can give fresh ideas and new insights and learning, from those who have gone before and those who are in other countries and systems. It stops teachers and teacher educators from reinventing the wheel, it can help to broaden understanding beyond the field of training – for example, learning from fields such as behavioural psychology, sociology and neuroscience can enrich the interpretation of practice.

Exploring narratives of practice in teacher education is especially useful for the professional development of teacher educators (White *et al.*, 2020). In this chapter a series of narratives about teacher educators’ practice are used to explore how specific examples relate to research and educational theories, and what professional knowledge base has been used to guide the judgements that have been made. The narratives will be about teaching and assessing student teachers, which can reflect teaching and assessment practices that teachers will also enact in their settings. These narratives were written by school-based and institute-based teacher educators working within school-university partnerships for initial teacher education, in England and the Netherlands. Participants were invited to write a brief story about a specific challenge they had faced recently in their practice, using pseudonyms, and including a beginning, a plot, and an ending (if there was one).

In unpicking these narratives of practice and relating them to empirical research and theoretical concepts, a deeper understanding will develop of how teachers and teacher educators can locate their practice within published literature. Resources are provided in this chapter to enable teacher educators to explicitly model how educational theories are related to their practice, providing an interpretive approach to enhancing the research literacy of educational professionals. As teacher educators critique and develop the way they model links between practice and research or theory in their own setting they can work on their own or with others to develop their approach. If working alone they might reflect on their practice, plan to model specific aspects and identify the underpinning research or theory in advance; whilst working with others can provide opportunities for peer observation, joint planning, co-teaching or discussing ideas with colleagues, trying them out and reporting back.

The next four sections of this chapter illustrate how a narrative of practice can be explored to learn more about modelling the link between practice and research or theory:

Section One: Exploring a narrative – have a go!

Section Two: Ways that teacher educators can explore narratives of practice using educational theories

Section Three: Sample narratives with provocations

Section Four: Example responses to questions in Section One

Section One: Exploring a narrative – have a go!

This section illustrates how you could use a story or narrative of practice to learn more about ways of modelling the link between practice and research or theory when working with teachers. As this is a challenging form of modelling, the first activity in this section, Activity 1.1, invites teacher educators to ‘step back’ and reflect on their own understanding of the term modelling, and of the purpose of modelling, before they consider their approaches to modelling. Activity 1.2 illustrates how the narrative could then be used as a basis for deepening reflective thinking about ways of modelling the link between a teacher educator’s practice and the research or theory that underpins it. These two activities are based on Narrative 1: ‘Individualised support’ in which a teacher mentor recounts their experience of working with a student

teacher in the classroom. Although the storyteller does not mention modelling explicitly, modelling might have taken place at several points in this story. A third activity, Activity 1.3, focuses on ongoing professional learning.

Each activity is designed to encourage personal reflection when carried out by a teacher educator working on their own. This reflection could be followed by discussion to articulate thinking and share ideas if the activities are used in pairs or groups. After you have had a go – or if you get stuck – you might find it helpful to have a look at the suggestions in Section Four.

Resources that can be used to support the process of identifying and critically evaluating research literature are listed after the references at the end of this chapter. These could be used alongside any activities in this chapter. The process of finding relevant literature starts with identifying a term or terms that relates to the practice of interest. Many academic papers can be found using web search engines such as Google Scholar, and may be available Open Access through the institutions of the authors or by emailing the author directly.

Narrative 1: ‘Individualised support’

I am an experienced teacher mentor. I had a student teacher who was recruited by my school on to a school-led programme for initial teacher education. The student teacher was quiet, calm, and patient. He was naturally prepared to work hard. His two main areas for development were initially ensuring that the pupils were listening to instructions and feedback, and behaviour management. He seemed to get lost within the classroom as his presence was not imposing. To improve his ability to ensure pupils were listening, I sent him to observe several teachers who had a quiet disposition, rather like him. We discussed what he had learnt and then reviewed how he could improve pupils’ behaviour when he was supporting different pupils. We identified his position in the classroom as a new area to focus on, and this meant he didn’t have to project his voice from different locations but from one point nearer the front. The ability to move around the class could come once the relationships with pupils were more developed. The positioning at the front also allowed him to keep a handle on the progress of all pupils, supporting them from a few metres away rather than from right next to each pupil. The behaviour improved greatly because the pupils were able to see him, and he was able to scan around the room. This was put as an on-going weekly target, and the professional mentor was made aware.

Dealing with the individual need of this student teacher, helped me to realise that each student teacher needs to be supported to find ways that are appropriate for them to develop the skills of managing the classroom. There is not a one-size-fits-all. My own style is much louder than that of this student teacher, and it was more helpful to find other teachers for him to observe rather than to expect him to do things in the same way as me. In the end he developed a good presence and the respect of the class without straining or trying to be someone that he wasn't.

Activities

If you are carrying out these activities with another teacher educator or in a group, you might like to work through each activity on your own and stop after each one to discuss your ideas with others.

Activity 1.1: Stepping back

This activity is divided into three stages:



- What does the term modelling mean to you? How would you describe modelling to a colleague or a student teacher?
- What do you see as the purpose of modelling? Why do you model?



- Read through Narrative 1: 'Individualised support'.
- Identify with the teacher mentor in this story and consider:
 - a) *When* you could model in this situation;
 - b) *With whom* you could model;
 - c) *What* you could model; and
 - d) *How* you could model.



- Consider your own approach to modelling and reflect on the same aspects of modelling.
 - a) *When* you model;
 - b) *With whom* you model;

- c) *What* you model; and
- d) *How* you model.

Activity 1.2: Linking practice and research or theory



- Read through Narrative 1: ‘Individualised support’ again. This time highlight or underline any part(s) of the story where you think the teacher mentor could link their practice, what they are doing, with research or theory.
- In the part(s) of the story you have highlighted or underlined, what research or theory could the teacher mentor use to support their practice?
- How could they model to the student teacher to make clear links between their practice and this research or theory?
- Finally, think again about your approach to modelling (Part 3 of Activity 1.1) and then reflect on your learning from this story. Can you identify how you could develop your approach to modelling to make clearer links between your practice and the research or theory that underpins it?

Activity 1.3: Ongoing professional learning





As you continue to reflect on, critique and develop your approach to modelling links between your practice and research or theory in your own setting:

- How could you work on your own to develop your approach?
- How could you work with others?

Once you have worked through these three activities you might like to look at some of the ideas provided in Section Four of this chapter. These ideas are designed to support further professional learning.

Section Two: Ways that teacher educators can explore narratives of practice using educational theories

Loughran and Berry (2003) asserted that ‘Deciding which aspects of practice to make explicit, how to make them explicit, and when so that they might be useful and meaningful for student teachers is an ongoing dilemma in attempting to teach through explicit modelling’ (p. 13). This section includes several activities that teacher educators could use with stories of practice to learn more about this challenging process in relation to modelling the link between practice and research or theory when working with teachers. In each case teacher educators need to find ways of uncovering the links between practice and research or theory before they can engage in this form of modelling. Some of these activities refer explicitly to this complex and important step.

These activities are suitable for teacher educators working alone  or in pairs or groups .

Activity 2.1: Ask the author



- Read through the story and identify any aspects of the author’s practice that interest you.
- What questions would you like to ask the author about these aspects of their practice?
- How could you work with them to uncover the research or theory that underpinned them?
- How could they have made the underpinning research or theory clear to others in this situation?
- What could you take away from this that will help you to develop your own practice of uncovering the research or theory that underpins your practice and making explicit links between your practice and that research or theory?

Activity 2.2: Discover, Deepen, Do (3D)



This activity is based on the ‘Discover – Deepen – Do’ model designed to support change in teaching through analysis of critical incidents or critical moments (Graham *et al.*, 2012, p. 47).

DISCOVER

- Read through the story and identify an aspect of practice that you would like to discuss.
- Highlight or underline this part of the story.
- Each person shares the part of the story they have identified and explains why they would like to discuss it.
- Everyone agrees on one aspect of practice to discuss.

DEEPEN

- Everyone shares their ideas about this aspect of practice so that they can gain greater understanding and new insights.
- Working in pairs or groups the participants identify and discuss research or theory that might have underpinned the practice and shares this with the group.
- Working together everyone considers how they could learn more about the research or theory they have identified (e.g. reading books, journal articles).

DO

- Each person reflects on their learning from this activity and identifies any new insights into the research or theory underpinning practice in this example and how they could find out more about it.
- Everyone identifies something they will do to make clearer links between their own practice and the research or theory that underpins it and shares this with the group.

Activity 2.3: Putting yourself in the story



- Read through the story and identify an aspect of practice that reflects what you think you would have done in that situation.

- Why would you have done that?
- Can you identify the research or theory that underlies that aspect of your practice?
- How could you make that research or theory explicit to a teacher in this example?

Activities 2.4: Stepping back, Linking practice and research or theory, Ongoing professional learning



These are the three sequential activities provided in the previous section of this chapter.

PART 1: Stepping back

PART 2: Linking practice and research or theory

PART 3: Ongoing professional learning

Activity 2.5: Uncovering theories in practice



- This activity is suitable for a story that involves a student teacher engaged in teaching.
- Read through the story and identify an aspect of the student teacher's practice that you would focus on if you were working with them.
- Why would you focus on this aspect of their practice?
- What questions would you like to ask them about it?
- How could you work with them to uncover the reasons for their actions and to relate these to research or theory?
- How could they use this learning to develop their practice in this area?
- What can you take away from this that will help you to develop the way you work with teachers to explore links between their practice and the research or theory that underpins it?

Activity 2.6: What would you do?



The context for this activity is that in many situations there is not a ‘right’ way to act; different approaches can be appropriate. This reflects the complex nature of the work of a teacher educator.

- Read through the story and identify something you would have done differently.
- Reflect on what actions you would have taken in this situation and why.
- Working in pairs or groups take turns to explain what you would have done differently, how you would have done it differently, and why.
- Would you have taken the same actions as each other?
- Discuss your choices, probing more deeply into your examples, and try to identify research or theory that is relevant to the actions you would have taken.
- Identify together how you could have made this research or theory clear to others in this story. What approaches could you use?
- How could you use these approaches in your own practice?

Section Three: Sample narratives with provocations

This section includes two narratives with provocations that are designed to support teacher educators’ professional learning about issues relating to modelling the link between practice and research or theory when working with teachers. There are two separate sets of provocations for each narrative. Each set of provocations comprises an activity.

In Narrative 2: ‘An unsatisfactory lesson’ a school-based teacher educator recounts their experience of working alongside a student teacher who is at an early phase of their teacher education programme. Activity 3.1, ‘**Trying on different shoes**’, linked to this narrative is based on work by Jarvis and Graham (2015). This activity invites teacher educators to try on the shoes of the student teacher and the teacher educator and to consider their perspectives before putting on their own shoes and considering the strategies they would have used in this situation, and how they might explain these

strategies and link them to research or theory. Activity 3.2, '**Choosing what to model**', invites teacher educators to choose an aspect of the approach the storyteller took to providing feedback on teaching, to consider how they could model that explicitly to a student teacher, and to identify whether they could link it with underpinning research or theory.

Narrative 3: 'Depth or breadth' is a teacher educator's account of teaching and of the importance and complexity of considering different beliefs about teaching, in this case the beliefs of the teacher educator, the student teachers, and the school in which they are based. The teacher educator concludes the account by reflecting 'what do we value in a lesson?' This fundamental question is explored initially using Activity 3.3, '**Exploring values in teaching**', which is adapted from one developed and used with teachers (Jarvis & Graham, 2015). Activity 3.4, '**What does 'modelling' mean to you?**', invites teacher educators to consider different approaches to modelling by reflecting on the similarities and differences between the way modelling is portrayed in the narrative and the approaches they use themselves.

Each activity is designed to encourage personal reflection when carried out by a teacher educator working on their own. This reflection could be followed by discussion to articulate thinking and share ideas if the activities are used in pairs or groups.

Narrative 2: 'An unsatisfactory lesson'

I have been working as a school-based teacher mentor for a few years. When I was working with this particular student teacher, I had a challenging incident early on in their training. Her teaching had been improving through the first term; however, this one lesson I observed was unsatisfactory. The lesson was not well planned, and the activities chosen did not match the learning objectives. The problem was that she thought the lesson went well, and I had to help her to understand where things had gone wrong. What could I do to help her to change her perspective without undermining her growing confidence?

I also had to discuss the importance of careful planning; that it was not about having a piece of paper to hand in as much as about carefully thinking through each stage of the lesson to make sure they were fit for the purpose

of the lesson. Her growing confidence had led to a complacent approach to the planning. Perhaps this was because, from her perspective, it seemed that more experienced teachers did not write detailed lesson plans – I don't think she realised that these teachers will have a lot of their thinking stored in their head rather than written.

We set a clear target that she could work on for the week, so that when I observed the next week, I would be able to see that she had planned more carefully and that the lesson would have more pace and purpose. Fortunately, this was effective, and the next lesson was much better.

I also realised that the student teacher might well discuss this incident with the school-based teacher educator overseeing training in the school. I was concerned that although she seemed to accept what I was trying to draw out of her during this meeting, she might put another perspective on the incident in conversation with this colleague. So, I highlighted the incident to the school-based teacher educator quietly, to ensure that a fuller picture was available to her when she met with the student teacher.

Activity 3.1: Trying on different shoes

- Read Narrative 2: 'An unsatisfactory lesson.'
- Try to put yourself in the shoes of the student teacher who thought her lesson had gone well.
- How might she have felt when she received feedback from the teacher mentor?
- Now try to put yourself in the shoes of the mentor.
- What were the mentor's concerns? What strategies did the mentor use to provide feedback on the lesson?
- Now put on your own shoes.
- Would you use the same strategies as the mentor to provide feedback in this situation? If not, what strategies would you use?
- How would you explain your reasons for using these strategies to the student teacher?
- Could you explain to her how these strategies link to underpinning research or theory? If not, how could you find out more about these links?
- What can you take away from this that will help you to develop the way you reflect on and explain links between practice and research or theory?

Activity 3.2: Choosing what to model

- Read Narrative 2: 'An unsatisfactory lesson', focusing on the teacher mentor's practice of providing feedback.
- Choose aspects of this practice that you could make explicit to the student teacher.
- Why would you choose these aspects of practice?
- How could you make them explicit in this situation?
- Could you link these aspects of practice to research or theory?
- If so, what research or theory would you share?
- How might this be useful for the student teacher's learning?
- How might It help your own learning?

Narrative 3: 'Depth or breadth'

As a new teacher educator there are many challenges to overcome. Moving from an environment where you are seen as an expert to one where you are a novice can be disconcerting. There is the challenge of teaching adults as opposed to children. Their thinking and understanding of education are often quite well developed and therefore making a change to understanding can be challenging.

Aligned with this is the tension between what you believe about teaching and what the beginning teacher's school believe good teaching looks like. An example of this is...

A Monday afternoon session where I was teaching the importance of providing pupils with lots of practice so that they can develop fluency in a concept. I also wanted to develop the concepts from the previous two weeks which looked at delivering explanations and modelling. I decided to use a whiteboard only, so that I could also show my own thinking as opposed to pre-prepared power point slides.

I then spent the next 20 minutes explaining, modelling, and showing how I would provide the pupils with lots of practice so that they could balance ionic compounds. We looked at the previous knowledge they would require to make sense of the work. I then gave them worked examples to show my thinking (metacognition) and justified the questions I wanted the pupils to work through. This justification involved using lots of familiar compounds, many I had mentioned during the session.

When I asked the student teachers for feedback, some could see that the time spent on this would speed up the time spent doing more complex work because it tried to develop solid foundations for all. That is the idea that although their gains appeared small in the short term, over a longer period they would be larger because academic success breeds motivation not the other way around. So, if they experienced success then they were more likely to be motivated and not rely on trying to “engage” the pupils to increase motivation.

There was a fascinating debate about how much work needs to be covered during a lesson. Some student teachers felt that I had taken a very long time to get to a certain point. So, the end point of the story is asking what do we value in a lesson? Understanding one thing well, and taking our time and checking understanding, or racing through the curriculum to demonstrate that it has all been taught?

Activity 3.3: Exploring values in teaching

- Read Narrative 3: ‘Depth or breadth’.
- Highlight or underline the parts of the story about what the teacher educator is doing or thinking.
- Using a different colour, highlight or underline the parts of the story about what the student teachers are doing or thinking.
- Identify and reflect on those parts of the story you think illustrate ‘good teaching’.
- Why do you think that? What are the values underpinning those parts of the story?
- Do these values underpin your own practice?
- Can you identify other values that underpin your own practice?
- Discuss your values in pairs or groups and work together to try to identify links between any of the values you have shared and research or theory and reflect on how you could explain the links as a teacher educator.

Activity 3.4: What does ‘modelling’ mean to you?

- Read Narrative 3: ‘Depth or breadth’.
- What does the storyteller tell you about their approach to modelling? Note down how you think they model in this story.

- What approaches would you have used? Note down how you think you would have modelled in this situation.
- Identify and reflect on the similarities and differences between the storyteller's approach to modelling and your own approach.
- What research or theory underpins your own approach to modelling?
- How could you find out more about research or theory relevant to using different approaches to modelling in teacher education?
- How could you make clear links between your approach to modelling and the underpinning research or theory so that teachers you work with can develop their own practice of modelling?

Section Four: Example responses to questions in Section One

This section provides some 'ideas to consider' in response to the questions in the first two activities provided with Narrative 1 in Section One of this chapter: Activity 1.1, **Stepping back** and Activity 1.2, **Linking practice and research or theory**. These ideas are designed to support further professional learning.

Activity 1.1: Stepping back



- What does the term modelling mean to you? How would you describe modelling to a colleague or a student teacher?

Ideas to consider:

- *The term modelling in teacher education has been defined in different ways. For example:*
 - *Loughran (2006) suggested that it 'means teaching about two things simultaneously; the content under consideration and the teaching employed to convey that content... Modeling then requires teachers of teaching to actively make the tacit explicit' (p. 42).*
 - *Loughran and Berry (2003) saw 'explicit modelling' as working at two levels at the same time: 'At one level, explicit modelling is about us "doing" in our practice that which we expect our students to do in*

their teaching. This means we must model the use of engaging and innovative teaching procedures for our students rather than “deliver” information about such practice through the traditional (and often expected) transmissive approach. At another level there is also a need to offer our student teachers access to the pedagogical reasoning, feelings, thoughts and actions that accompany our practice across a range of teaching and learning experiences’ (p. 4).

- What do you see as the purpose of modelling? Why do you model?

Ideas to consider:

- *You could model to explain thinking; to break down a complex activity into manageable steps so that the student teacher can understand the rationale of pedagogical choices; to offer new experiences of learning and teaching; to make explicit links between practice and different forms of public knowledge such as principles, theories, and research.*



- Read through Narrative 1: ‘Individualised support’
- Identify with the teacher mentor in this story and consider:
 - a) *When* you could model in this situation;
 - b) *With whom* you could model;
 - c) *What* you could model; and
 - d) *How* you could model.

Ideas to consider:

*a) and b) **When and with whom you could model in this situation.** You could model with the student teacher; you could choose others to model practice to the student teacher; you could use video recordings of model practice. You could choose to model by directly intervening in the lesson or through providing feedback to the student teacher.*

*c) and d) **What and how you could model in this situation.** You could model:*

- *Aspects of practice such as carrying out assessment and providing feedback. You could also model ‘reflective practice’ (Boyd, 2014, p. 58).*
- *Classroom presence, modelling positioning, use of body language and voice (Rogers, 2012).*

- *Enquiry into practice, modelling how the student teacher could enquire into their practice of encouraging pupils to listen and managing pupil behaviour.*
- *Problem solving around teaching, by allowing the student teacher to identify and suggest solutions to problems they are finding in the classroom, and by discussing these and sharing planning for practice in the next session.*
- *What it is like to be a learner (Boyd, 2014), a pupil, in this situation.*

You could model: by 'thinking aloud' (Loughran, 1995, p. 431), articulating things that are not going as planned, asking for reasons and solutions; by demonstrating ways of finding solutions such as by observing other teachers; by discussing what the student teacher has noticed about other teachers' practice and how they might use their learning in the classroom.



- Consider your own approach to modelling and reflect on the same aspects of modelling.
 - a) *When* you model;
 - b) *With whom* you model;
 - c) *What* you model; and
 - d) *How* you model.

Ideas to consider:

*a) and b) **When and with whom you model.** You could model when you are working with a student teacher or with any member of the teaching team. For example, you could model when you are planning a session together; leading or co-teaching a session; providing feedback; supporting them to engage in reflecting on their practice; identifying theory relevant to your practice; and engaging in your own professional development.*

- c) and d) **What and how you could model.** For example, you could model:*
- *Approaches to learning e.g. how to ask questions in a specific context. This might involve two tutors, one taking the role of the teacher and the other the learner, or the tutor could model by taking different roles, or providing prompts for teachers to develop questioning skills.*
 - *Aspects of practice such as organising group work or resources, and techniques for identifying prior knowledge, explaining or running*

a plenary. You could also model 'teaching strategies' and 'reflective practice' (Boyd, 2014, p. 58).

- *Enquiry into practice. Working with teachers to model how they might enquire into aspects of their practice. This might involve finding published literature to identify different approaches to learning and teaching to try in the classroom.*
- *Links between practice and theory. This might involve relating practice to theory of pedagogy, subject theory, child development theory, process of critical reflection.*
- *Planning for learning. Perhaps by sharing planning for sessions, asking for feedback, and also by reflecting publicly (on-line or face-to-face) on the session and identifying issues for consideration.*
- *Practitioner research.*
- *Professional relationships, including relationships between the teacher or teacher educator and the student teacher. Again, this could involve more than one person and might involve modelling features such as listening and respect.*
- *Professional values, such as those involved in developing relationships with teachers and valuing the teachers' own experiences.*
- *Problem solving around teaching by sharing planning or by identifying issues that arise and asking teachers to suggest solutions.*
- *Study skills e.g. different approaches to note-taking, engagement with texts, reading academic texts.*
- *Thinking processes such as developing an argument and interaction with ideas.*
- *What it is like to be a learner (Boyd, 2014) and different forms of learning.*
- *Working effectively with others. This could involve more than one person or the tutor to be explicit about others' roles in contributing to a session.*

You could model by:

- *Articulating when things go wrong in a session, asking for reasons and solutions.*
- *Co-teaching with a colleague or with a student teacher.*
- *Demonstrating e.g. showing how to do group work or how to work with pupils in a particular age group.*

- *Doing it ‘wrong,’ perhaps by deliberately doing a very poor presentation or by planning or organizing a poor session and then asking teachers to identify issues and ways the issues could be addressed. This could be as part of articulating modelling and its purpose. It involves experience including emotional engagement.*
- *Explaining why a room has been set up in a certain way and linking this to school classrooms.*
- *Providing a written rationale of a session.*
- *Sharing personal experiences.*
- *Stopping a session at a certain point and identifying what has been modelled.*
- *Teaching and ‘de-briefing’ sessions in which one teacher educator teaches and a second leads follow-up questioning and reflection on learning and teaching that involves student teachers and provides opportunities for modelling ‘professional critique’ of practice (Loughran & Berry, 2003, p. 4).*
- *Using role play, visual aids, storytelling and talking partners.*
- *Using ‘thinking aloud’ (Loughran, 1995, p. 431) or ‘self-conscious narrative’ (Boyd, 2014, p. 58), or by revealing a ‘thought bubble’ (White, 2011, p. 487) during a session to explain features of practice.*
- *Using video to capture moments of teaching and then recalling and talking about them.*
- *Using voice over text of a session plan to reveal thinking.*

You could also model how to enquire into modelling itself by documenting; by asking colleagues to observe; by looking at planning and considering whether modelling is specified or whether it is there but unspecified; by asking teachers for feedback on what has been modelled; by reflecting alone or with a colleague; or by planning with a colleague.

You could also consider how you might prompt teachers to use what they learn through teacher educator modelling to inform the development of their own teaching practice (Loughran, 1997).

Activity 1.2: Linking practice and research or theory



- Read through Narrative 1: ‘Individualised support’ again. This time highlight or underline any part(s) of the story where you think the teacher mentor could link their practice, what they are doing, with research or theory.
- In the part(s) of the story you have highlighted or underlined, what research or theory could the teacher mentor use to support their practice?
- How could they model to the student teacher to make clear links between their practice and this research or theory?

Ideas to consider:

Some parts of the story are underlined below together with some research or theory that the teacher mentor could use to support what they are doing.

To improve his ability to ensure pupils were listening, I sent him to observe a number of teachers who had a quiet disposition, rather like him.

Here, the teacher mentor could discuss Mason’s (2011, p. 35) ‘discipline of noticing’. This centres on the view that ‘noticing is a collection of practices designed to sensitize oneself so as to notice opportunities in the future in which to act freshly rather than automatically out of habit’ (Mason, 2011, p. 35). Reflection is integral to noticing, which involves readiness to notice and reflecting on recent experiences to identify issues to notice and be able to practice in a different way (Mason, 2011).

We discussed what he had learnt and then reviewed how he could improve pupils’ behaviour when he was supporting different pupils.

The discussion here is an example of ‘critical dialogue’ (Parker et al., 2016, p. 137) that allows the student teacher to use their experience to construct understanding through collaborative discourse around teaching and learning – moving their thinking forward about what it takes to develop as a teacher and leading to improved practice.

We identified his position in the classroom as a new area to focus on, and this meant he didn’t have to project his voice from different locations but from one point nearer the front. The ability to move around the class could come once the relationships with pupils were more developed.

The positioning at the front also allowed him to keep a handle on the progress of all pupils, supporting them from a few metres away rather than from right next to each pupil. The behaviour improved greatly because the pupils were able to see him, and he was able to scan around the room. This was put as an on-going weekly target, and the professional mentor was made aware.

The teacher mentor could link developing a classroom presence to the use of body language, voice and non-verbal communication (Altun, 2019). They could make a chart for the student teacher to use for observing others and checking which forms of body language they are using and the impact that is having. This way the student teacher could create an aide-memoire for how to position themselves and what body clues they can use. The teacher mentor could share Altun's (2019) paper with the student teacher and they could discuss together or with peers.

- Finally, think again about your approach to modelling (Part 3 of Activity 1.1) and then reflect on your learning from this story. Can you identify how you could develop your approach to modelling to make clearer links between your practice and the research or theory that underpins it?

Ideas to consider:

You could review the examples above and identify how you might like to use some of them with a focus on making explicit links between what you are doing and the research or theory that underpins it.

Conclusions

Narratives of practice can be used to enable teacher educators to explore their practice and make links with theory and research. By using these resources, teacher educators can grow in confidence in articulating the links between research and practice and develop an appreciation of the benefit of using public knowledge to develop and refine or challenge practical wisdom (Lunenberg *et al.*, 2007). This in turn provides a model for how teacher educators can work with teachers, looking at narratives of their practice, to identify underpinning theories and links to research. Explicitly modelling the interplay between research, theory and practice can be supported using

the resources developed here. In this way teachers and teacher educators will be able to develop their research literacy, and the profession will be better equipped to surface future areas for practitioner research where practical wisdom and local practices do not have a strong underpinning by the professional knowledge base.

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Further resources

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