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Changing Teaching

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Introduction

This report presents some of the data arising from a research project into graduates of the Institute of Education's innovative practice-based Master in Teaching programme, some four years on from the date of graduation of the first cohort. Using an on-line survey of all 110 graduates (of whom 35 responded) followed up with eight individual interviews, the project looked at range of issues affecting middle- and early-career teachers. These included their attitudes to CPD, management and leadership, the impact of the course on their practice, their level of motivation and burn-out, their relationships with colleagues and their continuing links with higher education. The raw data is being made available through the WLE website, and some of these other themes will be explored in more detail in later publications. This report focuses on the idea of change, looking in detail at how the teachers described change in their own practice, and the extent to which there is any evidence of there being a sustained change in practice in respect to their use of research literature or scholarship in the classroom. In addition to summaries of the survey data, lengthy quotations from transcripts of the interviews have often been selected because of the quality of insight they afford into the particular cases studied.

New Designs for Teachers' Professional Learning (Pickering, Daly & Pachler, 2007) described in some breadth the distinctive qualities of the MTeach. The degree challenges much current thinking about the shape and function of continuing professional development (CPD) and early professional development (EPD)—whilst current thinking demands training that is top-down, centralised and instrumentalist, the MTeach has been summarised by one reviewer as offering 'a very different CPD model, based on three key tenets: shared practice; collaboration; and scholarly and critical reflective practice.'[1]

Chapter 8 (Pickering, 2007) was written with the collaboration of a number of graduates of the course. While providing a rich and at times coruscating critique of current CPD practice, the chapter also offers alternative models, and shows graduates and their tutors beginning to explore in further detail a number of the higher-level questions associated with work-place learning and professional learning or development. This study arose partly to take this collaboration further, but also to attempt to provide some insight into the continuing impact of the MTeach (as an example of a particular model of teacher CPD and higher professional learning) on its graduates.

Literature review and contextual discussion

Though it has since been adapted to enable the participation of more experienced teachers, the MTeach (in the University of London model) as initially conceived, focused on the first three to four years of teachers' careers, immediately after the completion of their PGCE or similar initial qualification. There is a substantial literature exploring a

[1] *New Designs for Teachers' Professional Learning*, reviewed by Mr Jonathan Tummons at www.escalate.ac.uk/3788 on 22nd November 2007.

range of questions and issues in early professional development as an element in teachers' life-long learning. From the literature reviewed, five key themes are clear:

- the importance of informal learning and the problems associated with its validation;
- the theoretical deficit existing in current teacher training;
- the stimulation and development of professional collaboration that develops practice;
- the active engagement of teachers as learners in the construction of their own CPD

Exploring the relationship of informal and formal learning

An important focus in this area of research is the relationship between formal and informal learning. Chris Turner ends his 2006 essay with a call for more research into the value of informal learning for new teachers. Informal learning is (by definition) often difficult to quantify and describe but may be assumed to be the principal place of professional development for inexperienced teachers (Turner, 2006). Informal learning is a hidden fact of industry and commerce (Fuller et al., 2000), and possibly life. For some critics the formal and the informal are somehow held in tension with each other. Perhaps it is fairer to say that this perceived opposition reflects what is often situated fact: some organisations value off-the-job training more than others, some are more prepared to validate what is currently considered informal training. The MTeach offers a synthesis by externalising tacit knowledge (Nonaka et al, 2005 (cited in Fuller et al, 2000)). The virtual learning environment (VLE) creates an (on-line) interactional space for the early career teachers on the course, relocating them in a situation that contrasts with school. The mixed mode of delivery (portfolios, on-line discussions, creates opportunities in which the informal is formalised. By so doing the course lifts teachers' dangerous tendency towards the anecdotal into a theoretical, critical, analytical and scholarly situation. One module (Leading Learning) explicitly takes teacher narratives of classroom and school situations, and through a combination of on-line discussion and scholarly critique, locates these experiences in the academic discourse.

Without proper spaces for reflection and professional learning, NQTs are often 'isolated' (Williams, 2003; Turner, 2006), and by definition, cut-off from a learning community in which habits of scholarly reflection can be practiced and developed. Australian research has further demonstrated the vital but hidden rôle of peer networks and the effect that critical, reflective conversations of beginning teachers can have in improving teacher effectiveness (McCormack et al, 2006). Frameworks which make learning explicit offer NQTs opportunities to articulate an emotional intelligence (Turner). The MTeach has been designed to create such structures, and hence graduates should be less isolated, better able to draw on their informal learning, and able to locate it within a critical understanding of teaching.

The theoretical deficit in teacher training

Even under the current arrangements, there have been concerns that NQT mentors are not able to provide useful advice (Totterdell et al, 2002). The MTeach offers an alternative—constructivist—model, which both makes available to teachers quality higher-education tuition, and combines this with the innovative (and supervised) on-

line learning communities. As well as making-up for the theoretical deficit that has hitherto existed in the PGCE course, by providing an alternative ideological framework, the MTeach offers an alternative to the arrangements of government itself. The end-of-induction standards have been criticised for not being based on any research or theoretical framework or argued principles (Turner, 2006, citing McNally et al 2003), and may be criticised for being a political imposition on a complex social process in which the teacher must construct an identity and agency. The MTeach differs from most NQT and EPD provision in offering professional development that is more than the simply instrumental—most existing programmes focus on tactical class-room issues, and do enough 'to address the multi-faceted nature of learning of inexperienced teachers' (Turner 2006).

Developing collaborative, self-directed CPD

The MTeach explicitly aims to promote collegiality, openness and the sharing of knowledge. This is based on a theoretical conviction of the value of these qualities in improving the quality of teachers, shared by a wide range of stake-holders, not least the Welsh Assembly Government. The need to stimulate pupil motivation is a given in any classroom, and the corollary to this must be that teachers should be empowered to undertake 'self-directed' learning (Turner, 2006).

Purpose of research

The purpose of the research was to capture the impact the MTeach has had on the cohort that graduated in 2004, some four years after the completion of the course. The study develops the work undertaken in 2005-6 and aims to see whether the MTeach has had a positive impact on teacher's practice.

Objectives

The research began from the assumption that the MTeach has had a positive impact on the lives of the early-to-mid-career teachers who undertook the course, and that the experience has made them 'better teachers'.

Given the literature analysis above, we would expect graduates of the MTeach four years on *still* to be well motivated, engaged with their pupils, reflective, informed of academic literatures and policy, continuing to follow collegiate habits, and resilient to the challenges of the job. We must logically also expect them to be *better* motivated, engaged, informed, reflective, collaborative and resilient than those who have not gone through the programme. Six foci have therefore been suggested as markers of 'better teachers':

- career development
- perceptions of self-efficacy
- pupil achievement
- use of theory and scholarship to enhance teaching and learning

- habits of learning, with teachers taking control of their learning, in various forms of INSET and CPD
- continuing interactions with HE.

By combining quantitative measures with a qualitative discussion, the study aimed to see if the MTeach has had a positive impact on these six areas of teachers' lives and their ability to be effective.

Author's position

The author is a graduate of the course, being one of the first cohort who started the programme in 2001; in September 2007 he was employed part-time to assist with some teaching and take-on research tasks and became employed full-time from September 2008. Readers need to know (because of the direction that the subsequent analysis takes) that the author is a social democrat, broadly post-Marxist and heavily influenced by Roman Catholic social teaching.

Methods and data analysis

The full cohort of graduates of the MTeach was approached at the start of the spring term 2008. The course maintains a good data-base of email addresses, and the graduates were approached by email; the email contained a link to an on-line survey maintained by the London Knowledge Lab, where respondents were invited to complete a brief on-line questionnaire. The questionnaire asked basic questions, quantifying career development, and attempting to create measurable data recording graduates'

- perceptions of self-efficacy,
- use of theory and scholarship to enhance teaching and learning
- impact on pupil achievement
- habits of learning, with teachers taking control of their learning, in various forms of INSET and CPD
- continuing interactions with HE.

The data from the survey was collated in the week of 24 November 2008. There were thirty-five responses, representing some 32% of the course's 110 graduates at the time. No additional responses had been added in the period July—November 2008.

Interviews

In some attempt to triangulate the largely quantitative data of the questionnaires, and to 'get behind the data', they were backed-up with a number of interviews. The final question in the on-line survey was an invitation to all respondents to take part in interviews, and thirteen volunteered, and all were approached to agree times and dates. Initially, it had been hoped to organise number of focus-group interviews, but this proved logistically impossible: in the event eight one-to-one interviews were conducted with respondents 1, 3, 4, 20, 22, 23, 29 and 34 in June and July 2009. For ease of reading, these eight alone have been given pseudonyms:

LAUREN

Lauren works as a Head of English at a boys' comprehensive in north east London; many of the boys come from backgrounds classified as 'Asian'; she notes that gang culture has a strong and negative influence on the school. Her school has recently experienced a change of senior leadership, and is now subject to innovations in governance arrangements.

EMILY

Emily teaches year 2 in an inner city primary school in north London, her second full-time post, one which she notes is experiencing some stress at the management level because of the need to hit SAT targets. She has been teaching for six years, and was one of the first cohorts to come through the MTeach. Her first degree was not in education or a national curriculum subject, and she worked as a TEFL teacher abroad before completing the PGCE in 2002.

CHLOE

Chloe is an experienced teacher working in a large comprehensive in one of the counties neighbouring (and heavily influenced by) London. She has been a tutor for school-based initial teacher training for some three years, and in that role has strong links with both the Institute of Education and other HEIs. Most of her time, now, is spent administrating or teaching the ITT scheme, not in the school classroom, though she does still have a small teaching timetable.

KEIRAN

Keiran works as a science teacher in an LEA in England, some distance from London. He works three days in the class room, and two days running a GTP programme. He grew up in Manchester but has now made his home in the south.

AMELIE

Amelie is a teacher of MFL, born and brought up in France, where she qualified to teach. After teaching in England for three years, she decided to take the MTeach course, because and at the time of the interviews, working in a large maritime town on the coast of England. She relishes the classroom, and described in her interview how her desire to continue to teach rather than get involved in management was a mystery to her own management.

CHARLOTTE

After her degree in English, Charlotte went straight into teaching, and became a Fast Track teacher during her PGCE. After completing her initial teacher education at the Institute of Education, she progressed to the MTeach course. She is an Assistant Head at a large girls' comprehensive school in inner London.

ANGELIQUE

Angelique now works for an inner London LEA. After some time working as a year six teacher in a school in a demanding area of London, she works as a primary advisor. Her work principally involves observing, mentoring and developing teachers in the often high-stressed London Borough she lives in. She is the only black teacher in the interview group.

JESSCIA

After a strong academic career which included a Master's degree in Creative Writing, Jessica chose to teach, training at the Institute and ending up in a sixth form college in a large garrison town in the south of England, where she is head of the large department of English and Media.

Changing teaching

The on-line survey generated some powerful suggestions that the teachers who replied to the request to be surveyed (32% of the whole cohort) had found the process of following the course transformative. 30 out of 34 felt the MTeach had helped them progress in their careers, and 31 out of 35 felt the programme had made them either a more effective teacher (18 responses), or a significantly more effective teacher (13 responses). It is not possible to go into greater detail about the survey responses here, but the results will be published through the WLE website at the Institute of Education during the course of 2010. Beginning as semi-structured interviews with a script raising questions around the key themes discussed in Jon Pickering's (2007) chapter, and of the ideas arising out of the on-one questionnaire and survey, it is probably more accurate to describe these interviews as un-structured, because in the interviewing, issues emerged in what was very much a conversation between individuals interested about teaching and learning.

One key issue that arises out of the work is one simple question: what really changed in the teachers' practice as a result of the process of the MTeach degree? Analysis of the very rich interview data offered the following synthesis: there was indeed change in the teachers' practice; these changes, however, have to be seen in a context in which there is significant continuity in what the teachers do now, and what they did before; and furthermore that some changes in practice which the course had hoped to foster have not proven to be embedded. The discussion below looks at some examples of these changes and lacks of change, and offers a possible explanation as to why some changes have not been embedded in the teachers' practice.

Changes: teaching and leadership

Lauren, Head of English in a boys' secondary school in north London, was the first interviewee, and from the start, was very clear about the transformative possibilities of the course. She contrasted where she was at the time of the interview with what would have happened if she'd not been on the programme:

> I would have gone on, on my way of thinking that this is the way it's be done. And unless someone would have taken hold of me, I would have gone along on one line— PGCE— and all the management rôles I had there were bad, bad examples of management, but I didn't have the experience to discern that at that point, I just knew I didn't like it, but I couldn't articulate necessarily what was wrong with it.

Later on in the interview she comments on the powerful impact of informed reflection on her classroom practice:

> Lauren: […] I think once you develop the ability to be self critical, because that's what it makes you to do, you become more self-critical, and more analytical about what you're doing and what you're providing, you're then more able to take on-board critiques from others. So I'm quite comfortable for the kids stand up and say 'Miss, we've had a shit lesson', as long as they tell me why. And it doesn't upset me or make me feel that I've failed…I might think that it should be this way, and this would be the best way of doing it but they know better than me, I think, how they're going to learn that kind of stuff.

Her thoughts introduce two key possible areas for change, classroom practice and leadership—and a third issue, whether existing teacher training gives professionals the resources to engage critically with conventional thinking, attitudes or practice.
Other teachers interviewed were clear that things had changed in their classrooms as a result of the programme of study on the programme. Keiran, too, contrasted where he ended up, after the master's programme, with the kind of teacher he had been before, one too heavily reliant on models of teaching and learning into which he had been unconsciously socialised:

> before I did that course I was very much grammar school, from the front 'I'm teaching now', this is about me. You know. I'm teaching you how to do it, as opposed to looking at it the other way and looking at it from the learner's point of view and trying to develop a collaboration in learning within the classroom and independent learning. I mean I'm not saying it completely revolutionised my teaching, because it didn't, but it definitely taught me to look at things other ways and look at different ways of operating within the classroom. Some worked, some didn't, but it had a, quite an effect on me.

Lauren and Kieran were not alone in describing profound change in their approach to the practice of their profession. Other stories give some qualitative insight into the nature of the change that those 31 respondents in the survey felt had made them either a more effective or a significantly more effective teacher. Angelique now works in an education authority, developing other teachers. The knowledge and understanding she currently possesses meant that she was embarrassed by the memory she had of herself before undertaking the masters' level study. She tells this story so powerfully, that it is worth quoting her, verbatim, at length:

> I'm looking at— I'm laughing at myself, in the sense that— […] I'll tell you what happened to me. The way in which I teach now has been revolutionised by the programme. [...] OK, so I was part of the institution, and would go along with the

> rituals and the rules and everything, just be a part of it, but then, having been on the programme, I started making changes [...] one of the key things that happened, when I was doing the dissertation, I was working on performance versus learning in a year 6 class, and what I did, I got the children to write diary entries on a daily basis for about a term. [...] And I think those diaries really transformed my practice because I had children who were— and I did give them the opportunity to be free, and open, to write without, with little or no involvement. I'd read some of them and, some of them I'd actually read them after the children had left [each day] and I found is that children were really open and they'd be scrutinis[ing] my practice in the sense that I was so— now I'm looking back I can say I was very focused on SATs, I would go in, and I saw the children as targets. And I was like 'that's a level four, that's a—' you go in, and you think— And just looking back, I'm thinking I wasn't really concerned about them as individuals, nor was I concerned about the learning that was taking place, I was concerned about the levels that I wanted them to achieve. And I would go in the classroom, and I'd get very stressed, because at that time I was the only Year 6 teacher, so it felt like the whole weight of the school— [25'44''] the LEA pressures the school, the school pressures the Year Six teacher, the teacher pressures the children. And so you go in, and I'm like all I'm thinking about is '[clicks fingers] you're not doing that, [clicks fingers] you're not doing that, [clicks fingers] you're not doing that,' and not stopping to think, hang on a minute, these are *children*, they're meant to be learning and taking this away. And some of the children would be very critical. They'd come in and they'll say— I mean I find it really fascinating now, and embarrassing, as well! [Laughs] Thinking [back to it]! 'Cos you'll have children saying [in their journals] 'Oh that lesson, it was dry, it was so dry like biscuit—I didn't learn anything' or they'd say— Oh, there was one child in particular, who, every single day, she had a comment to make about the teacher, whereas other children were commenting about other children and other things that happened in the play ground. Which I usually missed anyway, because I didn't see that, I didn't see that as something that came into my classroom and affected the social dynamics of the classroom. But what I saw was 'right, we're moving on, level four, we just need to get on, and go to that and '[clicks fingers] why are you missing that!' […]

What Angelique describes here is the impact of the sustained critical and reflective study, the Practice-Based Enquiry (PBE). Her response provides evidence of some very broad and deep learning: not only has she reflected on the impact of empowering her pupils, so that their authentic voices can be given space, but she has thought about the social construction of the classroom and the environment in which it sits, her own position within a social hierarchy, and has developed—from a reflection on her pupils' experiences of the system in which she had been playing such a part—a powerful critique of conventional assumptions about teaching, learning and the assessment regime. Her teaching had been 'revolutionised' by the programme, or by one element of it, the PBE.

Angelique's contribution cited here seems synoptic of a wide range of learning—pupil voice, social construction, critical engagement with theory. It is possible that these diverse (but coherent) strands come together in the PBE, an extended piece of practice-based research resulting in a report of 10,000 words or a 20,000 word dissertation, and

submitted at the end of the programme. Like all the other modules in the course, the PBE begins with practice and moves to theory from the participants' classroom experiences, rather than beginning with the conventional starting-point of theory. In her interview, Charlotte articulated the particular success of this element:

> because it's practice-based, for me, if I'd kinda done that study kind of separately, it wouldn't have been so embedded, it wouldn't have stayed with me so much. And as we were talking about the model of learning before — I think that model of learning, is really, is really key to it all.

She later describes how influential that model of learning had been to her, how it had changed her method of operating, not just in the classroom, but in her management and attitude to CPD. Here she discusses how she set up a CPD activity around the school's work to design a more flexible curriculum, 'a flexible day in the week where all our students can do integrated learning, rather than subject-specific learning,' and in so doing, she explicitly followed the model of teaching for higher learning on the MTeach:

> I went through some of the key points and they had a reading, to take away with them, and then they came back and each fed-back on their reading and then posed questions to each other and discussed things with each other and then went away to think again about some of the big issues […] So that's quite 'MTeach' I think, you know, reading, responding, discussing together, and going away and thinking about it […]

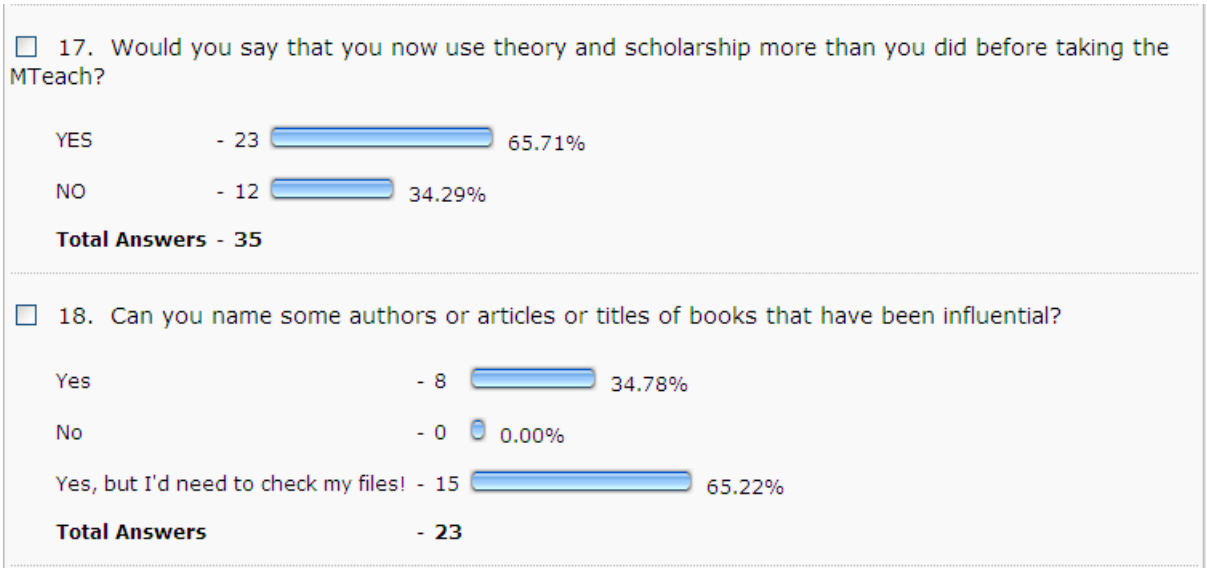
However, it is probably relevant that, in addition to her own attitudes, training and approaches, the school in which she is operating is one where, as she put it herself, strategic vision 'comes from the top, but the way it's put into practice, in a context specific way, is quite distributed.' The relationship of the 'critical practice' that emerges from the teachers' descriptions of both their learning experience and their work in the classroom to the cultural mainstream in education is one of the key themes to emerge from the teachers' contributions to this article. It's also clear from Charlotte's responses that the management of CPD should be seen as intimately bound-up with leadership—just as constructing learning activities within a classroom is about leading children towards areas of knowledge, CPD is about leading the team of teachers towards new ways of working, or new ideas. Similarly, this is imagined by Charlotte as a constructivist activity: the parameters of CPD are defined by those in authority, but the mission is conducted by the team, together. It's clear from other teachers' responses that the programme changed their ideas of how leadership should function. Lauren (whose comments began this section), also had a clear awareness that her leadership style had changed, and an analysis of how and why. The quotation which follows begins with a prompt question, picking up an idea about leadership that Lauren had glanced over, but not developed:

> AH: Where did that idea of empowerment come from? You defined leadership as empowerment…
> Lauren: understanding that not everybody is the same as me, because, at the time, I was having to mentor somebody who was struggling. And where it went wrong was, […] I expected that if I told you how to do it, you could do it. I didn't take on board that actually people come at it

> from their perspective and in their own ways, and you have to enable them to find the best in themselves, and what they'll be good at is not necessarily what I'll be good at, but they'll be good in their own ways. And I think that through the process of the kind of leadership section of the MTeach, I came away with it realising that good leadership is about empowerment not managing people. […]

Partial change: research literacy

One of the key ideas it was hoped could be explored through the one-to-one interviews was the extent to which graduates of the course were genuinely more engaged in research literacy, and whether or not this change continued to be embedded in their teaching practice. There were a number of questions in the on-line questionnaire that addressed this issue, and the table below shows how the 35 respondents answered two key questions: 'would you say that you now use theory and scholarship more than you did before taking the MTeach' and 'can you name some authors or articles or titles of books that have been influential'.



The questionnaire went on to ask those who'd answered 'yes' to this second question to give a couple of examples of influential authors, articles or books. The sequence of questions was structured so as to offer some graduated differentiation between the respondents' perceptions of scholarship in their teaching ('would you *say* that you use theory and scholarship…'), a self-assessment of their scholarship ('*can* you name some authors or articles…'), and a request for actual evidence of their scholarship ('please give a couple of examples').

Of the total of thirty-five respondents just under half (16) were able to offer some comment on the influence of scholarly literature on their teaching, and how reading during the programme had changed their teaching. These comments ranged from the direct and simple:

> "How learning happens in the classroom. The importance of the social context"
> "Through thinking about lesson planning and how lessons should be structured"
> "The content... theoretical analysis of management and practice."
> to the considered and the reflective:
> "[the literature gave me] more awareness of the role which effective classroom dialogue has in promoting effective teaching and learning. More knowledge of how to implement strategies which lead to more effective use of classroom dialogue".
> "I feel like I am able to reflect (and reconsider) my approach to teaching and consider whether what I am doing is effective (not only in terms of results, but in terms of pupil progress in a wider sense)"
> "[How did the reading change my practice? by] looking at improving my teaching of all boys groups and engaging them in learning. Working more collaboratively."
> "[I] have become less teacher focused."
> "[The literature] encouraged me to reflect on the way we handle grouping of children in the primary school."
> "They gave me ideas on which to base my own research."

A number, however, didn't really address the question or seemed to be a formulaic repetition of a learnt position, rather than a considered and integrated philosophy. The following are those responses, which were given in response to a prompt to describe how these influential texts or scholars had 'changed their approach to teaching':

> "lots to consider regarding effective teaching "
> "It is always good to read about developments in educational theory and where appropriate, apply to your own practice."
> "Clearly written on how to interpret academic theory and readings"
> "They have opened by eyes and expanded my thinking by providing me with different viewpoints "

One respondent made the perfectly sensible (and recognisable) comment that the readings 'have given me food for thought, and it is refreshing to know that someone at some point [has] been in the same situation as you at some point', which, whilst demonstrating one aspect of the learning resulting from the programme, doesn't indicate that scholarly insights are *immediately* to the hand of this particular teacher, or that their classroom practice could necessarily be described as research-based.
Of the 23 respondents who said that they did use theory and scholarship more now than before following the programme, eight said they could name specific authors or texts, and seven of this group gave the following names: Chris Watkins (cited three times, and on one occasion with the epithet 'Chris Watkins—legend'); Jon Pickering; Neil Mercer; Robin Alexander; Kyriacou; Blatchford et al [2]; Jeanne Gibbs (and *Tribes);* Alex Moore; David Scott.

Of these, only Blatchford, Robin Alexander and Jean Gibbs (and these last two were both cited by one respondent) are neither on the core readings nor do the authors teach on the course. This caused Professor David Scott, whose *Reading Educational Research and Policy* is a set text for one of the core modules, to remark in a research seminar that the list of influential authors 'seems heavily biased towards this corridor', referring to the

[2] Possibly Peter Blatchford and team on class sizes.

passage-way along which most of his colleagues in his faculty in the Institute of Education have their offices.

A further fifteen respondents to the on-line survey assessed that, though they couldn't remember specific names off the top of their heads, they would be able to do so if they 'checked their files' for the names of influential texts or authors. Three of this group, when prompted, offered the following further five references: 'Sergiovani,[3] Lying About The Wolf';[4] 'Maslow, [Norbert] Pachler' and 'the works of Geoff Hannon'. Of these, only Norbert Pachler is on the course readings (and was one of the founding team who set-up the programme).

All of which leads to a healthy scepticism about how enduring are the 'habits of scholarship'. Though it seems clear that the teachers have got the idea that scholarship and educational research literature are *important* and *relevant*, a only small minority was able to cite texts that didn't rely heavily on course readings. Yes, a third of the sample were able to cite key authors, but only three citations were not core readings set on core modules of the course—this is not the image of teachers regularly referring to research literature that David Hargreaves created in his lecture to the TDA in 1998: these teachers are not like surgeons or anaesthetists keeping abreast of developments in practice through regular reading of *The Lancet,* the *BMJ* or the *British Journal of Anaesthesia.* To put it more brutally, this is evidence that suggests that though the respondents read *during* the course (and learnt something about the value of research literacy), they had not *continued* to read when the focus of their lives returned, more exclusively, to life at school, and habits of scholarship maybe could not be embedded in their classroom practice.

Which is not to say that the supplied articles and book chapters were not useful or without influence, but rather, they have a particularly strong influence, because they become what Charlotte called 'a useful bank of readings':

> as an AST I was doing a lot of professional development with other staff, so I needed those kind of things [articles and readings], so if I was doing for example a session with BTs on behaviour management I would go to some of those texts to find it, cos— I just think it's really, really useful— I found it really useful to have from the MTeach a bank of readings, and a bank of quite accessible readings, and ones which are appropriate for teachers in the first couple of years of their career.

What seems less embedded is the idea that a serving teacher reflecting on a particular question arising out of classroom practice might pop on-line, do a quick literature search in Athens, down-load some articles and use them to inform subsequent teaching practice.

And this is the picture that emerges from the one-to-one interviews: often there is change in attitude to scholarship and its use to teachers, and in some cases this change is fundamental, but most others it is compromised or capped by circumstances.

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3 Probably the author of texts on leadership in Education

4 Presumably *Lying About The Wolf: essays in culture and education,* David Solway 1997

Lauren

Lauren was the first teacher to be interviewed, and coincidentally provides the strongest story about a change in attitude and behaviour with respect to the use of scholarship in teaching:

AH: Talk to me about theory and scholarship:

Lauren: Well, I think… I went into it incredibly sceptically… because I'd always felt that it was something that you had to do as a teacher to understand, and that it was quite often produced by people who were out of touch with the classroom, so it was something that people who couldn't practice did. But now I look back on it I can laugh. But once I started to engage with it and think about it I realised it has an enormous value in terms of— it's not necessarily what's written, it's how it impacts on you, as a practitioner, and how you take all this wealth of information, and use it to better your situation.

AH: So it had an effect four years ago, or whenever you did the course— are you still reading? Interesting, wacky things?

Lauren: I carry around wads of stuff. You know, I have a small child at home, so by the time I get home, sort him out, you know, I'm knackered myself, so, I'm willing to do it, I'd love to do it, but I don't physically have the time, which is why— one thing that I'm considering is how I develop myself so that I'm kind of like an AST rôle, I don't want to be a consultant necessarily, but that kind of AST rôle, where I'm still in the classroom, but I have the space to try and do something.

AH: What do you carry around? You said you carry around wads of stuff, what sort of things?

Lauren: So I have the NATE theory and practice kind of thing, I've got three of those, a backlog to get through.

AH: So you do get into them eventually,

Lauren: I do, I do, but this year's been the worst, I think […] So I've really got behind, but NATE stuff, I've got English and Media Stuff. Kind of loads of different publications that I subscribe to, and what I do is get through them, and photocopy the relevant bits and give them to my department 'what do you think about this' and they say 'hmm' and that's it really!

AH: And is that a change in behaviour you can attribute to being on the course?

Lauren: Yes, yes. Definitely. Definitely. Before I would have scanned through it and picked out nice bits that I liked, but actually I think that that— it's a bit like, I've got this Year 11 group and they've just gone, and they're set five, and behaviourally a nightmare but the problem is it's their access to the curriculum that's got them to that stage. I've taught them for three years and agonised "how the hell do you get them to spell better?" because it's such a complex thing, it's not just a case of teaching them x, y and z and that leads to better spelling, because it's far more complex than that. And then, kind of my reading on the train on my way to pick up my car, because I had a bit of time, led me to understand that actually, I'm right! you can't *teach* it, what you have to

> do is almost teach them "right, these are the general rules but you also need to know this and this and this and this and this", and give them word banks that break the rules and that they just have to "learn" it, there is no other way round it. And if by 16 they haven't had the experience of reading that has allowed them to pick it up innately, it's your only way forward, in a way. But it was the reading that allowed me to kind of—this thing that's been puzzling me for sort of two years—put something into practice that'd help them […] It was a NATE article or [similar]. And you know that kind of made me kind of quite cross, because if I'd had the chance to read that a little bit earlier, what I'd have planned would have been far more secure, rather than a bit rushed towards the end of their GCSE, in the hope that they might spell a few more accurately on the day. […]

In this extract, she provides clear evidence of the sort of 'scholarly teaching' that the course has hoped to support and encourage, in which critical literature encourages a deeper reflection on key questions of teaching and learning, what is achievable, how best to tackle educational disadvantage, and the wider forces at play in the classroom, forces that are beyond the control of the individual teacher. And these are not just material and social forces that have impacted on the children in her charge, but in which the priorities set by her employer and the demands placed on a working mother force out the time that might be given to research and reflection into her teaching. At the level of how teachers are paid to spend their time, and how they are expected to discharge their duties, the comparison with medical personnel breaks down. For medics, a central element in their contract is 'Supporting Professional Activities,' which are defined as 'training, medical education, continuing professional development, formal teaching, audit, job planning, appraisal, research, clinical management and local clinical governance activities' (NHS, *Terms and Conditions—Consultants,* 2003). Consultant doctors are paid to spend time in research but for teachers, there is only one reference to CPD in the Burgundy Book, the national agreement of teachers' pay and conditions in England and Wales:

> The Joint Council, the Teacher Organisations and the Local Education Authority Associations are convinced that it is of the utmost importance to schools and colleges; to the professional development of teachers; to the effective delivery of the curriculum; and to the accountability of the assessment system, that teachers be involved in the activities of the Examining Groups. (Local Government Employers, 2000)

Emily

Other teachers in the sample of eight demonstrated a scholarly approach to teaching. Emily gives a clear example of her disciplined use of literature to give depth to her teaching, though her story also suggests that this is more about her own personal temperament, than any change that might have been effected as a result of intensive masters' study.

AH: You said you'd much rather read a book [than attend organised CPD]—

Emily: Yeah, I think that's more about me…

AH: No, no— well, ok, it's you. Have you always been like that?

Emily: I've always been like that. But also, I think maybe the reason I'd like, I like reading a book or researching on the internet, is that I know what I want to find out, and then I go and find it out, rather than somebody else telling me.

AH: So what would you— Can you give me a concrete example? Yeah, you can? OK.

Emily: Uhmm. At the moment I'm trying to— 'cos I'm the math's co'rdinator at this school—and I'm trying to help the school to get better at using success criteria effectively so that the children can basically become more involved in their learning, and start evaluating their own progress. And [this is] something that the assessment co'rdinator at my last school was trying, well, to talk to me about and got me doing, was something called 'process success criteria', which is in maths, when, instead of giving children the outcome. So, the learning objective might be, for a year two class might be something like 'I can add numbers' a process success criteria might be 'find your first number on the number line, count the right number of jumps on the number line, check you're going in the right direction, write down the number you land on' something like that. An outcome success criteria might be something like erm 'your answers are right' [laughs]. And obviously, process success criteria in maths are more effective, and that's specific to maths, whereas in literacy you could do outcome success criteria. Check you've got full stops, check you've got capital letters. Does that make sense?

AH: The distinction between outcomes and process makes perfect sense, I don't quite understand why it's easier to do in maths than it is to do in literacy or writing.

Emily: No, you can do it in both, but in maths, outcomes are singularly unhelpful, because, not always, but a lot of the time, because it's just 'check your answers are right' and the outcome is it's right or it's wrong. Whereas in literacy, an outcome success criteria could be 'does your work have full stops in it?' And it could be quite helpful for assessment purposes for the children.

AH: And why, why is that better?

Emily: So that the children can take more responsibility for their own learning and start, start assessing themselves. In maths, if all they can do is see whether their answer's right, they're never going to understand why, which is why I think the process— but anyway, but I didn't really understand that, so that's something that I've been researching, by myself, […] and I'm still finding out for myself about process success criteria, so I might be slightly wrong.

Emily's description here shows a number of behaviours that the MTeach wanted to support or develop: a critique of conventional practice that starts from classrooms or relationships with children, is integrated with a critical analysis of scholarly literature,

and returns to the classroom. It's also quite clear that the course is not explicitly part of this story; there might be an element in which the course reinforced good behaviour, reflecting continuities in an educational culture (a theme which is discussed in more detail below), but as far as Emily's concerned, there hasn't been the sort of revolution in her practice, habits and understanding that is noted by some of the other respondents.

So, Emily seems to describe a process of continual growth into the discipline of education, in which the MTeach was simply an element, and for her, critical engagement with the scholarly literature was just something that she learnt to do. Lauren clearly states that her approach to teaching changed significantly as a result of the requirement of the course to engage with research, connect it with professional practice and to use the discourse of education as part of enquiry into personal teaching practice. Things changed for her, even if subsequent circumstances prevented her operating in the way she wanted.

Jessica

This story was slightly different for Jessica. The exchange reproduced below begins at a point where we had moved from discussing CPD to the research and preparation she puts into preparing her teaching for new A level set-texts (she works hard to ensure that there are regular injections of new texts, to keep people 'sparky').

AH: […] So that's all primary texts, what about secondary texts? Do you ever go there?

Jessica: Well, secondary texts. Yeah, absolutely. I rely—well, I've just done an activity with my students to do with *Hamlet*. Erm, we were doing, we were looking at two schools of criticism, and just an essay on Ophelia and Gertrude, and then I asked them to perform a scene of their choosing, but with—

AH: —a different reading

Jessica: —a different reading. And that works to some extent, not brilliantly…

AH: What were the two readings?

Jessica: One of them was an Elaine Showalter essay—feminist essay—can't remember who wrote the other one.

AH: and what was the school of thought?

Jessica: We were going with— down the Oedipus line, so the […] Gertrude and Hamlet scene, and very much looking at the Ethan Hawke production, the Brannagh production, the Mel Gibson production, and just showing them sort of shades between those three productions and then asking them to consider how they might look at, perhaps, the final scene, if they were going to perform that. And then asking them to write just a critical evaluation of their work, and they find that difficult, but it does encourage them to think about critical position. So theory does come in — we do advanced extension English as a, as an S-Level and we also do an other additional study called the History of English Literature, and both of those courses are geared-up for students who want to do English at university, and that's when theory really comes into play. And another additional study called Beyond English Language, which is

designed for students who want to go off and do linguistics, and that sort of takes them off the road into different schools of thinking, or perspective in relation to linguistics. So that's sort of the enrichment, but it does, it does feed into the classroom a little. So I've just got to, I guess, get my head round that particular topic and then set up some texts, and then feed in opportunities for students to be able to write creatively (which is what the coursework is) along side critical commentary. So we'll look at some analyses of different dystopic texts and use that as a kind of spring-board for their own commentary writing. But I guess my reading will be criticism of the Handmaid's Tale, looking at some, you know, secondary texts on 1984 or 'The Wasteland', that kind of thing, and using that, and forming that into stuff which is more user-friendly for students. It tends to be stuff that's filtered down so—

AH: Sure, but, none of that's about educational— that's not a bad thing. But when was the last time you read any of that?

Jessica: No. What? Stuff about education.

AH: Yes! 'Stuff about education'!

Jessica: [Laughs] When was the last time I read 'stuff about education'?! [Six second pause] I guess, you know, thinking about different courses, I mean you're always, you're always— the extended project's coming on line, soon, erm the creative writing course we talked about— you're always kind of aware what, what the kind of rationale or the impetus behind a course is— you know, whether that's the AQA baccalaureate or the pre-U, we've just had a long conversation about the Pre-U course, which is actually starting in college in September.

I think there's a clear sense here that 'research' or 'secondary literature' is still defined by the discourse of literary studies, proper to the subject specialism which Jessica teaches, rather than by any notion of educational research. The critical power of educational research literacy is not recognised to have the same importance as an understanding of theory derived from a sophisticated and successful academic career in literature and writing: 'theory' in this exchange means Literary Theory, not Vygotsky or Bruner.

Charlotte, Kieran, Amelie, Angelique and Chloë

Lauren wanted to read, but didn't have the time; Emily read because that's what you do; Jessica's reading was rooted in her literary training, not the educational research literacy that the programme taught. For Charlotte, Kieran, Amelie, Angelique and Chloë, reading was in some way connected with their continuing relationships with one or other HEI. Chloë was a professional tutor in her secondary school (and a lot of the her literature research was focussed on her trainee's action research); Charlotte and Kieran were both beginning EdDs, Amelie planned to start one, and Angelique was thinking about further study. Here's Charlotte on the subject:

AH: Do you still read…

Charlotte: That's partly a function of the fact that I'm working on the MTeach, and starting on the EdD… to some degree, because as an AST I was doing a lot of professional development with other staff, so I needed those kind of things, so if I was doing for example a session with BTs on behaviour management I would go to some of those texts to find it, cos— I just think it's really, really useful— I found it really useful to have from the MTeach a bank of readings, and a bank of quite accessible readings, and ones which are appropriate for teachers in the first couple of years of their career. And all the work that I've done with, in my previous school as well, I worked with student teachers and NQTs, and people on Teach First and people on the Graduate Teacher Programme, and I continued to do so when I first worked her, and all of htose readings I was using, you know, not every day by any means but, you know, intermittently, so whenever I was running a CPD session I would, you know, definitely use those.

AH Did you ever go and find out new stuff?

Charlotte: Not much, no […] but occasionally. For example if there was, yeah, if there was a writer who I was using or who I thought, yeah, I might try and find out something else by them […] Also, because I loved my dissertation, and genuinely found it interesting in terms of what it was saying about the world things like Vygotsky and Bruner and the important people — you do carry on reading bits of them, don't you?

And this is Kieran:

AH: You cite Chris Watkins as a 'legend'… do you continue to read that [sort of] literature?

Kieran: [hesitant] Yeah. I mean obviously I'm doing the doctorate, the EdD, so that— […]

And Amelie:

Amelie: Up to February [I was still reading research literature] mainly because of the associate tutor role, only talking about coming in and reading a few things around, you know discussions that you had. But I was planning on starting, maybe a doctorate, and carrying on because I don't want to stop learning.

This is Angelique:

AH […] Theory and scholarship? Do you still read that sort of stuff?

Angelique: Not a lot, but I do have— it's quite funny— I am still keen about research, and I want to get involved in a lot more research. I am actually trying to complete an application for— I'm going to look at family/ children, family learning, that kind of thing, so I'll need to do a bit more work in that area.

And, finally, Chloë:

AH Do you still read?
Chloe: Nmm. Only— I read, but only on the basis of 'because I need to'. I read that new magazine! That's a handy one because I get—

AH: That's *Professional Teacher*, from the TDA, for the benefit of the tape. So is it useful?
Chloe: Yeah, it's good! [...] 'Cos I haven't got to go searching for research for my trainees. [...] Yes, it's a whole new magazine that tells you all the latest research that's going on. [...] I've written to them now, and asked them if they want to do an article about my trainees all doing their action research. They haven't got back to me.

What this evidence seems to suggest is that it is simply very difficult for teachers, even the highly educated and the motivated ones, to maintain a habit of scholarship in the particular context of the education system in which we are currently operating, unless they are institutionally linked to a university: scholarship is *still* associated with higher education, and not with schools; and, despite recent attempts at professionalization, the economic and political relationships in that educational culture (the system that puts a price on teachers' time) chooses not to pay for research, even at the most basic level of the literature review. To engage, therefore, in this model of continuing professional development is, to a degree, to challenge existing ideas of what it is to be a teacher.

Continuities – links between initial teacher education and Masters level work

Which isn't to suggest that there aren't continuities between the PGCE training and where the teachers now are. We've already seen above how Emily and Jessica follow in their classroom practice long-established intellectual habits. Other teachers noted these continuities.

Charlotte: See, one of the things that I would say about my own kind of trajectory, was that the MTeach wasn't kind of an aberration, it wasn't separate from everything else. From the very start of my PGCE, or even before, I was doing the Fast Track Teacher programme, so I had lots of that kind of leadership discussion, leadership thinking , academic input as well, then during my NQT year I had lots more and I was doing bits of research, and then I did the MTeach, and that fitted in, and then I was an AST, so it's all part of the same rich picture, so it's kind of one piece of the jigsaw puzzle, rather than …

Amelie: I think I just progressed [...] my project to do with grammar was not triggered by doing the MTeach, it was prior to the MTeach. So I could have presented it and moved on as an AST without the weight of the Master's Degree.

And Emily and Jessica are explicit about the issue:

> Emily: I've never, I mean, I've never been observed by a head teacher and told 'what are you doing? you're letting them talk too much', or something. I mean maybe little practicalities about I don't know, whether we do drama or not, or something like that, would be something that I would disagree with or agree with, but no, the grand picture's always been something that I would [agree with]
>
> Jessica: And I kind of see the MTeach and the PGCE as sort of clasped together, because I did them in succession, and obviously, [the Module Leader], and [my supervisor], and [my PGCE Tutor], I'd got to know as part of the PGCE and again, you know, as part of the MTeach, so it sort of was an extended discussion/conversation, really.

In-culture and counter cultural

What appears to be going on here is that there is a set of values in the PGCE which are reinforced in the MTeach: for some teachers, these are uncomplicated cultural truths; for others operating in different contexts, these ideas are subversive of the dominant discourse. For teachers like Angelique and Lauren, the ideas of the PGCE were latent, and the critical reflection of the MTeach process brought them out, creating a challenge to the dominant ideologies of the schools in which they were working.

It should be noted that the dominant culture that Angelique came to see as vapid, unconnected to learning, and which she almost represents as inhumane, is the educational world in which high-stakes SATs are assumed to be a central element (still part of the British system, despite the recent election). The teachers in the sample took arms against other dominant assumptions in British educational life, from models of career, to leadership and management, and the value of Ofsted.

Here is Amelie, challenging ideas of leadership. I had asked her if she were still part of any networks of teachers. Her response here is interesting, because it moves from discussing teacher professional networks, to the attitudes of her senior colleagues to her and her development:

> AH: [are you still a member of teacher networks?]
>
> Amelie: There would have been one or two teachers interested [...] I think some teachers would have been interested in taking part and felt quite inspired by it, but I kept it to myself, because, originally the reaction was quite disappointed, the reaction from managers, leaders, because they'd planned something different for me. They could see me as head of French rather than going at it academically. […] Because they knew I'd never do what they had in mind ... leadership in a more administrative kind of way. Which I was not interested in... I want to be a teacher!

In the context that Amelie was working, it seemed impossible to be 'academic' *and* a subject leader, to be a teacher *and* a leader—assumptions that the MTeach challenges, as would any other masters-level, practice-based study. In this sense, the leadership model offered by the MTeach challenges managerialist assumptions of what growth and progress are, and challenges the underlying assumptions around power and status. We've already seen how Lauren's ideas of management and leadership developed through informed self-critical engagement with her own practice, to move to a position where she could define leadership as 'empowerment'. Such an idea of leadership was far from what she was experiencing in the school where she worked:

> I'm going to leave. I love this school. I love the kids in this school. They get a bum deal… it's not lead in a way that's going to facilitate it. […]
> My experience of being managed by it, is that there's nothing coming down. We talk about the fact that all this is going wrong, but we don't do anything to make it right.

And what was the model of leadership that was dominant, that was so failing the kids she loved?

> Ticking boxes and filling in bits of paper. Because that says to Ofsted, who come in for a day and a half that things are happening, I know they're not. […] We had this last night at Middle Managers, it was all about the 'Quality Assurance Review' and how we could improve it. And I said 'well we do a quality assurance review, we write a SEF , we write a department plan, why are they three entirely separate things? why is the whole thing not one organic review across the year? which produces a document which satisfies all those requirements? rather than everything being discrete?' […]Well, it's because you can put it in a folder and say to Ofsted 'that paperwork is done' and you spend more time writing about what you're going to do than doing it. And for me, that's the bit that's disappearing from my teaching, as a manager. […]

The political quality of this critique was not confined to Lauren, chronically frustrated in north east London, or to Amelie, leaving Britain after many years working on coast, on the very edge of the country. Charlotte, employed as an assistant head in a successful and expanding secondary in London had had enough of taking everything the Ministry told her on face value:

> One [thing] the MTeach gives you, I think, [is the] confidence that you understand not just what's happening in your school, but the national and local picture, a little bit of academic and theoretical knowledge. I mean, when I'm doing my work on the curriculum, I always appreciate that I've done the MTeach, and therefore I've just got a deeper and a broader insight into all kinds of educational issues, that I wouldn't have otherwise. [...] Reading policy documents and asking 'who wrote this' and 'what are their preconceptions about the rôle of education in our society…'

Conclusions

> Lauren: They tick their boxes. And this is an unprofessional thing to say, in some respects, [but] we have a head that's what she does, she was an Ofsted inspector, so she is a head who does her job by ticking boxes. Now if a box is ticked, that means the job is done, so she came out of [the] Ofsted [inspection] with having a clear vision and direction. She's got no vision and direction …

For several individuals, the course created a 'revolutionary' change in their approach to teaching. This has been powerfully described above by respondents who talk about breaking away from the styles of teaching they were socialised into either from childhood memory, initial teacher training, or Government precept. The core of this change as described by those respondents is exactly what the programme had hoped it would be: the consequences of an informed critical reflection on practice.

At the core of the these critiques is an element of work-based learning that responds to implications in a constructivist model of teaching and learning. If distributed learning is useful for children, it seems sensible to give teachers a chance to learn in the same way. And just as such a Vygotskian logic makes us think again about how our society holds and creates knowledge, so should it make us think again about how professional expertise is created and shared. Such a shift in perspective challenges those who currently hold power in the British educational system.

This distributed model, by acknowledging and empowering work-based experience (and, as Lauren noted) seeing this as a form of leadership, offers a significant shift in models of power and control. By offering teachers a space in the academy to connect theoretical knowledge with the undervalued stories of events in their classrooms, different knowledge is shown to have value and status. Given that our dominant ideas of leadership in Britain are technocratic and managerialist, a validation of work-based learning offers us a form of counter-cultural re-distribution of power that one might call positively syndicalist.

What this study also suggests is that some of the desired changes in teachers' practice have not been fully embedded. This is certainly clear in the case of the extent to which scholarship has or has not been embedded in the habits of daily or termly teaching practice. In a broad generalisation, it seems fair to say that many of the respondents want to read more or engage in other research or scholarly practices—but aren't because they're neither paid to do it nor can it be made to fit into the demands of their working life. It seems that large areas of state education are still very much trapped in an industrial model, in which the 'academic' values of scholarship and research are not always seen to have a place.

Much of this returns to a political critique. The bulk of this research was done in the dying days of the Labour administration of 1997-2010. As David Raffe and Ken Spours point out (2007), there was a split at the heart of New Labour's education policies between what was considered to be good policy, and what was considered politically possible: a synthesis was not constructed, and the numerous ensuing contradictions were allowed to stand. Many of the teachers in this survey seem to be left dealing with

the consequences of that unresolved confrontation of models and ideas. As the ideological clarity of the new 'Coalition Government' becomes more obvious, it is possible that educational debates will return to older battles, and the possibility to integrate a new professionalism with a model of distributed, empowering, work-based learning for teachers will be seen to have passed.

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