**The Position of Psychology in Education Studies - Why do we need to teach psychology in Education Studies?**

The merits and flaws of the disciplines approach to education studies have been debated from its inception in early 50's. Some would challenge the validity of the choice of the particular domains that comprise most education studies courses citing expediency as the basis for their original selection (McCulloch, 2002). Others question the need for a separate education studies course now that it is no longer an integral part of initial teacher training (Wilfred, 2006). I would argue that education studies and particularly psychology bring a valuable rigour to the study of education while at the same time offering practical pedagogical insights to future educators.

Before we consider psychology's place in education studies let us first step back and consider the validity of education studies as a necessary element of the preparation of future educators. The current approach to preparing future educators as typified by most Initial Teacher Training (ITT) courses is primarily pedagogical training approach. I would argue that such an approach on its own is not a sufficient preparation. From the perspective of Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, Engelhart, Furst, Hill & Krathwohl, 1956) focusing primarily on pedagogical training is only likely to engage the student at first three levels of cognition; remembering, understanding and applying. Research in psychology has shown that such an approach is likely to foster a reproductive style in the students, a style that is lacking in critical reflection (Trigwell, Prosser & Waterhouse, 1999). An educator who is unprepared to critically reflect and apply those reflections is unprepared to handle the ever changing world of education (Bottery, 2000; Maguire, Dillon and Quintrell, 1998). It would be too simplistic to say the ITT course leaders have no desire to include more critical reflection or that critical reflection is entirely absent from ITT courses. None the less the constraints placed on ITT courses by the Teacher Training Agency regulations gives course leaders very little room to include such content (Tubbs & Grimes, 2001).

It was with this in mind that we approached the design of the Education Studies degree. The degree would be a requirement for all students in ITT but would also be open to students with other subject combinations and other careers in mind. Students would start in their first year by studying all four disciplines (History, Philosophy, Psychology & Sociology) before narrowing their focus to two disciplines and finally one discipline in years two and three respectively. This increasing focus should allow the students to pursue their critical explorations in education to a much greater depth in their chosen area. This would encourage them to engage in learning at the higher levels of cognition in Bloom's taxonomy; analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

One overarching theme within our approach to teaching education studies at Hope was to move beyond didactic/transmission and constructivist/conceptual-change models of teaching and learning (Trigwell, Prosser and Waterhouse, 1999). Instead, we would aim for a more transformational view of learning seeing learning as the stimulation of personal growth rather than just the accumulation of facts or skills (Mezirow, 1991). One example of the kind of growth we would hope to foster is the development of a more sophisticated set of epistemological beliefs about education. Perry (1970) proposed a model of epistemological development for students in

higher education. Development occurred in stages and the overall trend of the changes was from relatively naive beliefs to sophisticated ones; from a simplistic view of knowledge to a complex view, from certainty to relativism and from an unquestioning acceptance of authority to exercising personal judgement (Perry, 1970). Perry believed that this kind of growth was not an automatic consequence of attending university. The design of our education studies degree, with its increasing focus throughout the three years, would be ideally suited to foster and promote this kind of development. Students are challenged to abandon simple easy answers and strive for a more sophisticated understanding of knowledge no matter which discipline they specialise in.

As I see it these more sophisticated epistemological beliefs regarding education are one of the main benefits provided by education studies and the study of psychology in particular. Students studying psychology would be required to critically evaluate theories in areas such as epistemological development (Perry, 1970), learning styles (Kolb, 1976), approaches to learning (Entwistle and Ramsden, 1983) and intelligence (Binet & Simon, 1916); all of which are likely to stimulate he students' own epistemological development. Furthermore, studying theories relating to learning in psychology is also likely to stimulate reflection in the students about their own beliefs, approaches and styles. I would argue that both of these events will have a positive effect on any individual who wishes to help others to learn. An educator needs to understand how beliefs, motivations and development can affect the perceptions and behaviour of both their students and themselves.

When opposition to education studies being included in ITT emerged in the 70s and 80s one of the chief criticisms was a failure to adequately address pedagogy (Crook, 2002). The delivery of psychology in our education studies course would seek to challenge that misconception showing how psychology has a lot to offer pedagogically; everything from diagnostic assessment strategies (Bennett, Desforges, Cockburn & Wilson, 1984), recycling feedback (O'Siochru, 2011) to classroom management techniques (Emmer & Stough, 2001). It would be possible to focus almost the entirety of the psychology component of the education studies course on pedagogical matters such as these. However, there is a danger in attempting to justify the inclusion of psychology primarily on the basis of it being able to inform pedagogy. I feel that this is a reductionist utilitarian approach, effectively equating education studies with teacher training and overlooking the greater potential that psychology and education studies as a whole can offer.

While we are still only in the initial phases of creating the complete education studies degree the early responses have been encouraging. Students are responding well to the discipline approach and are showing us they can make the connections between the disciplines and even synthesise them in their responses to questions in education. We still face challenges, nowhere more than in psychology such as continuing to strive to find the right balance between pedagogy and critical theory to ensure the content remains relevant but still encourages thinking on education that goes beyond the classroom.

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