

Far from final thoughts

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The stories told in this booklet underline that there is no typical further education based teacher educator. The teacher educators who contributed come from a range of academic and professional backgrounds, and they followed varying individual routes into teaching, and then into becoming teacher educators. They have indicated something of who they are, yet there is inevitably much more to learn about their work. For instance, it would be interesting to build on Kremer-Hayon and Zuzovsky's (1995) now somewhat distant work on the professional development of teacher educators and to learn more about this in relation to further education based teacher educators. It would be illuminating to study further education based teacher educators' dispositions towards their work as researchers within their field and the broader area of Education Studies.

What we have presented here is a series of brief career related biographies. They each seem to celebrate the identity of ‘teacher educator’, but they also collectively project a strong sense of liminality which pervades the professional journey taken and which remains palpable even after many years. The role of teacher educator does not really constitute a terminal destination. Like all biographical details these stories take place in a particular context and that context is framed by institutional, sector and professional regulation, it is engrained in complex cultures and very particular personal and occupational histories. FE teacher education, of course, is enacted as a practice in relation to the wider field of school teacher education, which in the UK has its own long established traditions based on full-time residential training in, often, single-sex teacher training establishments of the kind described by Edwards (2001). These school teacher training colleges generally offered a process of bourgeois enculturation, frequently within a religious ethos. It was these roots that contributed to teacher education’s relative conservatism as an academic activity (Ellis and McNicholl, 2015), and to a situation in which teacher educators,

...were produced as an exceptional category of academic worker in this sense and also in the sense of bearing strong personal responsibilities as professional role models and exemplary practitioners. (Ellis, McNicholl and Pendry 2012 p.691)

John Furlong (2013), focusing on universities, has set out the development of Education as an academic discipline, including the political and policy challenges that have impeded it and those which face it. In some respects, the recognition related challenges described by Furlong become amplified within FE based teacher education, and this is particularly so in relation to the issues which lead to academic

marginalisation. For many, the margins are a favoured site of labour, the place where it is most possible to ‘make a difference’.

These 12 narratives offer a modest contribution to what is known about further education based teacher educators in England and stand as an invitation to others to tell their own stories as part of their continued contributions to educational discourse.