

Introduction

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Prosopography, broadly speaking the study of collective biography, is a term which still sends me to a spellchecker - but the field has much to recommend it, and the accounts collected here suggest its potential. Another area of research endeavour which has received more attention in recent years is the study of teachers' memories. What follows, however, is not a presentation of a substantive research project (though it may well provide a 'point of departure' for future studies).

The individual profiles herein will show some of the constituent parts that make up a large network of lifelong learning teacher educators who are, or who have been, based in further education colleges in England. 'Constitution parts' is a cold phrase, and what this booklet aims to do, in a modest way, is to partially illuminate the *people* involved in this work, and aspects of their orientations to being a teacher

educator, through a series of relatively short narratives. It is not being claimed that these colleagues are ‘typical’, of course, each person is unique. What comes through is that collectively, as might be expected, they reflect the (rightly renowned) diversity of the sector which they have been serving.

The life trajectories set out in these accounts range from those of teacher educators who themselves first entered further education as a ‘second educational chance’, or as part of a journey to a second or a third career, to those of others who arrived through a more direct post-university route. All, however, share a commitment to social justice and to learning or, more specifically, to social justice *through* learning.

There is the road to a career in further education teaching, and then there is the more twisted and less trodden byway that leads to becoming a teacher educator within the sector. What is clear is that the process of becoming never really ends. Common themes, as is the case in a number of other professions, are the pressures that lead to something of an ‘imposture syndrome’ and, more positively, the strength that is derived from belonging to and actively creating a very real community of practice. The professional and academic synergies and the positive creativity that arise from these, together with an ethos of genuine partnership, underpin the University of Huddersfield led network which operates through the Education and Training Consortium. This, I think, is evident in these pages.

I hope that you will enjoy reading these teacher educator ‘short stories’ as much as I did.