



## Lou Mycroft: a principled teacher educator

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**I never did decide to become a teacher educator** and it was not until I read Lunenberg, Korthagen and Swennen's work on modelling that I realised the meta-function of what I did.

I was a public health specialist in a pioneering NHS department, which promoted community development as the most effective vehicle for empowerment (and consequently health improvement) – this was my master's study and remains my professional heartland. I joined Northern College to work on a Community Health Animateur programme; a practical expression of my public health work. I did not identify as a teacher at that time, never mind a teacher educator, yet in essence the work I did then is the work I do now.

For twenty years, I have worked with people who, whether they identify it or not (generally not), have a leadership role amongst marginalised groups and individuals. Teacher education, rather than community regeneration or public health, is now the approach I take but I have come to be pragmatic about the labels disciplines carry. Language mutates but the mission is still social change.

Three key moments in my development were:

1. Joining the Consortium Network and its community of practice.
2. Realising that I could lead the co-creation of new pedagogies and theories of learning.
3. Foregrounding the principle of equality in the TeachNorthern 'Community of Praxis'

Along the way, I have been inspired by:

- Cheryl Reynolds, Jebar Ahmed and Alison Iredale, all of whom are digital pioneers.
- Shailesh Appukuttan and Catina Barrett, who inspired me to think of myself as a thinker.
- Liz O'Brien, one of Northern College's trainees, for her tweet which sparked the idea of the TeachNorthern Community of Praxis and 'thinkers are our friends', the notion that writers are not to be feared but befriended as they help us map out and better understand our roles as teachers and trainers and the places where we practice.

The biggest shift in my thinking has been from teaching content to process. At the start of my career as a teacher educator I worked hard to learn about other people's pedagogies, to transmit this information

to trainees in a number of active and ‘busy’ ways. Now I combine digital and face-to-face stimuli with dialogic pedagogical processes, which enable students to think critically and deeply, identifying their own pedagogies, theories of learning and leadership strategies and putting them into practice.

And I have come full circle. From health to education, community development’s *yin* - and the corresponding *yang* of organisational development - have been at the heart of my own praxis. A further shift this summer has provided a life-changing perspective. ‘The work’ (the political work of shifting the world’s inequalities) is the institution, rather than any single institution being ‘the work’. Whether I am writing, teaching, teacher educating, researching, campaigning, reading, tweeting or just out in the world meeting people, **I am doing my bit to change the world.**

*Postscript: Lou has completed her doctorate since writing her profile.*