



UEL Research & Knowledge Exchange Conference 2013

Call for Abstracts

Name & Title of Presenter:	Jean Murray
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Co investigators:	n/a
Title of Abstract:	'Reforming' teacher education? Analysing and theorising work in a contested field
Key Theme/ Key words:	Teacher education, government intervention, academic work

Abstract (No more than 400 words):

Internationally, teacher education is seen as a powerful lever for change in schooling, and there has been a global trend for 'reform' of curricula, outcome and assessment measures, partnership requirements, practicum experiences and routes in teaching. Amidst this plethora of activity, teacher educators – as key agents in the highly contested field of teacher education - remain an under-researched and poorly understood occupational group. This is a particular concern for any teacher education system that aspires to a model of high quality, research-informed pre-service programmes, conducted in research-rich environments. But concern becomes a matter of extreme urgency in the national context of England where a teacher education system, traditionally based in Higher Education, is being systematically dismantled by an ideologically driven government.

Drawing on relevant research and a theoretical framework based around the work of Bourdieu, the first part of this presentation will identify issues about the habitus and professional capital of teacher educators as workers in Higher Education. Analysis indicates that, even before the current radical changes, some Schools of Education in England struggled to ensure their compliance to government imperatives for instrumental forms of pre-service work with

balancing the ideal of research-informed models. Additionally, many teacher educators were struggling to become active researchers, at the same time as maintaining their professional capital as highly skilled practitioners in both school and university systems.

The second part of the presentation will provide a brief overview of relevant changes in the ITE sector and practicum workplaces and identify key structural and systemic challenges facing the teacher education workforce, drawing particularly on an analysis of recent radical changes to pre-service provision in England. It will consider the implications for the quality of existing programmes and conjecture the possible impact on the teacher education workforce of the future which may include a diminution of research-informed teaching and specific pedagogic expertise.

Considering briefly the implications of the Donaldson Review's (2010) recommendation for Scotland that every teacher should become a teacher educator, the third part of the presentation will seek to outline ways in which the UK could aspire to an ideal model of collaborative research-informed provision, conducted in research-rich environments by a teacher educator workforce who are themselves active researchers.