

A124: INDIVIDUAL PAPERS: Becoming a Teacher: Early career teachers, agency and critical reflection

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A program that operates in the spaces between courses was established in a regional university, to respond to concerns that 40 per cent of teachers either leave or intend to leave the teaching profession within five years of joining. This initiative aims to provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to network with teachers from the beginning of their Education study. Through the creation of an Education Commons, the program brings together pre-service teachers, educators from across educational sectors, and academics. It uses a model of critical reflection (Macfarlane, Noble, Kilderry, & Nolan, 2005) to frame discussions about 'hot' education topics.

Although positive responses from pre-service teachers over the four years that the program has been operating suggest that participants regard the program as successful, we have now started to investigate the longer-term effects on early career teachers who participated in the program whilst they were university students. The research reported in this study draws on multiple case studies conducted with early career teachers who are working in regional, rural and remote areas of Queensland. Using data collected during semi-structured interviews, we analyse the teachers' descriptions of incidents that they regard as significant in their experience of teaching. This analysis informs a discussion about teacher agency and critical reflection.

Reference

Macfarlane, K., Noble, K., Kilderry, A., & Nolan, A. (2005). Developing skills of thinking otherwise and critical reflection. In K. Noble, K. Macfarlane & J. Cartmel (Eds.), *Circles of change: Challenging orthodoxy in practitioner supervision* (pp. 11-20). Frenchs Forest, NSW: Pearson.