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The Purposes and Challenges when Using Modelling as a Trigger of Rehearsing in Teacher Education

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Abstract

This study investigates when teacher educators (TEs) model specific teaching strategies, and what implications such modelling has in teacher education (TE). The aim is to conceptualise modelling as part of TE didactics and to explore how TEs and pre-service teachers (PSTs) reflect in and on practice (Schön, 1983) when they engage in modelling.

Drawing on Lunenberg et al. (2007), the study distinguishes between implicit and explicit modelling, where explicit modelling involves meta-commentary in which TEs articulate and justify their pedagogical choices while teaching.

The research questions are: How do TEs reflect on modelling when they use process drama as a “teaching about teaching” approach? How do PSTs perceive this modelling? The study is a case study within an educational design research framework. Data were generated from campus-based process drama sessions in English as a Foreign Language. Sources include classroom video observations, field notes, and two video-stimulated recall interviews with both TEs and PSTs.

Findings fall into categories of: (i) purposes of modelling related to preparing PSTs as professional teachers; and (ii) challenges that arise when modelling is used.

Key tensions include the risk of instrumentality, the danger of disrupting the “magic of the moment”, and the need to preserve improvisation and the artistry of teaching. PSTs report that modelling allows them to unfold, rehearse and theorise about teaching, thereby extending their teaching repertoire. They emphasise that explicit translation to their own practice, and clear connections between exemplary modelling and theory, are crucial for understanding the purposes of modelling.

Keywords: Modelling Teaching, Performative Teaching Practices, Representation of Practice, Process Drama, Aesthetic Approach to Teaching