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*(Section editor: Jo Lampert)*

**TEACHER DEVELOPMENT:  
‘SIMPLE’ AND ‘COMPLEX’ VIEWS**

Jane Jones & Viv Ellis

*King's College London*

**Summary**

*Development* is a keyword in the vocabulary of teacher education research. Keywords are high-frequency words and phrases that whilst bringing people together in conversation are nonetheless sites of significant contestation in the field. At its most basic level, in the phrase ‘teacher development’, *development* can refer either to the development of the teacher (personal-professional formation) or to the development of the practice (teaching). Adopting descriptive categories from literacy research to delineate ‘simple’ and ‘complex’ views on the underlying questions of development, it becomes clear that, within such a dichotomous construction, ‘simple’ approaches are insufficient either to describe or to plan for becoming a teacher and experiencing growth in professional practice.

Nonetheless, in the research literature, it is possible to discern critical-humanistic and also techno-rationalist clusters of meaning: optimistic yet expansive understandings of learning and change alongside well-intentioned over-simplifications of inherently contingent and uncertain situations. Navigating these clusters is consequential for how

the work of teaching and of educating teachers can be understood. Indeed, the vocabulary of teacher education research needs to be examined much more closely so that, by interrogating keywords such as development, new spaces for a more critical deliberation of becoming a teacher and for more transformative practices of both teaching and teacher education can be stimulated.

### **Keywords**

Teacher development

Teacher education

Professional formation

Practice-development

Reflective Practice

Teacher Research

Sociocultural theory

## INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we focus on the concept of *development* in research on teacher education. We focus specifically on educational research discourses in Euro-American contexts that are, nonetheless, relevant to key international debates in the context of globalization (Seddon & Levin, 2013). Through a review of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century research literature, we show how, in the field of teacher education (comprising initial/pre-service teacher education as well as continuing professional learning), development as a concept is deployed both in relation to what we will refer to as *personal-professional formation* (the development of the teacher as a person/worker) and to the *learning of a practice* (the development of teaching). In both these categories of use, change processes are involved. Sometimes, change is conceptualised as linear and uni-directional, representing a simple qualitative or quantitative improvement indicative of progress, a more or less instrumental process, something akin to climbing a ladder. At other times, change is conceptualised as complex and contingent, a recursive process with regressive as well as progressive potential, involving individual subjectivities, uncertainties and agency as well as social structures and educational politics. As Evans argued (2002), very few definitions or conceptual clarifications are evident in the teacher development research literature.

Responding to this need, we argue that *development*, as a keyword (Williams, 1976) in the vocabulary of change in teacher education, represents a significant site of contestation in research discourses about both the formation of teachers and the learning of the practice of teaching. Drawing on an existing distinction in literacy research (LRRC, 2015), we characterise these different understandings of processes of change and learning, broadly, as ‘the simple view’ and ‘the complex view’ of teacher development.

## **Development as a keyword in the vocabulary of research on teacher education**

Williams (1976) identified keywords as a lexical category that not only figure frequently in public communication - that bind us together in conversation - but that are also associated with significant cultural divides and sites of contestation. In philosophy, the term 'essentially contested concepts' (Gallie, 1956) is used to represent a similar phenomenon. Keywords in use can lead to the reaction 'that's not what I meant at all' during or following an interaction, even though the interaction may have begun with an explicit statement of shared interests in the keyword. We believe that *development* is just one keyword in the vocabulary of research in teacher education and continuing professional learning. (Another keyword in teacher education in the early twenty-first century, for example, has been *practice* [c.f. Lampert, 2009]). Consequently, many researchers are interested in 'teacher development' but what this means and how the developmental process is conceptualised and, vitally, planned for, differ profoundly.

Development, as a concept in educational research generally, often carries with it the underlying interests and the intellectual principles of social, cognitive and developmental psychology and the field of human development more generally. Human development maintains interests in the psychological and biological study of growth from birth onwards and seeks to answer questions about how human beings change over the life-course in relation to particular norms (e.g. Smith & Vonéche, 2006) or in relation to sociocultural contexts (e.g. Bronfenbrenner, 1979). We see this interest in studying normative change over time reflected in some traditions of research in the field of teacher development. In the work of Day and colleagues, for example, we see interests in personal and professional change being integrated in understanding how 'teachers' effectiveness' varies across different phases of their careers, in different schools in diverse contexts (Day & Gu, 2007; Day et al, 2006). More generally, however, in our view, these interests in development play out in distinct traditions of research.

The association between development and 'effectiveness' as a teacher reminds us that development can also be very strongly inflected through economic (or economicist) discourses. Development's meaning often arises out of questions of change to a country's

economy in the context of the governance of ‘international development’, for example (Verger & Parcerisa, 2018) or, economically, the quality of a country’s school system being judged comparatively across international contexts and being regarded as a predictor of economic performance (e.g. Schleicher, 2016). Relatedly, we also see the use of development to describe the relationship between education systems and the production of ‘human capital’ (Becker, 1993), often in connection to ‘knowledge economy’ discourses and economic rationalism (e.g. Hanushek & Woessman, 2015). According to Furlong, Cochran-Smith & Brennan, in many parts of the world, late twentieth century education policy was increasingly based on an education-economics elision through which ‘teaching and teacher education are tightly linked to the nation’s aspirations for global competitiveness’ (Furlong, Cochran-Smith & Brennan, 2009, p. 3).

At the same time, there are strong cultural traditions in some countries (for example in northern Europe) where human development - and the role of education, in particular - is represented in a concept such as *Bildung*. *Bildung* is rooted in an eighteenth century philosophical discourse where the focus is on the personal growth of the person or the cultivation of their subjective selves through an expansive educational process (Herbart, 1892; Bruford, 1975).

Moreover, an approach to teacher education research based on the formation of the person as teaching professional at the intersection of the personal and the psycho-socio-cultural, necessarily engages with learning to be a teacher (and learning to teach differently at different times and in different spaces) as a process of *becoming*. Understanding personal-professional change as a process of becoming involves understanding the development of the teacher as a subjective process - or as a process of subjectification involving conflict and uncertainty (Britzman, 2006, 2004; Bibby, 2010). Becoming also involves a socialisation process that has been historically structured by key political dynamics such as a drive for professionalisation for teachers and the reproduction of inequitable and unjust distributions of power through the school system (Popkewitz, 1985; Anyon, 1997). Becoming and developing as a teacher, from this perspective, therefore raise questions of history and political economy as well as individual and cultural psychology. A ‘struggle for the soul’ of the teacher (Popkewitz,

1998) is also a struggle for the soul of education and society more generally (see Trippestad, Swennen & Werler, 2017, with reference to teacher education).

Additionally, thinking about the ‘formation’ of the teacher alongside the development of their professional practice, raises enduringly persistent questions about ‘innate talent’ and ‘natural vocation’ and whether certain individuals are ‘born to teach’.

### *Natural/Nurtured Development: Born to Teach?*

The notion of being a ‘natural born teacher’ remains prevalent in everyday discourses of teacher education often referenced, for example, to personal traits, gender or other cultural markers, aspects of personality as well as perceptions of performance. Teaching is also the kind of work for which some claim there is a ‘calling’ or vocation (e.g. Bluestein, 2015; Serow, Eaker & Ciechalski, 1992; Farkas, Johnson & Foleno, (2000) and this claim has endured historically (Bullough and Hall-Kenyon, 2011). For example, Whitbeck’s (2009) study, analyzing the views of primary student teachers in their first year of teacher training in the USA, evidenced a belief by many of them in a ‘special calling’ or in a ‘gift’ that the students believed guaranteed success as a teacher.

Whitbeck’s research, however, highlighted the need to focus those learning to become teachers on re-examining their own perceptions and to support them in re-defining realities. There is also a debate, for example, about whether native speaker language fluency gives individuals an innate ability to teach the target language and an advantage over non-native speakers. Overwhelmingly, the research challenges the ‘Native Speaker Fallacy’ (an assumption that the native speaker is the most effective) and poses questions about knowledge, power, status and training needs (Braine, 2009). Moreover, the figure of the ‘natural teacher’ is thus part of wider cultural assumptions about teaching and teacher education, based on folkloric or ‘mythic’ (Britzman, 1986) representations of teachers and teaching. Such representations are enhanced by romanticized visions of ‘the teacher’ in film and literature (Burbach & Figgins, 1999; Robertson, 1997; Dalton, 2010) in which the depictions are almost always of ‘naturally’ inspired and inspiring teachers.

In subsequent sections of this chapter, we look first at how development, as a keyword, figures in research discourses on teacher education and development as *personal-*

*professional formation* before turning to an examination of development in the research on *the learning of the practice of teaching*. In each case, we refer to our literature review of contrasting traditions of research underpinned by different definitions and understandings of development. In organising this discussion, we have adopted a categorical distinction that has arisen in literacy research concerning the teaching of reading and the development of readers – the ‘simple view’ and the ‘complex view’ (LRRC, 2015; Stuart et al, 2008). Briefly, the simple view of teaching reading and developing readers prioritises two variables – decoding practice (grapho-phonics) for word recognition and listening comprehension – and has led to a strong emphasis in practice on ‘phonics first’ so that decoding (and, it is assumed, word recognition) can be ‘secured’ before the teacher and student move on to more complex matters of meaning. The ‘complex’ view regards word recognition and listening comprehension as important variables but insufficient on their own either to explain or plan for the teaching of reading as a meaning-making, culturally-situated activity. Furthermore, a ‘complex’ view of teaching reading and reading development recognises that there may be negative consequences that accrue to a reliance on single-method approaches.

In what follows, we take the same approach to discussing the different meanings of development in teacher education research – recognising the limitations of what is clearly a dichotomy but one that is, nonetheless evident in research and policy. Ultimately, we argue that a simple view of development in research on teacher education may identify important variables that alone are insufficient to account for the complex processes of personal and professional becoming that characterise sustainable teacher preparation. Crucially, however, we also argue that clarifying the distinction between, on the one hand, apparently simple and, on the other, multi-dimensionally complex research perspectives on teacher development is consequential not only for teachers but more generally.



## ***DEVELOPMENT IN PERSONAL-PROFESSIONAL FORMATION***

In this section, we focus on the meanings of development in research on the institutionally-located practices of teacher education and the formation of a particular category of professional worker – schoolteachers – at particular historical moments. In doing so, we adopt the broad distinction between a simple and a complex view that we introduced above.

### **The Simple View: Developing ‘New Professionals’**

Whether schoolteachers are regarded as ‘semi-professionals’ (Etzioni, 1969) or ‘state-mediated’ professionals (Johnson, 1972), or some other category, teachers are nonetheless identified as a distinctive category of worker with public responsibilities and one of consequence in achieving policy objectives. As both populations and economies grow, the demand for (and importance invested in) school teachers increases as the pool of those both interested and qualified to become teachers becomes less predictable (Loeb & Beteille, 2008). In these circumstances, ‘alternative’ routes into teaching thrive for reasons of both practical necessity (i.e. recruitment in the context of teacher shortages) and political ideology (e.g. the claim that public universities have ‘failed’ to produce sufficient effective teachers) (Hess & McShane, 2014). One of the most significant of these alternatives to ‘traditional’ forms of teacher education have been those routes (such as Teach for America and Teach First) that come under the umbrella organisation of Teach for All ([teachforall.org](http://teachforall.org)).

The Teach for All teacher has been characterised as the ‘teaching other people’s children, elsewhere, for a while’ teacher (Ellis et al, 2015). Strongly imbued with the values of equal opportunity and social mobility, the rhetoric of Teach for All is successful in persuading (primarily young) people to become teachers ‘for a while’ (hence ‘teach *first*’), developing their ‘leadership potential’ in classrooms and schools, before going on to seek careers in other parts of the economy. Although perhaps more of the participants in these schemes stay in teaching for longer than was originally anticipated, becoming a Teach for America or Teach First participant – developing this prospective identity as both ‘participant’ and then later as ‘ambassador’ – is a very different prospect to

developing as a ‘traditional’ or ordinary teaching professional. Indeed, the distinctiveness of the Teach for All branded ‘leader’ (even the word ‘teacher’ is often avoided) is founded on their distance from a mainstream teaching profession that is presented as having failed to address ‘attainment gaps’ and resolve social mobility (Hess & McShane, 2014; IPPR, 2016). Participants in Teach for All schemes are encouraged (and selected) to have strong altruistic aims and orientations to change rather than stasis and also encouraged to think of themselves as extraordinary. At the same time, given the rhetoric of ‘saving’ children and young people and presenting teachers as the solution to the problem of a ‘broken society’ (Ellis et al, 2015), participants in these schemes (and indeed teachers more generally) are indirectly responsabilised for the failure of the individual child and, indeed, society’s failures. Both the claims and the stakes are high (Darling-Hammond, 1994; Labaree, 2010; Kretchmar et al, 2014).

Developing ‘teach for a while’ teachers relies on group socialisation processes in the same way that traditional forms of professional teacher socialisation do. What is interesting about ‘alternative’ teacher education programmes such as Teach for All and ‘alternative’ models of teacher development more generally is their primary framing *as alternative* to the mainstream profession. Being socialised into this alternative category of teachers involves internalising particular narratives - imbued with values such as an urgent commitment to ‘solving’ social mobility and equal opportunity, for example – in which the mainstream teaching profession is seen as part of the problem (Crawford-Garrett, 2013; Schneider, 2014). Cochran-Smith and colleagues have explored the complex relationships between independent graduate schools of education (IGSEs) – unaffiliated with universities - that emerged in the United States in the early twenty-first century and the actual universities to which they were set up as an ‘alternative’ (Cochran-Smith et al, 2018). In alternative models, the development of the practice of teaching in the school setting is often as important as socialisation into the alternative group identity afforded by the programme. It is the social, emotional and intellectual resources of this group identity that will sustain the relentless pace and long hours that are often necessary to try to meet the challenges of alternative models. Additionally, it is the distinctive ‘brand’ that will continue to secure philanthropic - and indeed government - funding. It is a model of teacher formation that is founded on a principle Britzman (1986) once

described as the ‘cultural myth’ of ‘Everything depends on the teacher’. The methods of helping these ‘new’ or time-limited professionals have to be simple and certain: the ‘best evidence’ or ‘codified best practice’ associated with ‘expert teachers’ drives the intensive, work-based forms of training these alternative programmes offer. According to this simple view of developing teaching, it is possible to identify the teacher behaviours and classroom routines that are universally effective in raising the attainment of all children and young people or, more specifically, those from ‘disadvantaged’ groups. Thus, the potentially strong allure of the simple view of teacher development (for both policy-makers and researchers seeking short-term impact for their work) can lie in its framing as an urgent response to societal problems of justice.

While we recognize that there is a vital need to support teachers in their acquisition of practical skills as part of their formation, we also recognize that embedded in this simple approach is the construction of the ‘never good enough’ teacher. In such an account of ‘the teacher’, there is a compelling call to constant improvement and towards a form of impossible perfection that is achieved through incremental progression in skills augmented by ‘simple’ interventions and ‘better’ data-driven accounts of student progress. The principal assumptions underlying this simple view of the development of the teacher is *certainty* that the combination of powerful group ‘reform’ identity narratives (Bruner & Fleischer Feldman, 1995) with a fairly limited but ‘evidenced-based’ toolkit of teaching techniques (to which high levels of fidelity are required [Muijs, Chapman and Armstrong, 2012]) will produce the kind of teacher who will solve gaps in educational attainment and fix societal problems of social mobility. Taking the simple view, the axes of development most amenable to measurement and therefore able to evidence ‘effectiveness’ involves both teacher skills (e.g. standards, competences) and student ‘outcomes’ (performance in tests and examinations and progression to higher education). However, the power of the group identity narratives associated with such programmes do not compensate for weaknesses in their evidence-base around measurements of both teacher skills and student outcomes (see, for example, the UK National Audit Office report on Teach First in England; NAO, 2016).

## The Complex View: Personal-Professional Formation and Uncertainty

Understanding the development of the teacher in sociocultural and historical contexts also means understanding how that person becomes a particular kind of person, assuming and struggling with a particular identity – the school teacher. While the focus of this chapter is not on teacher identity *per se*, it is nonetheless important to see the becoming of a teacher not only as their trajectory of participation in specific social practices but as their active appropriation of the resources of a specific cultural identity – those associated with the figure of the school teacher within particular socio-historic conditions (Holland et al, 1998). Becoming a teacher as a type of professional worker also raises questions about the meanings of profession and professionalism and the relationships between professionals and society more generally. From this perspective, the concept of professional formation, subjectivity and/or psycho-social development, and the meaning of the ‘reflective’ practitioner are relevant.

### *Professional Formation and Bildung*

In some northern European educational and philosophical traditions, *Bildung* represents a process of human development across the life-course as distinct from specific training or the acquisition of particular knowledge-as-content, often held to be represented by *erziehung* (Biesta 2016). Moreover, *Bildung*, when linked with other words, provides specificity in conceptualisation; for example, *Lehrerbildung* meaning teacher development. In Germany, for example, theories of *Bildung* have permeated all stages of teacher education with formal frameworks beginning with *kindergarten* (Textor 1999). Teachers learn a multitude of other general theories and those pertaining to the subject disciplines and, increasingly, *Kompetenzorientierung* (competency- based theory). The introduction of competency-based theories of development represents a challenge to the historical emphasis on *Bildung* in some contexts, reflecting a globalizing challenge to local cultures of professional education. The influential *didaktik* theorist Klafki defined *Bildung* in individuals as a ‘quality for self- determination involving freedom, emancipation, autonomy, responsibility, reason and independence’ (2000: p.87), values mirrored in pedagogical discourses that continue to frame more or less critical approaches

to teacher development in anglophone contexts today (e.g. McLaren, 2016). Klafki has later acknowledged the social context of *Bildung* and the ‘individualities’ of different peoples and cultures and the right of all to develop the capacity for self-determination, participation and solidarity, in some respects aligning with multicultural, social justice and inclusion agendas of some contemporary models of teacher development (Cochran-Smith, 2004).

In France, for example, teachers are employees of the state paid to enact a ‘civic’ function that is both educational and personal-social (Cornu, 2015) and more broadly political. To this end, Bourdoncle (2000:125) asserts that the initial stage – *la formation des maîtres* - is *un processus insitutionnalis * explicitly designed to teach the pre-requisites and is the most important stage for initiating student teachers into the *professional socialisation* process - a life-long, usually informal, adaptational process focused on the becoming of the person as a particular socio-cultural identity. Becoming a teacher within the French system requires adherence to curricular directives but also legitimates the unshakeable focus on individuals’ subject expertise. Continuing professional development (*la formation continue*), on the other hand, is largely the choice of the teachers (other than for some occasional government training directives) and enables teachers to exercise their considerable intellectual freedom (Mailhos, 2001) and develop their individual professional personalities whilst exercising a considerable degree of agency (Develey, 1994:76). Within this civic culture, teachers progressively enrich their teaching and learning theoretical frameworks (Perrenoud, 2002) and also exercise their inalienable right to challenge, even ‘dilute’ (Bonnard, 1999) imposed change in the sphere of educational politics. The development of the teacher as a professional with these democratic rights as well as public responsibilities has been at the heart of the French system. There is attention both to the individual teacher’s development of professional knowledge and to their socialisation into *a profession*, a collective of specialist workers with publicly accountable rights and responsibilities.

### *Subjectivities and Psycho-Social Development*

In tracing the processes of becoming a teacher through teacher education programmes,

researchers have drawn on sociocultural theories of learning in which identity is a salient concept (Holland et al, 1998; Olsen, 2016) as well as theories of life history and narrative (Nias, 1993; Goodson, 2011), sometimes informed by an ethnographic perspective (Britzman 1991/2004; Gatti, 2016). The work of Britzman is particularly significant in this approach to the development of the teacher as, in her research, she moved from the critical analysis of ethnographically constructed narratives of the experience of learning to teach (1991) to psychoanalytically-informed analyses of the process of becoming a teacher (2006, 2012). In some respects, Britzman's research in the 1990s captured what Smagorinsky (Smagorinsky et al, 2003) – after Vygotsky (1987) – called the 'twisting path' of development. Britzman's work of the early twenty-first century has focused on articulating the radical uncertainty inherent in a concept such as development contrary to dominant notions that are used to suggest a movement 'from immaturity to maturity', with a final end-point (Britzman, 2006).

Drawing on the work of Klein, Lacan and the British psychoanalysts Wilfred Bion and Donald Winnicott, Britzman asks the provocative question: 'what if there is no such thing as development' outside of a need to 'conceptualize real and fantasised relationships, institutions, practices, culture, other minds, and education' (p. 2)? Britzman suggests that the development of the person – as infant for Winnicott and as teacher for Britzman – cannot be understood outside 'facts of dependency' and 'relations of responsibility' embodied in psycho-social framings as much as cultural institutions. A genuine form of teacher *education* must create the conditions for 'tolerat[ing] and valu[ing] the uncertainty of development as a strange and even alienating resource for understanding the great conflicts our field absorbs, creates, and lives within' (p. 2). Without this acceptance of uncertain development, we repress opportunities for the education of teachers that can only come with the analysis of conflicts and dilemmas. Indeed, challenging one of the persistent themes of 'learning teaching from experience', Britzman argues that 'the having of experience dulls our thinking' (p. 3).

Referring to Bion, Britzman argues that 'teacher education is a hated field; no teacher really loves her or his teacher education' because there is a 'hatred' of learning from experience when it entails self-analysis (p. 8). This reaction to learning is understandable,

says Britzman, if we ask adults to think ‘about one’s painful emotional experience of helplessness, dependency, and frustration’ at a time when there is a strong need for security and certainty, both psychologically and socially in response to powerful signals in the culture (ibid.). At a time when education generally – and teacher education specifically – is strongly framed by a ‘management by objectives’, technical-rational approach to a standard of effectiveness, Britzman’s research is highly distinctive in the field of teacher education for its elaboration of a fundamental psychoanalytic idea:

that adults working in schools are subject to their adolescence and these elemental sets of internal conflicts, phantasies, and defenses return in professional knowledge as demands for certainty and as a belief that learning is a tonic to conflict as opposed to conflict’s delegate.

(Britzman 2012: 274)

Britzman’s original contribution to a complex understanding of the development of the teacher emphasises both the psychological life of the person in becoming and the psycho-social challenges of joining one of what Freud (1925) called the ‘impossible professions’ – where the practitioner’s personal experience of uncertainty is met with public demands for certainty; where the learning possible through making oneself vulnerable to experience is thwarted by the needs of security; and where the hope of transformative change is overwritten by participation in the reproduction of societal norms.

*Development and the Reflective Practitioner: ‘Learning from Experience’*

This attention to ‘learning from experience’ also provides an important link to a consideration of the ‘reflective practice’ perspective (Schön 1983, 1987, 1992), perhaps on more optimistic terms than the psychoanalytic approach. Founded on the work of Dewey on reflection (1933) and referencing notions of learning from experience (Kolb, 2014), Schön’s notion of the ‘reflective practitioner’ readily embraced development as part of a wider professional learning project, and it has arguably had the most enduring impact on the conceptualization of teacher development than any other idea. Although frequently adopted by the teacher education research community, there is often, according to Kinsella (20003), a lack of conceptual clarity and a multiplicity of

interpretation and confusion as to the meaning of reflective practice. Furthermore, the focus and phrasing of reflective practice vary considerably, from Schön's reflections- in and -on action, to Freese's (1999) 'with practice' - reflective practice between student teachers and school mentors -and Loughran's (1996) 'anticipatory, contemporaneous and retrospective reflective practice' further complicating our understandings. Reflective practice can be construed as an intra-self- process or, as Parkinson writes, something one does 'with others', inter-selves and therefore relationally. Giddens (1991) refers to the notion of the reflexive self as 'a project', part of the construction of one's narrative, a process that both relies on and strengthens human agency.

Harford's (2008) focus was on peer-based reflective practice and, as with many other subsequent studies, showed how student teachers felt initial anxiety about critiquing their peers, although ultimately claimed it to be beneficial. Avesson and Skolberg (2000) problematized the use of language itself in reflective discussion between student teacher and mentor. Issues under discussion were often found to be mundane leading to simplistic suggestions and solutions with regard to subsequent actions, ideas and evaluations. Kinsella (2003) raises the issue of power relations in terms of the legitimation of 'who can say what' in the trainee- mentor discussion, asserting that mentors more often than not frame the discourse and the subsequent actions in the form of targets. This does little to promote a broader more critical understanding of issues on the part of the student teacher.

This critical and disruptive perspective was elaborated in Zeichner's research (1996, 1982) that led to him to argue that reflective practice is inconceivable without a fundamental critical questioning of shared values and goals – a shift in focus away from personal introspection to public deliberation of ends as well as means. Finlay's (2003) concept of 'critical reflection' takes a similar perspective. Such views conflict considerably, however, with reform compliance and accountability agendas that also impact on teacher development (Evans, 2011) and constrain teacher – and more broadly human - agency (Lasky, 2005).



Whilst reflective practice is discursively ubiquitous and deeply embedded in many dominant discourses of teacher development research, ultimately, none of these reflective practice models are unproblematic. Often, they run the risk of being little more than a technical, repetitive exercise represented in a plethora of homogenized reflection templates and journalling (Boud et al, 1993) rather than a genuinely transformative process or, as Adams, in a critique of reflective practice (2003) argues, a process that should be ‘culturally-situated and fluid’, one in which teachers develop reflexivity. Nevertheless, the notion of the ‘reflective practitioner’ – especially due to its ubiquity and resilience in the discourses of teacher education research – offers a powerful counterpoint to the simple view of development and one that, potentially at least, integrates both personal, subjective and public, professional growth.

### **THE *DEVELOPMENT* OF A PRACTICE: LEARNING TEACHING**

In this section, we consider the simple and complex view in relation to the learning of the practice of teaching. Broadly speaking, the simple view is characterised by an approach to learning that psychologist George Kelly referred to as 'accumulative fragmentalism' (Kelly, 1963), where the specialised knowledge required is acquired, cumulatively, in a defined, decontextualised sequence, ‘brick by brick’. The complex view, on the other hand, tends to be characterised by concepts such as contingency or situatedness, drawing on a family of theories Jean Lave has referred to as ‘cognition plus’ (1988; Lave & Wenger, 1991) and critical social theories. The simple view of learning teaching tends to assume that additional knowledge and rehearsal of routines will inevitably lead to development (defined as increased effectiveness against a pre-determined goal) whereas the complex view regards not only the learning as related to a variety of socio-cultural, political and economic factors but the object of learning – the practice – as evolving, the practice itself being in motion and subject to historical contingencies such as colonialism (Dominguez, in press) and the politics of professionalism (Seddon & Levin, 2013).

## **The ‘Simple View’ of Developing the Practice of Teaching**

Historically, efforts to describe and promote the simple development of the practice of teaching through research-informed interventions have relied on professionalising moves such as the codification of professional knowledge bases (e.g. Shulman, 1987) the specification of professional standards (e.g. DfEE, 1998), or the ranking of specific behaviours that can be statistically associated with greater effect sizes (e.g. Hattie, 2008). The underlying assumption is that the acquisition of specific pieces of knowledge and the automaticity of certain teacher behaviours will ensure competence and effectiveness and that progression in competence and effectiveness can be mapped onto and planned for as levels in a hierarchy. We see this view encoded in some countries’ professional standards for beginning, experienced and advanced or expert teachers (e.g. DfE, 2017) and we also see it represented in various frameworks for mentoring and coaching (e.g. Danielson, 2013) as well as in research-based ‘stage-schemes’ of teachers’ development (e.g. Fuller & Bown, 1975).

A recent ‘practice-turn’ in teacher education, emerging particularly in the USA, is notable for its identification of what are variously termed ‘core practices’ (Ball & Forzani, 2009; Grossman & McDonald, 2008) or ‘teacher moves’ (Lemov, 2011). Although these two approaches have emerged from very different research and professional traditions, they both seek to identify practices (defined as teacher behaviours, actions or routines) associated with effective teaching (defined by measures such as test scores or progression to higher education). The work of Ball and colleagues (2009), Grossman and colleagues (2008) and others has sought to identify those practices that be associated with greater gains on students’ test scores, the practices being described as ‘high leverage’ (Teaching Works, 2013). This work has emerged from a strong research community with existing interests in both teacher education and subject teaching, especially Mathematics. On the other hand, Lemov’s contribution emerged from his work in the charter school movement and education reform more generally and was based on his own observations of what he saw as ‘effective’ teacher behaviours. Both approaches are fundamentally optimistic in that they are premised on the belief that it is possible to learn to teach. The ‘core practices’ approach also does acknowledge the complexity of practice as a collective,

sociocultural phenomenon (e.g. Lampert, 2009) even while it seeks to construct a teacher education curriculum focused on a selection of ‘high-leverage’ decontextualized teacher behaviours. Yet both approaches promote a simple view of the development of teaching consisting of the ‘deliberate practice’ (Ericsson et al, 1993) of particular routines. As Popkewitz (1985) commented of earlier attempts to identify effective teacher ‘traits’, this approach is akin to ‘industrial task analysis’ (p. 96). One of the main risks of this approach is that in its emphasis on ‘what works’ (defined using the measures of the existing testing system), it over-simplifies and fails to ask ‘for whom’ (a political as well as a moral question) and also to consider the underlying syntactic structure (Schwab, 1964) of teacher knowledge that might allow people to develop both adaptive expertise (Berliner, 2001) and a critical stance on education and society. Philip et al (in press) have shown how a ‘core practices’ approach has ‘potentially dehumanizing implications ... peripheralizing equity and justice in the struggle for democratic public schooling’ (np).

### **A ‘Complex View’ of Teaching Development**

A complex view of the development of teaching as a practice takes a more anthropological view of the concept of practice as a goal-oriented, historically-evolving, human activity mediated by culturally-specific artefacts or tools and subject to social norms and a division of labour and situated within a specific context (Engeström, 1987; Lave, 1988; Hutchins, 1995; Cole, 1996). Such a complex view is often ultimately derived from a key Vygotskian insight that in order to understand (and, indeed, stimulate) human development it is necessary to study it (and intervene) in its social situation, with the ‘social situation of development’ being a key methodological concept (Vygotsky, 1987).

From this perspective, change in a teacher’s practice will be relative to their social situation and, given that social situations change over time, change is likely to be complex and recursive rather than linear with regressive as well as progressive potential. Smagorinsky (e.g. Smagorinsky, 2013; Star Johnson et al, 2003; Smagorinsky et al, 2003), over a number of studies, has demonstrated the accommodations and resistances

involved in teachers' participating in the pedagogical practices of particular school settings and the ways in which teachers take up and appropriate the cultural tools that are available in those settings – and how these tools both enable and constrain various possibilities for teaching. Edwards and Protheroe (2003) showed how school-based mentoring of beginning teachers – especially in high accountability contexts – can limit their agency and restrict the development of their practice as they are coached into 'teaching by proxy' (teaching as the mentor teacher would – conforming to their personal rules). Ellis (2007a, b) showed how teachers who move through different settings for practice (for example, who teach in three different schools in a two-year period) appropriate the various cultural tools that are available within the immediate setting as well as from the broader cultural arena (the realm of professional knowledge) on the basis of their autobiography and the stances formed through their lived experience. This research provides an explanation of why the same teacher's practice can differ so markedly from setting to setting and why things can go so wrong, even for those teachers previously deemed effective. Drawing on the work of both Lave (1991) and Dreier (1999, 2000), Ellis described this process as a personal trajectory of participation in the cultural practices of both local setting and cultural arena, a process that is both inherently complex and uncertain, in a dialectical relationship with social structures.

Another important and related concept, especially when contrasted with the basis of the simple view of developing teaching, is improvisation. Indeed, advocates of the simple view of development sometimes contrast their approach with one where improvisation is a key marker of expertise (e.g. Ball & Forzani, 2009). If improvisation in teaching is defined as the capacity to respond, 'in the moment', to complex and unpredictable classroom situations on the basis of deep knowledge of the subject content, the learners and the context, the challenge for advocates for both the simple and complex view is how to prepare teachers to develop this capacity. Advocates of the simple view argue that improvisation is only possible once a certain degree of competence is acquired through the rehearsal of key routines or 'core practices' deemed effective across whole populations of students (ibid.). Advocates of the complex view propose instead that teachers need to be able to deal with uncertainty and relate to the actual students they teach rather than epidemiological representations of whole populations of students in

order to develop the capacity to improvise. And, indeed, that deliberate practice alone of certain teaching routines may well make these routines automatic but not necessarily responsive to the diversity of students and so therefore not truly ‘expert’ (c.f. Campitelli & Gobet, 2010; Hambrick et al, 2014, Hambrick et al, 2016).

Through his research with beginning teachers, Rowland (Rowland et al, 2005; Rowland, 2014) has made a significant contribution to our understanding of the situated and contingency of visible change in the practice of teaching (specifically, the knowledge of mathematics visible in teaching episodes) by identifying ‘connection’ and ‘contingency’ as two dimensions of what he refers to as the ‘knowledge quartet’. Connection includes the capacity to make links between concepts in the teaching situation and also anticipating the complexity of this situation in planning. Contingency includes the capacity to respond to students’ ideas, to divert from planned teaching agendas, and to cope with the unavailability of resources (material and conceptual) in the environment. Rowland’s elaboration of both connection and contingency strengthen the case for the importance of improvisation as a capacity integral to the development of teaching from the start rather than as some later adornment. Rowland’s contribution offers a theoretical framework for both the analysis and development of teaching (specifically mathematics) that acknowledges the complexity of teaching as a practice, part of which is consequential to the uncertainty and unpredictability of the social situation of development. A critical response to this uncertainty and unpredictability is to foreground the active and agentic investigation of that social situation, something that Cochran-Smith and Lytle (2009) have called an ‘inquiry stance’.

*Teacher/researcher: taking an ‘inquiry stance’ in the development of teaching*

In a number of countries, the early twenty-first century saw a movement of teachers claiming research as their professional territory and who wish to conduct their own research (Campbell and Groundwater-Smith, 2010) as ‘insiders’ through the adoption of an ‘inquiry stance’ on developing practice (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 2009). Bryant asserts that the natural, potentially research-rich environment of the classroom habitus of teachers - who are working constantly with data - makes them ‘ipso facto researchers into

their own practice' (1996: 115), providing an ongoing opportunity for potential pedagogic research.

Teachers' work revolves around day-to-day classroom interactions where, as Wilson (2013:4) writes, they 'draw on their intuitive tacit knowledge' to take 'hot action'. This action is 'coloured by feelings and reactions and relies on an instant response, building up 'knowledge in action'. It is reactive, emotional and 'fix- it' action. In school, teachers often chance upon 'opportunistic learning' (Eraut, 2004) in informal learning spaces such as coffee rooms and corridors and indulge their natural inquisitiveness and propensity for debate, questioning and argument. A drive to initiate inquiry and research practice can arise as a result of questions that 'emerge from discrepancies between what is intended and what occurs' (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1993:14). From this perspective, teachers do more inquiry and sometimes research than they think and this can be a critical contributory factor to the way they develop their practice (e.g. Jones, 2016). This is aided by the tendency to de-emphasise externally provided, one-off CPD in favour of personalized, context- sensitive CPD processes that might includes action research. Collaborative inquiry and research has been evidenced in, for example, teacher learning communities (Bolam et al, 2005) and teacher rounds (Del Prete, 2013). Such collaborative projects provide an opportunity to not just exchange ideas but challenge each other's perspectives and change beliefs and mindsets. Farren (2008), in research about ICT teachers sharing online discussion platforms, found that teachers were able to create their own space - a 'web of betweenness' - to position themselves and their beliefs amongst the plethora of theories that framed their subject. In so doing, the teachers were able to subject the findings of existing research and, crucially, their own research to critical interrogation. To develop this kind of criticality, the culture and micro-politics of the school are critically important variables in providing space for teacher learning and development of this kind (Hargreaves, D, 1995; Stoll & Seashore Louis, 2007).

Overall, the complex view of developing the practice of teaching foregrounds critical questioning in collaborative dialogues among teachers as a tool to provoke a more deliberative investigation, or 'systematic self-critical inquiry', as Stenhouse (1981:103) put it. For Elliott (1991), research affects 'the development of persons in their

professional role' (p. 52) with the potential to change the existing material conditions. The complex view of the development of teaching foregrounds the possibilities for research, systematic investigation of practice and an inquiry stance to have beneficial impact on both positive change in practices, the becoming of the teacher as a person and, critically, the education of young people.

## CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we have examined traditions of research on teacher education in which *development* is a keyword. We have identified two contexts-in-use for this keyword that have been the focus of the chapter: the development of the teacher and the development of the practice of teaching. In organising our review of the Euro-American research literature, we have adopted descriptive categories represented in an enduring dichotomous construction from literacy research to delineate simple and complex approaches to the underlying question of development. We have argued that the simple view of both the development of the teacher and the development of teaching, whilst identifying some important variables, alone is insufficient either to describe or to plan for becoming a teacher and experiencing growth in professional practice.

In the research we have examined, it is possible to discern both critical-humanistic and techno-rationalist clusters of meaning (Horn, 2016); optimistic commitments to learning and change alongside well-intentioned yet over-simplified reductions of inherently contingent and uncertain situations. Like Horn, we believe that navigating these clusters is consequential for how we understand the work of teaching and the job of educating teachers. As Popkewitz (1985) argued, the cultural divide between these simple and complex conceptualisations – which he posed as ‘the conflict between scientific management and progressive ideologies in teacher education’ – reminds us that, fundamentally, education is ‘a site in which larger issues of social interest and power are contested’ (p. 102). As well-intentioned as it might be, the simple view of teacher development in educational research has the potential to exacerbate the privatisation of public education through the monetisation of research findings in the market for teacher

development ‘solutions’ (Verger et al, 2016). Additionally, as early twenty-first century research has started to address, such approaches can also entrench the Whiteness of teacher education programmes through the elimination of contextual, cultural variation and the presumption of ‘what counts’ as powerful knowledge (Sleeter, 2016; Dominguez, in press). The simple view of teacher development - like the simple view of teaching reading – has consequences beyond the individual. The consequential nature of this distinction between simple and complex views of development for education and teaching as professional work more broadly is why we argue that the vocabulary of teacher education needs to be examined much more closely. By interrogating keywords such as development, we create new spaces for a more critical deliberation of becoming a teacher and for more transformative practices of both teaching and teacher education.



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