

What and how do teachers learn from experience?

**A Research Symposium supported by the Society for Educational Studies
and the Oxford Centre for Sociocultural and Activity Theory Research**

*Sunday 23rd October to Tuesday 25th October, 2011
Rewley House, University of Oxford*

Learning teaching ‘on the job’, ‘from experience’ or ‘from teachers’ has chimed with much recent policy on teaching and schools. In the UK, think-tanks such as Policy Exchange and the Centre for Policy Studies approvingly quote researchers who have emphasised the ‘craft’ of teaching and ‘apprenticeship’ views of learning to teach. Rhetorically, the goal is to marginalise higher education’s role in the preparation of teachers – positioning it as overly academic, theoretical, ‘progressive’ or irrelevant to the day-to-day practices of teaching. Educational Studies, as a discipline, is seen as sub-intellectual with low standards of rigour. Politically and institutionally, the object of a great deal of current policy – just as it has been for many governments over the last 25 years – has been to evacuate the intellectual project of teacher education and, as for example in England, replace it with a policy-prescribed version of vocational training delivered through franchises awarded by the government or through the National College for School Leadership.

This research symposium proposes to confront the central assertion of this tradition of policy and of research – that teachers learn ‘from experience’ – by focusing on the very meaning of this assertion: what and how do teachers learn from experience? And how are we to understand experience and experiential learning in professional education? The symposium will draw on historical and complementary insights from philosophy and rhetoric, feminist curriculum and cultural theory, school effectiveness research, and sociocultural psychology to examine experience as a concept with specific reference to initial or pre-service teacher education. These insights will allow participants to work with different theoretical tools on an especially practical and pressing problem in Educational Studies.

Confirmed invited presenters:

Prof Anne Edwards, University of Oxford, UK
Prof Madeleine Grumet, University of North Carolina, USA
Prof Daniel Muijs, University of Southampton, UK
Dr Tom Are Trippestad, Bergen University College, Norway

Call for papers

Proposals for papers and posters to be presented at this research symposium are invited by the organising committee. Papers and posters should directly address the conference question/themes from any perspective and by any mode of enquiry. The conference committee is keen to encourage contributions informed by the range of theoretical, methodological and empirical resources that characterise Educational Studies as a discipline and symposium participants will be encouraged to talk with and respond to each other and to synthesise the outcomes of the symposium for deliberation in the public sphere.

Our invited speakers suggest some of the range of perspectives we are seeking – sociocultural and cultural-historical psychology; philosophy, cultural and critical theory; school effectiveness and school improvement research; rhetoric and policy analysis. We also seek historical, anthropological, sociological and discourse and linguistic-based studies of teachers learning from/through experience. The symposium will necessarily be small-scale (a maximum of 35 participants) and the committee is planning for a published outcome to the symposium.

If you would like to propose a paper or poster for presentation and discussion, please send the information requested below to viv.ellis@education.ox.ac.uk by **midnight (UK time) Sunday 10th July 2011**. Proposals will be reviewed by the symposium committee and decisions notified by Friday 15th July 2011.

Information required in proposals:

- In your email, your name, title, institutional affiliation and contact details;
- Whether you are proposing a paper or a poster;
- In a separate file without identifying information and attached to the email, a 500 word abstract of your paper or poster giving the key question(s) addressed, mode(s) of enquiry and summary of argument.

Please note the maximum length of papers will be 3000 words (excluding references) - and a poster of A1 size - and also that **full copies of the 3000 word papers selected will be required by Friday 7th October** so they can be uploaded to a symposium website.

Registration:

Registration for the symposium and payment of the fee will be online (through the University of Oxford online store) and authors of successful proposals will be notified of the arrangements. The fee includes registration and any materials; tea and coffee; two dinners (Sunday and Monday evenings) and two lunches (Monday and Tuesday).

Standard fee: £275

Student fee: £125 (Students will be required to send a copy of their ID when registering.)

The fee does not include overnight accommodation and participants will be responsible for making their own overnight accommodation arrangements. However, Rewley House, the symposium venue, does offer accommodation although this must be arranged by participants themselves separately. Further information will be provided to presenters.

Symposium Committee

Viv Ellis, Ian Finlay, Joanne Hazell, Prabhat Rai (University of Oxford, UK); Janet Orchard (University of Bristol, UK, and Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain).