TEACHER EDUCATION IN CHANGE: AN INTELLEC-
TUAL PRACTICE. ISSUES FOR ALBANIA

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Abstract – *There is growing acknowledgement world wide that all teachers are entitled to high quality, up-to-date programmes of professional development and that the school as a site for such training is central to the endeavour. This paper suggests that the concept of the reflective practitioner (Schon 1987), which has provided a powerful and dominant model for teacher education for almost a decade, is insufficient as an informing principle given this new context of change and development. It is timely to draw on international debates and models of learning that cross cultures and contexts, and a pedagogy which takes account of the socially situated nature of the learning process. The article presents a case study of a recently developed in-service teacher education programme in Albania. It describes the planning and implementation of the project as well as the evaluation findings of the first pilot phase. The case study highlights three key areas that emerged in the programme's development: the iteration between theory and practice, the centrality of forums of inquiry and the need for transforming frameworks. It is argued that the reconceptualising of teacher education as a social practice provides a fruitful way forward for change and advancement in training. Six key issues for teacher development and research are proposed.*

Introduction

*T*eacher education is changing. There is growing acknowledgement world wide that all teachers are entitled to high quality, up-to-date programmes of professional development. One aspect of this international debate concerns the increased significance that schools should play in both pre and in-service training. Hargreaves (1995) has drawn attention to the new 'social geography' of teacher education as it rapidly becomes de-institutionalised and dispersed across a variety of schools and clusters – *"re-embedded in other sites and spaces"*. Given this new global context Moon (1996:12) has argued that

> *"the school as a site for training is unambiguously central to the task of establishing new and more challenging expectations".*

A new in service programme for Albanian teachers is used in this paper to raise questions about how *"more challenging expectations"* might be developed in

the light of this move towards school based models of teacher training. It will be argued that the concept of the 'reflective practitioner' which has become influential in teacher education, particularly in Britain and the United States, is only a partial framework for informing teacher development. Teacher education, it will be argued, must be an intellectually challenging process that moves beyond 'reflection'. It needs to draw on wider debates and conceptions of learning, including those which challenge the traditional dichotomy between theory and practice. The paper suggests that such debates should take account of the social nature of learning and the way relationships, communication and activity, as well as social and cultural context influence practice. The case study highlights these complex dimensions of culture and context, serving both to illustrate the key issues raised in the first part of this paper as well their implications for teacher development in general.

Part One: Moving beyond 'reflection'

Over the last decade experiential learning theory has come to provide a predominant model for teacher development in Britain and the United States. Schon's (1987) concept of the 'reflective practitioner' has been particularly influential in this respect establishing an epistemology of practice based on a process of interaction and reflection on the part of the teacher and serving as a model that broadly encompasses not only the 'novice' engaged in pre-service education but also the experienced teacher involved in an ongoing process of professional development. There is little doubt that the concept has accorded much needed status to the notion of professional 'knowledge in practice', particularly given the increased significance of schools in teacher development at all stages. As Gilroy (1993:125) has noted

> "the 'reflective practitioner' is firmly esconsed in (teacher educators') technical vocabulary and it is only natural that those responsible for teacher education courses should be considering restructuring them so as to create teachers who can behave in the reflective manner now deemed a distinguishing feature of the teaching profession."

He echoes Calderhead's (1989) fear however, that the notion of reflection is becoming an empty slogan rather than a principle for teacher development.

As an account of learning , the concept of the 'reflective practitioner' demands close attention. In philosophical terms it presents a clear paradox: a person *"cannot inquire about what he does not know, since he does not know about what*

he is to inquire" (Plato 1964) . Or as McIntyre (1990:124-5) points out in relation to the novice teacher and classroom practice:

> *"the limitations of student teacher's perceptions, information-processing, understandings and awareness of alternatives are likely to restrict their learning about teaching as much as they restrict their teaching."*

The concept of 'reflection in action' implicitly rests on a view of cognitive development which locates the learning process largely in the head of the individual. Such reflection accentuates the image of the solitary teacher working behind the closed doors of the classroom, reinforcing a common sense 'sink or swim' view of teacher development which says 'for the most part as a teacher you're on your own and the sooner you learn to cope with that the better'. This paper questions this individualistic perspective, since such a view ignores the distinguished body of research which has illuminated the social, cultural and communicative dimensions of learning and development discussed below.[1]

Nevertheless, the concept of reflection has provided teachers with a welcome challenge to the technicist thrust of much contemporary educational policy. In addition, as Furlong and Maynard (1995:49) have closely argued, Schon's ideas have

> *"caught the spirit of the times; they legitimise the removal of the formal teaching of theory in teacher education courses (Furlong et al. 1994), and provide a rationale for the move to school-based teacher education... Schools must themselves become central to the training process, and teachers, who alone have access to the 'situated knowledge' that students must acquire, become seen as key people in the training process".*

In this respect reflective practice, resting firmly on the Dewian tradition of 'reflective action', has become a central concept in the development of mentoring. And undoubtedly the process of reflection becomes more meaningful when a communicative dimension is acknowledged. Using Schon's work as a springboard, Furlong and Maynard *(ibid)* for example, have proposed a developmental model for school based experience in British schools, which integrates a process of interaction and reflection on the part of the learner with structured feedback from a teacher or 'mentor'. As students progress through stages of development from 'beginning' teaching to 'autonomous' teaching they argue, mentors need to share both their professional knowledge as well as engaging in systematic and planned intervention. They emphasise a distinction between *learning about teaching and learning to teach;* practical experience in

school supported by reflection on such practice, they contend, is paramount in teacher education:

> *"... in learning a practical activity like teaching, the processes involved are very different from learning in an intellectual sense"* (ibid:192)

Analysing teacher education from a broader, European perspective, Moon (1996) has also noted the importance and complexity of the role of the mentor, given the new emphasis on school based teacher education:

> *"The mentor within the practicum provides the crucial link that mediates the beginning knowledge and skills of the teacher with practical experience in schools. In school focussed professional development programmes the role of more experienced teachers in assisting the professional growth of their less experienced colleagues is becoming increasingly acknowledged."* (Moon 1996:12)

However he and his colleagues describe this school based developmental process as one which must have "intellectual foundation and challenge" (Banks *et al.* 1995).

It is clearly important to establish more systematically what the role of teachers acting as mentors should be, but the concept of 'reflection' is insufficient as an informing principle. Critiques by Calderhead (1989), MacIntyre (1990) and Gilroy (1993) have already been cited; Eraut (1995) and Bengetsson (1995)[2] provide others. The use of imprecise, generalised notions of reflective practice can also be misleading in mentoring contexts. Research by Burgess and Harris (1995) for example, has highlighted the way in which the notion of 'reflection', when conflated with the skill of counselling or 'empathy', emphasises the personal relationship between mentor and novice. This, as they point out, is often done at the expense of the systematic challenge and evaluation of novice teachers' progress and development. Other studies of mentoring have shown that whilst mentors tend to be confident in encouraging reflection on issues such as classroom management, rules, routines and pupil behaviour, analysis of pupil learning is frequently neglected. In searching for approaches to teacher development that will inform frameworks of professional support, a variety of models need to be explored, particularly those which encourage rigorous attention to be paid to the teaching and learning process itself.

Classroom practice in Britain and other parts of northern Europe, such as Denmark and Sweden has been increasingly influenced over the last few years by a theory of learning as social practice which has developed across a variety of disciplines such as socio linguistics, psychology and anthropology. This tradition

has shifted thinking away from a purely individual perspective, and focuses on situated knowledge developed in the context of shared learning. As a theory of intellectual development, it is well known, though by a variety of names and with a wide variety of interpretations: social constructivism; cultural psychology Crook (1991); socio historicism Chaiklin and Lave (1994). It has been used widely by researchers to explore aspects of the learning process (Edwards and Mercer 1987; Wood 1988; Gardner 1993) and has impacted on teacher education courses in Britain (National Writing Project 1989; NFER Partnership Teaching Project 1990; National Oracy Project 1989; OU PGCE Teaching in Secondary Schools 1994). In essence the theory proposes that human learning and cognitive development is culturally based, is a socially situated rather than individual process and importantly, is also a communicative process. This view of learning is rooted in the seminal work of the Soviet psychologist and semiotician Vygostksy (Wertsch 1985; Vygotsky 1978) whose ideas provide a rigorous theoretical basis for pedagogy and which consistently focus on the *potential* for the expansion of learning and understanding. Through discourse knowledge is continually not only constructed but transformed: thus when two or more people communicate there is a real possibility that by pooling their knowledge and experience they achieve a new level of understanding beyond that which either had before (Edwards & Mercer 1987).

It is puzzling that such a powerful theory of learning should be used to explore and illuminate classroom pedagogy and practice, whilst for the most part being ignored in the field of teacher development itself. By overlooking the insights this theory offers, we have failed to fully address the cognitive challenge of teacher development, continually preoccupied by an unhelpful dichotomy between theory and practice. The process of teaching and learning from this perspective has been powerfully described by Bruner as a 'forum' or 'dialogue' which includes but goes beyond reflection. It is a constant meeting of minds in which 'teachers' and 'learners' engage in a negotiation of shared meaning:

> *"The language of education, if it is to be an invitation to reflection and culture creating, cannot be the so-called uncontaminated language of fact and objectivity. It must express stance and counter-stance and in the process leave place for reflection, for metacognition. It is this that permits one to reach higher ground, this process of objectifying in language and image what one has thought and then turning around on it and reconsidering it"* (Bruner 1986:129).

Such a process critically extends the role of teacher or more experienced peer in the learning process well beyond that of mere 'facilitator' or 'coach' – for the

quality of the cognitive support becomes a key dimension. Thus neo-Vygotskian approaches to learning are based on two important assumptions:

- that learning with assistance or instruction is normal, common and indeed an important feature of human mental development, and

- that the limits of a persons' learning or problem solving can be expanded when the right kind of cognitive support is provided (Mercer 1994).

These two assumptions inform Vygostky's well known concept of the 'zone of proximal development' which is fundamental to his accounts of childhood learning and development. This concept provides a fruitful descriptor of adult development too, an interactive system:

> *"within which people work on a problem which at least one of them could not, alone, work on effectively. Cognitive change takes place within this zone, where the zone is considered both in terms of an individual's developmental history and in terms of the support structure created by other people and cultural tools in the setting."* (Newman, Griffin & Cole 1989:61)

The concept problematises the neat almost Piagetian stages of development from 'beginner' to 'autonomous' teacher proposed in much of the literature on teacher development. For the zone of proximal development is not an attribute of a person but the attribute of an event – a *particular situated pedagogical relationship*. The potential level of achievement is a measure of the strength of the cultural framework which supports that learning. (Mercer 1994) The quality of the supporting interventions of teachers and experienced peers, which Bruner (1978) termed 'scaffolding', is therefore a key factor.

Working in this tradition, Jean Lave's (1988; 1991) recent research has underlined the way in which cognitive change is an attribute of situated pedagogical relationships in particular settings and contexts. Learning, she argues, is an integral aspect of activity in and with the world at all times. That learning occurs is not problematic. But *what* is learned is always complexly problematic. Research with adult learners engaged in new learning situations has led her to describe a process of involvement in 'communities of practice' that is at first 'legitimately peripheral' but gradually increases in engagement and complexity. To become a full member 'requires access to a wide range of ongoing activity, old-timers, and other members of the community; and to information, resources and opportunities for participation in communities of practice'. Newcomers she contends can be prevented from this vital peripheral participation if they are not given *"productive access to activity in the community of practitioners"* or if the

meaning of such activities is not made 'transparent'. She challenges the notion that learning 'in practice' and learning 'in an intellectual' sense are different processes:

> "*Legitimate peripheral participation places the explanatory burden for issues such as 'understanding' and 'levels' of abstraction or conceptualisation not on one type of learning as opposed to another, but on the cultural practice in which the learning is taking place, on issues of access, and on the transparency of the cultural environment with respect to the meaning of what is being learned. Insofar as the notion of transparency, taken very broadly, is a way of organising activities that make their meaning visible, it opens an alternative approach to the traditional dichotomy between learning experientially and learning at a distance, between learning by doing and learning by abstraction.*" (Lave and Wenger 1991:104-5)

A theory of situated learning can significantly inform teacher development providing a rigour which the concept of reflection lacks. The intellectual foundation of such a theory offers a provocative framework for describing the process of teacher development - most obviously in mentoring contexts such as partnership teaching, joint observation and co enquiry into practice, but also in tutorial settings and peer discussion. The insights provided would also help in the analysis of activities which create 'transparency', contexts for example in which experienced teachers successfully enable pedagogic strategies and practice to become explicit to 'novice' teachers, moving them beyond 'procedural' knowledge to 'principled' understanding of the teaching process.

It has been argued elsewhere (Leach 1996) that support for professional development must take into account that knowledge is constantly created and transformed at the intersection of dialogue between people, their collective knowledge and experience, in particular settings and context. Such support should therefore be set in a framework which provides for a *range of opportunities of relationships* and *activities in a variety of settings,* which include *schools and classrooms.* This echoes Lave's emphasis on the necessity for the widest access to *"ongoing activity in communities of practice"*. Both the nature and quality of such opportunities are key if their meaning is to be 'transparent'. This is a shared endeavour and has important implications both for course construction and for development in mentor and tutor training. In arguing for learning contexts for teacher development that operate explicitly at the interface between theory and practice we are of course also describing model contexts for classroom practice: for we would maintain that support for professional development should fully mirror what is expected of the best practice in students' own schools and teaching contexts.

Part Two: Teacher development in change: a case study

Such perspectives on teacher development have implicitly informed the teacher education programme which is the focus of this case study. The setting is eastern Europe and the teachers involved are in the main working in Albanian schools. This context provides a singular window on the process of teacher development in a country where fundamental educational change is taking place against the background of fundamental society wide change. Those of us who have been minor partners in the development of this in-service programme, have the sense that we are witnesses, at times bewildered ones, to history in the making. As outsiders, we are ourselves engaged in 'legitimate peripheral participation' in the way that Lave describes. On the one hand we are struggling to understand and interpret our experience of the programme in practice without the knowledge which full membership of that 'community of practice' would provide. Yet in the process we gain insights into our own, more familiar 'communities of practice'. The programme serves well to illustrate the process of teacher development. It is new; it has been implemented in a country where in-service initiatives have been uncommon. Moreover, different observers have judged it to have achieved its main objectives in the initial pilot phase. The programme has *"met with a warm welcome by participating teachers"* as well as being *"supported by national and local district officials"* (Leach and Moon 1996). It has been detailed as *"a very successful project"* in a document recently commissioned by the Albanian Ministry of Education (University of the West of England 1996); yet another account describes the programme as *"one of the most innovative and relevant to the country's particular circumstances"* (Vachon 1996).

Observation of the programme, including classroom observation has clearly revealed the socially situated nature of the learning process. It has demonstrated the rich potential of this theory of learning not only to describe, but also to analyse the process of teacher development. I will begin by sketching the wider social and educational context, before turning to the specific teacher education project that is the object of this case study. The case study will illustrate the issues raised in part one of this paper. In developing three key themes (theory and practice, forums for enquiry and transforming frameworks), it will stress the importance of learning contexts for teacher development which

- operate explicitly at the interface between theory and practice
- take into account that knowledge is created and transformed at the intersection of dialogue between people and their collective knowledge and experience
- create 'transparency', enabling pedagogy and practice to move beyond the 'procedural' to 'principled' analyses of teaching and learning.

The Albanian context

'Sultan Murat sat astride his steed
And observed the prisoner bound hand and foot:
His advanced age, his wounds, his chains ...
'Albanian,' he inquired, 'Why do you fight

When you could live differently?'
'Because, padishah,' replied the prisoner,
"Everyone has a piece of the sky in his breast,
And in it flies a swallow,"

(Arapi, 1993)

"The system in Albania has been totalitarian. Everything was axiomatic. There was no debate. Teachers' opinions were controlled." (Geography teacher, Gjirokaster)

Shqiperia (Albania) remains one of Europe's least known yet wildly beautiful countries. The taint of cold war politics continues to influence the perceptions of many, conjuring up to outsiders the images of a hostile and forbidding country, hardly a description to fit the unspoilt Aegean coastline and the majestic mountains that form the spine of the ancient province of Illyria. Totalitarianism, however, over nearly fifty years has had a profound though not absolute impact. Enver Hoxha, and briefly his successor, retained absolute control in Albania until the fall of regimes in neighbouring countries. Despite this enforced isolation from the media and a political and economic repression unparalleled in Eastern Europe, news of Hungary's removal of its stretch of the Iron Curtain reached Albania at the end of the 1980s. Mass demonstrations in the capital Tirana in December 1990 were quickly followed by the freeing of political prisoners, the legalisation of opposition parties and free elections. Albania's broad reform agenda has however been severely hampered by its dismal economic position. The reforms of 1991, abruptly ended central planning, but with no alternative mechanism in place, virtual economic collapse followed. Production in agriculture, hitherto providing employment to half the country's labour force, fell by 35% and industrial output by more than 60%. By 1992 Albania had become critically dependent on foreign aid and private remittances from abroad (Bassler 1995). Thus whilst political change has propelled Albania into contact with the rest of Europe and the international community, after years of cultural isolation, it remains Europe's poorest country. Its grave economic situation has impeded the desperately needed restructuring of political and civil institutions as well as educational reform.

The impact of this period of upheaval coupled with the bleak economic contex has been devastating for education. Priorities have been difficult to establish ir educational terms when the needs are so varied and pressing, the problems so wide ranging. In 1994 reports showed that 60% of basic and secondary schoo classrooms needed repair or complete replacement, having seriously deterioratec during the interregnum which followed the demise of the communist system. Many schools, seen as symbols of an oppressive regime, had been vandalised, occupied or even burned to the gorund. There is a severe shortage of basic textbooks and paper. There is no educational technology. Vital infrastructures such as roads and telecommunications remain fragile and unreliable. US$9 million alone was borrowed by the Ministry of Education from overseas donors in 1994 for school rehabilitation projects attending to broken or missing windows and furniture, collapsing roofs and walls, non- functioning or non-existent sanitation facilities, and missing or broken heating equipment (Berryman 1994; Vachon 1996)

Against this background Albania struggles to preserve educational achievements that are remarkable for a country of its income level: almost 80% of the population is literate having completed at least four years of schooling. Nevertheless in a country where almost one in three of the population are of school age, recent declines in school enrolment testify to a potentially serious breakdown in the education system. Drop-out rates are increasing and only 45% of 14-17 year olds were enrolled in a 1992 survey. (Vachon 1996) This situation is most acute in remote areas. Multiple factors contribute to enrolment decline nationally: one issue is that of reengaging popular commitment to education which has traditionally been associated with a controlling and punitive regime. Many parents are reluctant to send their children to unsanitary, unheated facilities, especially in the bitter winter. In outlying districts particularly, some parents require their children's help with tending livestock or working the land. Another key issue is the need for curricular reform. Prior to 1991 educational policy was prescribed by a national education plan coordinated with the national economic plan; its administration was highly centralised. So too was the curriculum, with its 'red threads' of political doctrine particularly evident in philosophy, civics, history and geography. Albania's political and geographical isolation meant that educationalists were unable to keep abreast of modern developments in curriculum and pedagogy. Teacher educators thus face a long term need to create curricular frameworks that reflect current subject knowledge and the best pedagogical practice within the Albanian context.

Whilst all aspects of education, including the curriculum, are under review, a major priority for the Ministry of Education, is teacher education and retraining. Currently teacher training is not routine and no national assessment policy exists.

In the North and East of Albania the Ministry of Education faces difficulty in recruiting teachers; 64% of the population live in rural and mountainous districts and the quality of education provided is often poorer in these areas. Only 19% of teachers in rural areas for example have a high school qualification at senior primary level (10-14 years), the figure nationally is 30.6%. (Berryman 1994) An ambitious national policy has been formulated for the restructuring of teacher training in Albania, with the country's Pedagogical Institute and six universities playing a pivotal role in this aspect of educational planning. Key decisions have to be made against the urgently felt need to shift the focus of debate towards schools, towards the development of new knowledge in the context of classroom practice. How, for example will intending teachers gain experience of new ideas and real classrooms? What strategies are best used for in-service education? Should there be demonstration schools where innovative ideas can be piloted before introducing them 'system-wide'?; if so how can good practice spread beyond such schools and what incentive is there for teachers to seek out and use better practice? Where does the cascade model of in-service education fit in as it is currently delivered?; what of the 'formators' who have responsibility for such programmes, many of whom are associated with out dated approaches and thinking? A World Bank strategy report on educational development in Albania summarised the 'retraining challenge' facing the country thus:

> "cascade training can behave like gossip, the message becoming increasingly distorted as it travels from person to person. More fundamentally, unless training combines new knowledge with its guided and corrected application (for, example in simulated classrooms), it will change teachers' verbal repertoire but not their practice. Thus the retraining challenge will be to design curricula that help trainees transfer what they know into what they do and to design school or district-level mechanisms that reinforce the new learning." (Berryman 1994:64).

The task in hand for educators in Albania, whether classroom teachers or policy makers is enormous.

The pilot programme

> "Kualida has changed old concepts that were useless, it is the opening of a window that breaks the framework of the ex-regime. It is legitimatising a new system in a new educationalsetting – it is a programme for the future."
> (School Inspector, Girokastra district).

KUALIDA Education Development Project is a pilot project for the in service training of elementary teachers (Grades 5-8) in three districts of Albania: Elbasan, Skodra to the north and Girokastra (linked to Tepelena) in the south of the country, encompassing rural as well as town communities. The specific courses which have been piloted arose out of a feasibility study into the potential for using open learning in the Albanian context commissioned by the Albanian Education Development Project (AEDP) as part of the Ministry of Education's development strategy (Moon and Leach, 1995). In creating the Kualida programme, AEDP decided to adapt an open and distance teaching strategy using expertise from the Open University in Britain but basing the programme development wholly within Albania. The acronym KUALIDA, which approximates to the sound of the Albanian word for quality, derives from the linguistic written expression of Training (*KUALI*fikimi), Distance (*D*istance) and Teachers (*A*rsimitareve).

Impetus for the development of this three month programme arose from the urgent need for teacher retraining in Albania as described above. The course was designed for teachers of English, history, geography and French- curriculum areas that members of the Pedagogic Institute and teachers alike had identified as most in need of in-service programmes.[3] The main focus of the written course materials, distributed to over eight hundred teachers, was methodological issues. In particular the programme was responding to a need to develop a wider range of individual and group teaching strategies in Albanian classrooms.

The 815 teachers involved in the pilot project were assigned in groups of twenty five to a subject specific ëformatorí (advisory teacher), responsible for three tutorials at the beginning, middle and towards the end of the programme. Formators were also responsible for visiting teachers in their classrooms and assessing their written notebooks according to agreed criteria. The course materials provided a common frame of reference both for teachers working together and visiting formators. Traditionally formators have attended schools without warning, but the programme team emphasised that visits to discuss course activities must be by invitation of the teacher concerned and in a context of professionals working together.

All formators involved in the project were given extensive face to face training: in open learning methodology, in the course materials and in 'tutorial' provision. They were also provided with written guidance, including notes on their role and on how tutorials were to be planned and run. In tutorials links were explored between school Activities and the course materials, a vital opportunity for discussing and analysing new practice outside the pressures of the classroom. Members of the programme team visited a proportion of tutorials, to evaluate and review the programme. The combination of country wide training, written guidance and tutorial monitoring, formed an important component of quality

assurance within the Kualida project and informed the evaluation of the first phase of the programme.

Key themes

"A lot of work needs to be done. New steps are always difficult" (History Formator, Skhodra District).

An intensive external evaluation of the project was carried out encompassing all the pilot districts (Moon & Leach 1996). The data which is drawn on here included: a questionnaire to the eight hundred teachers in the project (95% return); interviews with the director of education, formators and inspectors in the four pilot districts; meetings with teachers in three out of four of the pilot districts; observation of lessons in each district; teacher notebooks; tutor planning documents. Interviews and meetings were conducted in a mixture of English, French and Albanian with an Albanian interpreter available throughout. Three key themes emerged, which relate to the issues raised in the first part of this paper and which I will call: *theory and practice, forums for enquiry, and transforming frameworks.*

Theory and practice

"Under the old system, students came into class, sat down and stayed still. The teacher took attendance, checked homework, and recited or read the day's lesson. No questions. No independent thinking" (Science teacher, Shales).

The course is based around four short study texts *"Aspecte Te Mesimdhenies Gjuhe Frenge" (Angleze /Histori /Gjeografi*[4] (Musai et al. 1995) one for each subject area, designed round a common framework. There is a two part introduction: *C'duhet Te ndryshosh?* (Why Change?) and *Kualifikimi Ne Distance Nje Mundesi Per Te Ndryshuar* which introduces distance education as a Methodology. The first main section focuses on *Metodolgji* (methodologies) which are new to Albanian teachers generally, such as strategies for teaching and learning (e.g. problem solving, brainstorming, role play, group and pair work), the use of questioning and pupil assessment. The second section *Veprimtari* (Activities) provides teachers with exemplar material to be adapted to their own teaching contexts. Three 45 minute television programmes, filmed in Albanian classrooms, complement the study texts, illustrating some of these teaching approaches.

These materials are innovative in two respects in the Albanian context. The first is that they have been written by academics drawn from the pedagogic institute and university department in collaboration with practising teachers in each of the four subject areas. The second innovation is the way in which theory and practice are interlinked both within the study guide and in the programme as a whole.

The teachers had clearly taken the course extremely seriously. This was reflected in comments such as *"I worked for many hours to analyse the models"; "Kulaida has taken up a lot of teachers' time"*. 77% rated the course materials very useful or quite useful. 60% said it had been very useful or quite useful in helping to improve classroom practice. The critical iteration between 'theory' and 'practice' which we discussed in part one, was a constant theme during the interviews and the regularity with which all those involved in the project, from regional directors to classroom teachers, referred to this was quite unexpected. The phrase *"close to teachers"* was frequently used to underline recognition of the way the writing team's knowledge of real classrooms had informed the materials. Whilst the first month of the course allocates study hours solely to theory and tutorial time, from the second month onwards time for classroom based activities, runs parallel with time for text and tutorial study.

This approach had clearly had a major impact on the teachers in the project with 53% evaluating the classroom Activities as very or quite useful, 38% as useful. *"Kulaida is close to the teachers – the methodology is useful but the practical element invaluable"; "theoretically speaking the methods are contemporary and the teachers are keen, practically speaking the materials are helpful"; "the combination of text and practical activities is very successful"*.

To what can we attribute Albanian teachers' intense interest in and commitment to developing theoretical perspectives on classroom pedagogy? It may be in part a function of the fact that there is no access to text books, resources, media or information technology; teaching approaches are the only things at present open to change. Personal experience of being controlled - as teachers, as thinkers and as innovators must also be a critical factor; the metaphor of breaking free from an imposed template was repeated time and again. *"Kualida breaks the framework of the ex-regime"; "Kulaida provides students with the opportunity to express independent thought and opinion..."; "...it enables students to think freely for themselves"; "...teachers have gained more freedom, they are not forced into a framework"; "...teachers feel more original."* Such commitment provides an interesting contrast with accounts of educational change in Eastern Germany. There many teachers do have easy access to resources and a plethora of new textbook are readily available. Nevertheless researchers found that

"Reforming teaching methods... is still on the back burner. This area is considered as a deeply personal affair and indeed it hinges on a teacher's personality and style to a much higher degree than content. Schools are aware of a new message from staff development centres that the new state of the art pedagogy is student centred, but experimenting with new methods of instruction requires a personal involvement in reform which many teachers lack. In addition, not all things can be changed at the same time, and instructional methods are an area where nobody at this point interferes or exerts pressure". (Weiler, Mintrop & Fuhrmann 1996:112)

Undoubtedly the programme itself has raised the level of dialogue and debate amongst Albanian teachers. The course materials, combined with carefully chosen classroom activities and a dynamic support framework has enabled the successful interweaving of theory and practice, helping to make the process more 'transparent' for many teachers involved in the project. Formators and inspectors frequently stressed how teachers had until this point been familiar with new methodologies but lacked confidence to transfer them into practice.

"Initially teachers thought that Kulaida was not new to them. It was familiar theoretically in many ways, but in the long run the teachers were keen because of the practical aspects of the texts"; "teachers are good at method but when it comes to application this is less easy".

Forums for enquiry

"The system was designed to make the student fear the teacher, the teacher fear the school director, the director fear the school inspector, and the inspector fear the ministry." (Science Teacher, Shales).

The second major theme that emerged strongly in the teacher evaluation centred on relationships and communication between individuals and groups. This included communication in the classroom: teachers spoke about a *"new atmosphere being created".*

"The project provides helpful approaches for improving relationships between teachers and pupils"; "communication between teacher and students have been improved. It is a good experience for us."

A more contentious area was relationships between the adults involved the programme. Teacher support for Kualida had been carefully considered by the project team at the planning stage and seen as crucial to the success of the pilot

programme. The decision to work within the existing regional networks of 'formators' was a calculated risk: we have already mentioned, for example, that some formators were identified with the controversial cascade model of training. The evaluation indicated that to a large degree the policy was proving successful. Overall tutorials were rated more highly than any other aspect of the programme, indicating the immense value of forums for encouraging debate and dialogue. 81% of teachers graded them as 'very useful' or 'quite useful'.

> *"The organisation of tutorials was good" commented a French teacher;*
> *"the organisation was important, they were not as authoritarian as before".*

One formator noted

> *"we have also learned a lot from this project. Whatever happens in the*
> *future we have considered it useful for ourselves".*

It was clear that practice had varied, in one region for example there was criticism that some formators were continuing to use out dated methods in tutorials. The external report noted *"a few (formators) appeared to use up valuable time on overly administrative concerns. Others assumed a very passive role for the teachers in contradiction to the way they were being enjoined in the materials to work with their classes"* (Leach & Moon 1996). But there was also open acknowledgement by many in the project of the complexity of the process of change for all concerned *"as teachers had difficulty in organising group work, so did the tutors. More training is needed".*

Establishing school based support within the Kualida programme had also been seen as vital, but what form it should take had also posed a problem initially. No formal mentoring system currently exists in Albanian schools and whilst expertise in innovative classroom methods is being developed, support operates on an informal basis. It was decided to combine this informal approach with the work of formators. The programme therefore explicitly urged teachers to invite formators to visit classrooms, whilst also encouraging them to build on traditional practice by meeting with colleagues from neighbouring schools and visiting each others' classrooms. Many formators proved to have been active in visiting teachers in their schools, discussing and giving feedback on lessons; this had been welcomed. Some kept detailed notebooks which indicated the seriousness with which this process was undertaken and the scope for further development work in observation and co-analysis of practice. Some teachers had worked particularly closely with their formator and as a result are emerging as confident leaders within schools: a mentoring structure with its own unique dynamic is clearly emerging. However additional forums of school based support were in evidence; this was

perhaps the most fascinating and unexpected feature of the programme. In some of the classrooms we visited there were as many as twelve adults in the room observing a lesson: pupils and teacher alike seemed used to the low murmur of discussion as subject specialists from neighbouring schools discussed together in pairs or threes. This communal approach to analysing practice seemed to have embedded itself into the project and was frequently referred to in the evaluation process:

> *"There was great interest in the project for teachers in other subject areas, for example the Albanian language. Teachers asked us about the methodologies – model lessons were given in school for groups of teachers to watch and discuss." "Many seminars have been held and the work of teachers watched." "Many model lessons have been observed." "We have arranged open classes in both the elementary and secondary schools".*

The use of the word 'model' in this context carried the connotation of 'exemplar' or 'pattern', a model lesson illustrating new knowledge 'in practice' but at the same time being open to discussion.

That vigorous debate about new approaches to teaching and learning is taking place is evident. Discussion has also been fuelled by the screening of the Kualida television programmes on mainstream television: a large percentage of Albanian homes have television, for whilst the Hoxha regime jammed foreign broadcasts it recognised TV as the ideal way to get his image into every living room. The establishment of new video centres in each of the regions creates a further context in which teachers can work together. 'Forums for enquiry' are thus very much alive, be they tutorials, the discussion of project television programmes at home, school based meetings or classroom teaching, observation and co-analysis. The pattern such forums are taking are not only consonant with the culture in which they are being developed, they also illustrate that centrality of relationships and dialogue for effective learning in practice as indicated in part one of this paper.

Transforming frameworks

The transformation of both pedagogical understanding and teachers' classroom activities are profoundly open ended processes as Albanian teachers engage with new approaches to teaching and learning for the first time in their professional lives. How such approaches, in individual schools and classrooms, will develop in the longer term is as yet unclear. One of the concerns of the evaluation was that all those involved in the project should recognise the

importance of valuing the best of the older, traditional classroom methods alongside the new. The evaluation noted

> *"In a few instances we found tutors and teachers talking about the Kulaida 'method' and setting it in juxtaposition to more traditional approaches. (Kualida) is about process and methods rather than 'a' method.[5] We suspect that the zeal of some tutors may have contributed to this and some adjustment in tutor briefings in the future may be appropriate"* (Leach & Moon 1996).

The report underlined the need for all successful methods to be valued. In Britain we have certainly much to learn for example, from the high standards and fluency achieved in second language learning amongst young people in Albania.

It was suggested in the earlier part of this paper that a socially situated theory of learning illuminates the process of teacher development and that the nature of teacher or 'old timer' support can constrain or expand the cognitive potential of learners. Vygostky's 'zone of proximal development' and Bruner's concept of 'scaffolding' were described as pertinent transforming frameworks. The importance of such frameworks in the Albanian setting cannot be underestimated; frameworks which are only fully brought into existence through talk, debate and dialogue. The carefully designed classroom Activities of Kualida, allied with exemplars of real classrooms on the television programmes provided clear models that enabled teachers in the programme to try out new approaches.

> *"teachers would like more models";*

> *"teachers now have models to refer to and the activities showed them what they needed to plan and prepare for"*

> *"this was the first stage which sensitised people to this approach"*

However it was clear that even these well designed tasks were insufficient without the debate, dialogue and structured support provided in the forums of inquiry we have described:

> *"Tutors worked in two ways: seminars and concrete work in each school with groups, small groups and individuals."*

> *"every month we have involved a well prepared teacher to give a seminar on methods."*

> *"In tutorials there was a great need to discuss/debate/other different models."*

Transforming frameworks had clearly provided the careful 'scaffolding' consonant with the useful definition provided by Maybin, Mercer and Stierer (1992) as *"help which will enable a learner to accomplish a task which they would not have been able to quite manage on their own" enabling a "greater level of independent competence"*.

Engestrom (1987) has suggested that where people learn to do things they have not done before zones of proximal development are collective rather than individual phenomena and the *"new is a collective invention in the face of felt dilemmas and contradictions that impede ongoing activity and impel movement and change"* (Chaiklin & Lave 1993:13). Mercer (1994) has rejected such a theory but proposes the development of a concept related to the ZPD which might shift the focus from individuals working on their own, concentrating instead on the 'synergy' of a learning group and how it might function together as a 'community of enquiry':

> *"In practical educational terms, we might then be able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the joint learning process, and suggest directions in which the community could most fruitfully be expected to encourage and advance"* (Mercer 1994:104).

The development of such a concept would seem to be particularly fruitful for teacher development in a variety of contexts. At the very least it provides an appropriate metaphor for the potentially radical change that has been described in this case study.

Although his notion of the 'reflective practitioner' has been celebrated, Schon's own work is an illustration of the broader, socially situated model of professional development we have described. The glimpse of Quist's architectural studio, which provides the setting for 'reflection in action', is *"a space in which students spend much of their working lives, at times talking together" as well as..."engaged in parallel pursuit of the common design task"* (Schon 1987:44). Architect Quist's introduction of the design process details the high quality, in depth cognitive intervention of an expert, as well as the careful scaffolding of novice Petra's, understanding. As novice and teacher talk and sketch Quist *"gives Petra reasons for her intuitions" and "makes a basic design principle explicit"*. Schon is at pains to draw attention to the domains of specialist language used, demonstrating as he does so the constant iteration between theory and practice, knowing and doing. He concludes *Educating The Reflective Practitioner* by describing *"an experiment in collective inquiry"* involving wide and dynamic forums for *"intellectual debate about teaching"* which include participants sitting in on each others' courses as well as directing small groups.

Teacher development is a process in which understanding can be both created and transformed. Six key issues arise from this study. Teacher education should:

• *Provide model learning environments*

Teaching and learning should fully mirror that which is expected of the best practice in the classroom. This has critical implications for the provision and development of tutor and mentor training. As we have seen in the Kualida programme for example, formators are encouraged to use their tutorials as models for classroom pedagogy. Indeed this aspect of the programme is seen as so crucial to the success of the programme that it is a major focus for stage two of the project.

• *Be consonant with the culture in which it is developed, yet should be open to different models and debates which cross national and cultural boundaries*

This has critical implications, for example, in the training of mature students and those from ethnic minority cultures. Teacher education too often assumes knowledge about classroom culture and practice that is puzzling to the older student or to someone adjusting to a distinctively differing educational culture. Knowledge of linguistic conventions or the complexities of classroom planning for example, may well need the kind of careful and explicit scaffolding that Quist affords his novices.

• *Encourage teaching communities to develop a variety of forums for inquiry. These should be developmental and exploratory providing experience of a wide variety of teaching and learning opportunities*

Successful innovations, for example in electronic communication and mentoring (such as partnership teaching, joint observations and co-analysis of practice) should be documented and debated at an international level. The experience of collaborative group observation and discussion of classrooms in the Albanian programme is clearly one example, experiments in video conferencing between students and mentors in areas where the technology is well developed provides another. Detailed descriptions of successful and varied forums of enquiry would enable us to see and analyse key learning processes.

• *Challenge traditional dichotomies such as the distinction between the transmission of knowledge and learner centred approaches, theory and practice, teacher and learner.*

This has implications both for course design and the nature of learner support, both in initial and in-service contexts as the discussion of the Kualida programme has shown.

- *Recognise the centrality of the quality of the communication process*

Research should describe the use of 'transforming frameworks'. We should seek to analyse in-depth contexts in which experienced teachers successfully enable pedagogic strategies and practice to become explicit to "novice" teachers, moving them beyond "procedural" knowledge to "principled"understanding of the teaching process.

- *Have a firm base in schools and classrooms; it should be seen as an ongoing process across initial, induction and ongoing phases of teacher development*

Supported study or training such as Kualida is a vital aspect of teacher development. However, if teacher education is about real change in classrooms and schools, such training needs to inform practice in an ongoing way, embracing both novice and experienced teacher. This paper has suggested that the nature and quality of the forums for enquiry supporting teacher development are central to the endeavour. For in whatever context, teacher education needs to be rooted in a theory of learning as a social practice: the school is the key 'site' in this practice for change.

Notes

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[1] It is important to distinguish here the everyday use of the term 'reflective practitioner' by teacher educators from the rich work of Schon (1987) in which this concept is embedded and which is referred to in part 2 of this paper.

[2] Bengetsson terms this 'anglo saxon pedagogy'

[3] In phase 2 of the Kulaida project (1996-7), the materials will be developed in other curriculum areas, beginning with civics and the Albanian language.

[4] Aspects of Teaching in French/English/History/Geography

[5] *"Aspects of teaching in..."* was deliberately chosen as a title to emphasise that the course introduces only *some* teaching approaches. In Kulaida Phase 2 (1996-7), the existing course will be developed nationally, and new materials developed in the four subject areas.

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