

*Early
Professional
Learning
Project*



*An ESRC (TLRP) funded project with University of
Stirling & Manchester Metropolitan University*

Presentation to EVABCOM Seminar

October 2005, Stirling

Becoming a teacher: a question of identity formation

In the first few months of their first teaching post, new teachers face the need to establish themselves as teachers in the eyes of their colleagues and pupils. The narrative data of the 'Early Professional Learning Project'* suggest that this experience is characterised by its emotional and relational nature. It can be construed as a natural task which new teachers complete, or emerge from, successfully if they are accepted as teachers by the people they work with and the children they teach. However, it is as a personal and individual journey of identity formation, rather than a neat progression of knowledge acquisition, that the experience appears to take place. Developing the argument that becoming a teacher is about who you are or become, as much as it is about what you know, leads ultimately to the question of what relative status should be accorded to the epistemological and ontological basis of early professional development. In particular, what light can be shed on our interpretation of professional standards that ostensibly govern the process of development, and how they relate to the actual experience of learning to teach?

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*The EPL Project is funded by the ESRC within their TLRP Programme