

Placing ourselves to confront present and future curriculum challenges

Linda Keesing-Styles

Unitec Institute of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand
lkeesing-styles@unitec.ac.nz

Robert Ayres

Unitec Institute of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand
rayres@unitec.ac.nz

Simon Nash

Unitec Institute of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand
snash@unitec.ac.nz

How do we support teachers to be most effectively placed to meet the challenges of educating 21st Century learners?

This presentation reports on research into a whole of institution curriculum renewal project in a New Zealand tertiary institution. The project - influenced by the work of writers including Barnett (2000), Doll (2002) and Barnett and Coate (2005) - aimed to reframe learning as 'conversation' and develop programmes that are integrated with the world and genuinely dynamic. During the project, teachers were inevitably challenged to reflect on their ontological and epistemological beliefs (Ball, 2003) and to consider a range of pedagogical implications. While the institutional project focused on curriculum reform, the researchers who carried out a parallel investigation into teacher perspectives confronted the implications for teachers' sense of identity and for their pedagogies in these new places. The institutional project was underpinned by explicit assumptions and expectations around what a teacher needs to 'be' in their role and the types of pedagogies they might employ. Using departmental focus groups and interviews with teachers, the research identified through thematic analysis what helped and hindered the process of rethinking 'teacher'. It also captured changes in teachers' beliefs and practices and considered whether teachers were any better placed to meet contemporary educational challenges as a result of their reflections. The presentation will outline key findings from the project that address these issues and report on the subsequent interventions designed to resolve them.