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Public Lecture

Interactions in Language Teacher Education: Some of the Whats & Hows

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Date: Wednesday 2 October 2013

Time: 7.30 pm

Location: Room 4050B, Arts Building, Trinity College

Language teacher education contexts present many opportunities for social and professional interaction for those who engage in it. Feedback on teaching practice (TP) is an obvious example, and is the focus of the first part of this talk as it is an integral and fundamental part of the vast majority of teacher education programmes. Unfortunately, research and discussion around the nature of feedback and its very many complex issues are still in their infancy, not least because it often remains a 'behind closed doors' activity. The talk will begin with an overview of the literature that does exist in an attempt to raise some of the important considerations for the feedback context, such as, expectations, anxiety, conflicting agendas, facilitator roles, skills, attributes and behaviours. In particular, it will examine corpus discourse data from the feedback context to uncover and critically describe what actually takes place during such exchanges. Some issues will be raised and realistic suggestions for changes in professional practices centred on the role of the tutor and the expectations of the student teacher will be outlined.

In the second part of the talk, I will move to a discussion of other types of reflective activities conducted in on-line contexts (blogs, chat, discussion fora) and the ways in which student teachers engage with each other and with tutors in these contexts. Having presented a generic corpus-based description of such interactions, an examination of student teacher narratives will trace the ways in which teacher identity is constructed through the use of blogs in particular.

Dr Fiona Farr is Dean of Teaching and Learning at the University of Limerick, Ireland, where she is also a member of the Centre for Applied Language Studies. She holds an MA in TEFL and a PhD in the area of Applied Corpus-Based Discourse Analysis. Other positions include Series Co-Editor, Edinburgh Textbooks in TESOL; Editorial Board Member, Classroom Discourse Journal (Routledge); Co-Manager of the Limerick Corpus of Irish English; Executive Committee Member, Irish Association of Applied Linguistics; and Visiting Research Scholar, Queen's University, Belfast (2012/2013) and Lancaster University, (2012-2015). She has been involved in several national and international applied research projects in corpus linguistics, most recently including the ESRC-funded project, 'Centre for Corpus Linguistics and Social Science' led by Lancaster University. She has published on corpus linguistics, language teaching and teacher education in several international journals including TESOL Quarterly, the Journal of English for Academic Purposes, Language Awareness, Intercultural Pragmatics, Language Learning, Classroom Discourse and Language Teaching. She has published many chapters in edited collections, as well as co-editing two books. Her own 2011 book, The Discourse of Teaching Practice Feedback. An investigation of spoken and written modes (Routledge), is an applied corpus-based examination of spoken language as it is used in 3rd level language teacher education contexts.