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“Becoming and being Professional: at a time of change”

The role of the Early Years Professional

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Introduction to “Petcha Kutcha”
Japanese for Chit chat

- Engagement of Early Years staff and settings with Higher Education
- Partly to enable Government to meet its own target
- Provide a status and salary...
- Platform for other careers
- Partly because it is a sound pedagogical/andragogical or a malleable approach

Overview

- Political promise from all parties to continue work with early years services...
- Be mindful of the socio economic issues as they impact on children and families "down stream" (Ridge and Wright, 2008)
- Dilemmas as to who should be responsible for these services, the State? Communities? Families? (Baldock, 2011)
- Progress has been made, but it is an 'active' process, it requires momentum (Healy and Jenkins, 2006)
- In an uncertain world, keep learning, re-think and re-frame (Paul and Elder, 2002)
- Strategies for an uncertain self, uncertain role in an uncertain world

Professional uncertainty

- Finding your self
 - How do you present yourself to others
 - Identification of own skills
 - Locate your strongest area of knowledge
 - What experiences have you lived
 - Other special interests in...
 - Map your career trajectory
 - Collectively these complex set of activities, with a shared ethos and working with others, require training, practice, understanding, analysis and reflection (Nixon and Murr, 2006)
-
- It takes time to become a Professional!

**Professional attributes, skills
knowledge, experience**

- All of you have had former roles, these have been trial runs of the person you wish to be. This is an “experimental phase” (Ibarra, 1999)
- It is a time when you
 - *Observe and identify role models*
 - *Experiment with provisional selves*
 - *Evaluate self against standards and feedback*

A sense of becoming

- You begin, to present appropriate mannerisms and conduct as you navigate toward your professional role with a credible image
- It is critical that you present a stable and consistent set of attributes, beliefs, values, motives and experiences in which you can define your professional role
- When crafting yourself as a professional Evans (1999) cited in (Nixon and Murr, 2006, 801) was said to “...*over-generalise the distinction between academic and practice learning*” In contrast, Laurillard (2006) extols the virtue of academic learning as been relevant and clear, despite been one step removed from the work place it can contextualise and have application in the “real world”(ibid)

Becoming Professional

In your professional world consider...

- Self conception: - social roles, group membership, personal characteristic, traits, personal conduct
- Modification of self:- desirable and undesirable
- Move from your real to your ideal position (Boyatzis, 2002)
- Use cognitive and emotional filters

- Professional competence, positional orientation, recognition and reward can all be gained by means of enhanced learning through "... a mode of average everydayness" (Dall'Alba, 2009, p.35)

Identity construction: crafting possible selves

- Early role models were parents, instilling a sense of standards, family values a foundation for our development
- Later role models are sought from a wider focus that incorporate careers, corporate, entrepreneurial and professional worlds
- Mentors are always close to their mentee, it is an interactive relationship
- A role model may or may not give permission, they may "*close or distant to the role model user*" (Singh, Vinnicombe and James 2006, p.67)

Identifying a role model

- Continue to be issues over the lack of role models in gendered work. Those in high positions can be viewed as being masculine having given up their right to social and emotional capital (children). Others in balanced firms/business tend to fare better, with women as good role models, professional, stylish, accessible and encouraging
- Women often find role models from their community, family or own social world...(ibid, p.69)

Women leading Women

- There is no single role model that you encounter, but a series of networking opportunities with people interested in you and your role
- These people can be near, distant, women, men, managers and mentors, but they are people out there to help you attain your career
- People will give opportunities for you to flourish, be confident in your ability, not give prescriptive tasks...

Role models and networks

- Using a metaphor of “unfreezing, changing and refreezing” was offered by Ashforth (1998) as a way for women who were reconciling life and career plans and reconstructing selves
- Early Years Professional status provides an opportunity to reconcile self with skills, role, a new identity and leadership

Self and the process of change

- This is your journey, take control
- Enjoy the scenery
- Your new professional role awaits
- Personalise your approach, increase your skills of listening, observing, learning and negotiating with others as you explore the challenges in your new world

Being an EYP