

# Teacher Professional Development in Changing Conditions

Edited by  
Douwe Beijaard,  
Paulien C. Meijer,  
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TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
IN CHANGING CONDITIONS

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## Introductory chapter

# TRENDS AND THEMES IN TEACHERS' WORKING AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Douwe Beijaard, Paulien C. Meijer, Greta Morine-Dersheimer and Harm Tillema

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Educational reform is an international phenomenon that has been building in effort and impact over a period of years. Reform has taken somewhat different patterns of development in different countries, but there are important similarities that are visible across nations and cultures. In a critique of the standards-based reform of teacher education in the U.S., Delandshere and Petrosky (2004) illustrate some common trends. They refer to the development of generic teaching standards by states in Australia; the efforts toward development of a national curriculum related to standards for both students and teachers in New Zealand; and the attempts to standardize teacher preparation in Europe by developing a system of course credit that permits comparison of learning experiences for prospective teachers in different nations. In some policy documents one can read now about what constitutes a “European teacher” by referring, among other things, to teachers’ cross-national mobility and ability to contribute to development of the “European citizen.”

This international emphasis on standards for teaching and teacher education has grown out of an interlocking set of circumstances, with educational research operating as a contributing factor. Cross-national assessments of student achievement in core academic areas conducted through the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) have alerted many governments to areas of apparent weakness in pupil performance, and fueled efforts at curriculum reform as well as school accountability (e.g., National Commission on Excellence in Education Reports in U.S., 1983, 1984; see also Berliner & Biddle, 1995). Research on teaching has demonstrated to the satisfaction of many that

qualified (i.e., appropriately prepared) teachers can produce improved student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Many policy makers believe that setting and enforcing standards will lead to improved student and teacher performance. However, strong concerns about the long-term impact of the standards-based reforms related to teaching and teacher education have been voiced by some (e.g., Cochran-Smith, 2001; Delandshere & Arens, 2001). In the Australian context Sachs (2003), for example, argues that we should critically look at professional standards for teachers and the claims that are made by their advocates. She also writes that standards cannot and should not be frozen in time, but must be flexible to the changing conditions of teaching and learning as these occur inside and outside of schools.

Alternative licensing of teachers is another issue that raises considerable debate in the teaching profession (Heilbronn, 2002; Zuzowksy & Libman, 2003). In many countries the standards discussion as well as teacher retention in the profession mark the need for new assessments of competence. On the one hand, policy makers and school managers welcome alternative licensing as an opportunity to recruit, select, and retain new teachers for the profession. In many contexts and countries where there is a dire need for teachers (such as in many European countries) alternative licensing is a way to relieve a teacher shortage quickly. But on the other hand, teachers and teacher educators view alternative licensing as a step towards de-professionalisation and as a genuine threat to the quality of education (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Tickle, 2001).

Delandshere and Arens (2001) note that performance assessment appears to drive the standards reforms. They list the following recurring themes in policy statements: (1) definition of *general statements* that apply to all teachers, (2) acquisition of specified *essential knowledge and skills*, (3) application of the *same standards* of performance to *all* teachers, and *elimination of differences between the aims* of teacher education programs, and (4) *emphasis on performance and practical skills* rather than theoretical knowledge (p.552; italics in original). Cochran-Smith (2001) frames this as an “outcomes” issue, in which market forces appear to drive education policy, as opposed to democratic beliefs in public education and social justice.

One argument in support of the movement in New Zealand has been that high standards for teachers can contribute to the acceptance of teachers as professionals (Gore & Morrison, 2001). However, there is an inherent disconnect between establishing top-down standards for teacher education and encouraging the governance of teacher education by professional educators. Gore and Morrison “believe teacher educators need to take a stronger stand in relation to government forces, taking action to demand

appropriately resourced reform initiatives that would truly professionalize teaching and teacher education” (p.581).

In parallel with the reform movements in teacher education have been curriculum reforms in K-12 education. In part these have been related to changes in researchers’ conceptions of thinking and learning in the classroom. Nuthall (1997) has identified three broad categories of research on students’ classroom experiences: studies with a psychological or cognitive constructivist orientation, studies that are primarily sociocultural in orientation, and studies based on a sociolinguistic orientation. On the basis of his analysis of these varied approaches, and the evidence from his own research (Alton-Lee & Nuthall, 1992; Alton-Lee, Nuthall & Patrick, 1993; Nuthall & Alton-Lee, 1993; Nuthall & Alton-Lee, 1995), Nuthall concludes:

“[I]f we incorporate the sociocultural and sociolinguistic perspectives into a cognitive constructivist model of the development of mental processes, then it is possible to see how the language and social processes of the classroom construct the ways in which students acquire and retain knowledge.... All the evidence we have now about how language shapes classroom experience, about how social processes structure the content of what is talked about and how, about how students remember both the context and content of their classroom experiences, all these make it clear that it is the whole of what goes on in classrooms that determines how students think and learn.... [B]ut readers who had hoped to find ... a set of recommendations about how to get students to think and learn more effectively in their classrooms will be disappointed” (Nuthall, 1997, p.758).

Nuthall goes on to state that “the practical consequence of the increasing complexity of our research and understanding of classroom processes is that there is no longer the possibility of simple answers to questions about how to improve the quality of students’ thinking and learning in classrooms” (p.760).

What we are faced with, then, are two inherently contradictory forces pushing for educational reform, each of which is seemingly based on educational research. Research on teaching is used to support national policies creating standards for teaching and teacher education that operate to promote uniformity of programs and practice in the expectation that this will lead to improved student achievement. Research on students’ classroom learning indicates that teaching and learning are such complex processes that simple answers, such as setting national standards, are necessarily flawed. Critical questions can be raised about distinctions between goals aimed at

improved student achievement versus improved quality of student thinking and learning. Similar questions can be raised about desirable goals for teacher education. Do we need to improve the achievement (performance standards) of prospective and experienced teachers or do we need to improve the quality of their thinking and learning (professional expertise)?

Another major issue running through teacher education and best framed under the label *uncertainty* is the redefinition of professionalism. Teacher educators are forced to warrant their position in the education and professional preparation of beginning teachers. The profession of teacher educators is in danger since there are multiple routes to become a teacher. The discussion on professionalism is ruled by uncertainty because no solid knowledge base, at least in the eyes of managers and policy makers, can be presented to constitute a shared core of knowledge about teacher education (Gilroy, Edwards & Hartley, 2002). Teacher educators are thus forced, even coerced, into a position they would prefer to avoid, that is, to reconstruct a seemingly coherent set of guiding principles to govern their domain, principles that form a prescriptive approach to learning to teach.

These are only a few examples of the turmoil surrounding teaching and teacher education reform, and the role that research has played in promoting, supporting, and critiquing the international reform movements. That turmoil provided the backdrop for the proceedings of the 11<sup>th</sup> biennial conference of the International Study Association on Teachers and Teaching (ISATT), hosted by ICLON at the University of Leiden in 2003. The theme of the conference, “New Directions in Teachers’ Working and Learning Environment,” emphasized the role of context in teacher learning. Educational reforms are an important feature of the current international contexts for teacher learning. Educational reforms at the classroom level provide both opportunities for and constraints on the learning of teachers as well as students. Educational reforms affecting teacher education institutions provide opportunities for and constraints on the learning of both teacher educators and prospective teachers. Attendees at the 2003 ISATT conference discussed issues related to teacher learning in these contexts, and reported on results of research conducted in these contexts.

This book presents some highlights from the deliberations of the ISATT conference in Leiden. Part 1 presents the five keynote addresses of the conference, while Parts 2 through 4 present selected papers related to each of three sub-themes: knowledge construction and learning to teach, perspectives on teachers’ personal and professional lives, and teachers’ workplace as context for learning. This introductory chapter is designed to indicate some relationships among and between the chapters in each part, and highlight some themes emerging from the conference.

## **2 PART ONE: PERSPECTIVES ON KNOWLEDGE, CONTEXT, AND LEARNING BY TEACHERS**

In Part 1, authors of the five keynote addresses discuss issues related to the types and sources of teachers' knowledge, the types of opportunities that do or do not exist for teachers to learn or develop new knowledge in their preparation programs or through their classroom experience, and the ways in which evaluation of teachers can contribute to or detract from teachers' professional development. The authors themselves, educators all, draw on different sources of knowledge and use different forms (or representations) of knowledge in developing and framing their analyses, arguments, and conclusions. The papers thus form an interesting array of approaches to consideration of teachers' working and learning environments, and set a complex context for exploration of the three sub-themes that follow.

In his chapter "Knowledge Construction and Learning to Teach about Teaching," John Loughran draws on his own self-study as a source of knowledge about the practice of teacher education. His working and learning environment is an innovative teacher preparation program in southern Australia. Self-study is seen by Loughran as one way of developing a pedagogy of teacher education. He notes that self-study can be focused on one's own individual practice, organized around collaborative study of a common topic, or concerned with issues of institutional organization. Loughran presents propositional knowledge, derived from his self-study, in the form of 18 assertions that he hopes might contribute to the development of a knowledge base for teacher education. He challenges teacher educators to engage in a similar process of framing and reframing their teaching experience for themselves as well as for the prospective teachers they instruct.

In "Shifting Stories to Live By: Interweaving the personal and professional in teachers' lives," D. Jean Clandinin and Marilyn Huber draw upon participant observation and interviews as sources of knowledge about how and what teachers learn from working with children of diversity. They explore the working and learning environment of elementary teachers in an urban elementary school in western Canada. Clandinin and Huber present the results of their research in the form of narrative knowledge – 'word images' from teachers' stories of their early personal and professional lives, together with excerpts from teachers' stories about more recent experiences with children from diverse backgrounds. Their analysis emphasizes the interweaving of the personal and professional in teachers' stories and highlights the moments of tension that lead to shifts in the ways teachers frame their personal and professional identities. They call on educators (and presumably policy makers) to rethink the types of learning environments we

provide for teachers and students in schools, to encourage the imagining of alternative stories to live by.

“The Crucible of the Classroom: A learning environment for teachers or a site of crucifixion?” is the title of Les Tickle’s chapter. He draws on writings from ancient wisdom and a wide variety of contemporary scholars as sources of knowledge as he considers how teachers might cope with the present-day working environment of classrooms and schools. Tickle describes the condition of globalization that currently affects schools and classrooms: a “market” approach to educational policy, with competing conceptions of curriculum and pedagogy, rapid technological innovations, and an emphasis on student performance as output. He notes that this condition of globalization conspires against processes of teacher education and professional dignity, leaving teachers with crises in schools and little space to develop in person. Using a liberal sampling of quotations as representations of the knowledge of scholars, Tickle constructs an interesting political and psychological argument about how to deal with this harsh environment. He sees a teacher’s continuous learning and development of new images of self-identity as critical. He confronts educators with the task of creating new identities to position ourselves against the culture of globalization existing in today’s schools.

In his chapter “Practice, Theory, and Person in Life-long Professional Learning,” Fred Korthagen draws on a combination of practical experience, reflection, and research as sources of knowledge to describe a realistic approach to teacher education and introduce a model for systematic reflection. Korthagen’s ‘realistic approach’ attempts to integrate theory and practice by building on student teachers’ concerns emanating from their experience in real classrooms. In reflection on these concerns and the actions which generated them, the student teachers are encouraged to go beyond rational thinking to consider their feelings. The model guiding this reflection includes six levels, with the most central ‘core levels involving consideration of identity and mission. Korthagen represents the rationale for his approach to teacher learning through a series of graphic displays, and summarizes his views on the role of reflection in a set of six propositions. He concludes that more attention to the deeper levels of reflection is a prerequisite for a balanced integration of the personal and professional in teaching. He calls on teacher educators to take the lead in demonstrating the value of self-awareness in terms of our own professional identities and personal missions, particularly as these relate to our professional behavior.

In the final chapter of this set, “New Methods and Perspectives on Teacher Evaluation: Who evaluates what and for which purposes?”, Kari Smith draws on an extensive body of international research and policy analysis related to educational evaluation. She considers how teaching standards affect the working and learning environment for teachers around

the world. Smith presents an overview of the Who, What, When, Why, and How of evaluation of teaching, summarizing essential key points. She notes the advantages and disadvantages of explicit standards for use in evaluation of teaching, and indicates the critical difference between formative and summative evaluation, with formative evaluation having particular potential for encouraging teacher learning. She identifies three paradigms for evaluation that are useful in determining appropriate purposes and tools in different evaluative contexts, and briefly describes the most frequently used types of tools. Smith advocates an intelligent use of standards and evaluation that appreciates individuality and uniqueness in teaching and empowers teachers in a publicly transparent environment. She urges us as evaluators of teaching to be certain that all decisions affecting teachers and their careers are based on strong, authentic, and well-documented evidence of teaching performance.

Together these five chapters highlight self-awareness of changes in teachers' personal and professional identity as a critical feature of learning by teachers and teacher educators. Classroom practice provides an essential context for teacher learning. Self-study, reflection, and formative evaluation can be useful contributors to the process of teacher learning. Teacher educators need to model self-awareness and reflection in their own work with prospective and experienced teachers. Researchers have an important role to play in revealing the ways in which teachers' workplaces can and do provide supportive environments for teacher learning, as well as the difficulties that reform movements can impose. These major themes are developed in more detail in Parts 2, 3, and 4.

### **3 PART TWO: KNOWLEDGE CONSTRUCTION AND LEARNING TO TEACH**

Part 2 highlights varied aspects of teachers' knowledge construction. Knowledge is socially constructed, thus develops in interaction. Colleagues, whether or not they are part of a learning community, play an important role in teachers' knowledge development. It is helpful, and often necessary, that processes of knowledge construction are embedded in challenging learning environments. In teacher education, teacher educators play a pivotal role in creating such a learning environment. It is argued that teacher educators can be very supportive for beginning teachers on-the-job as well.

In the chapter "Analyzing Teacher Knowledge in its Interactional Positioning," Jukka Husu presents two ways of analyzing teacher narratives: the 'representational' and the 'presentational' analysis. The former analysis type emphasizes what teachers narrate and makes it possible to describe teachers' knowledge frameworks. The latter analysis type attempts to

describe how teachers narrate, i.e., come to the knowledge they express. Each type of analysis adds to the other. Together, they help to develop a further understanding of teacher knowledge and how teachers construct their knowledge. An important underlying notion is that language must be seen as a social system which develops in interaction.

The chapter of Ruth G. Kane and Tom Russell, “Reconstructing Knowledge-in-action: Learning from the authority of experience as a first-year teacher,” deals with experiences of first-year teachers after their teacher education in New Zealand and Canada. Both authors had email conversations with these beginning teachers. The themes emerging from these conversations may help educators in initial teacher education to anticipate teachers’ learning needs in the period after a teacher education program is completed. The process of becoming a teacher continues beyond that professional entry point. The authors suggest that it is important for teacher educators to model classroom processes for establishing relationships with students. They see a significant potential for teacher educators to be more involved in the early years of teaching, thus supporting and working with beginning teachers.

The chapter of Ciaran Sugrue is called “Revisiting Teacher Archetypes: Re-conceptualising student teachers’ lay theories and identities.” In his narrative account of developing learning identities, Sugrue shows that forming a community of learners may nurture and transform teacher knowledge as well as restrict it. A community of learners constitutes a landscape in which tradition and transformation, continuity and change are intermittently present. Sugrue is well aware of the political, social and other constraining influences that impinge on such communities of learners, and shows how the wider arena of the world outside teaching contributes to identity formation. He points to a corrective paradox, indicating that traditional ways of knowing and routines in teaching can be transformed to support identities that include open-mindedness and tolerance of difference. Learning communities as a way of jointly constructing knowledge need not inhibit imaginative risk-taking in the construction of new knowledge for the teaching profession.

The chapter of Rosária Justi and Jan H. van Driel, “Developing Science Teachers’ Knowledge on Models and Modelling,” deals with what in particular might contribute to professional growth. These authors adopt a conceptual model of professional development to guide their research on teacher knowledge building. This model (following Clarke & Hollingworth, 2002) provides space for enactment and reflection on knowledge building in the changing (work) environment of the teacher which is constructed of four domains: external, personal, practice and consequences. The study clarifies that knowledge development is crucial for the improvement of (science) teaching. In particular working together with experts to help develop



knowledge of models and modelling in science teaching proves to be supportive for the teachers' own understanding of content. Getting involved in an activity-oriented way, i.e., by conducting research projects, improves the teachers' teaching practices, according to this study.

In her chapter "Its About Time: Issues of time in knowledge construction for preservice and practicing teachers in school contexts," Margaret R. Olson offers an important perspective on teacher identity formation and knowledge growth. Continuity in personal life creates the stories we live by; reconstructing these stories may show us the significance of experiences and teachers' interpretations of (work) contexts. Olson shows us how rethinking conceptions of time and continuity can help us detect the gaps and contradictions in teacher knowledge which lead to "awakenings" and reconstruction of that knowledge.

The chapters presented in this section of the book testify to the intricate relationships among teacher identity, (changes in) work environment, and the building of knowledge in the profession. Teacher identities are intrinsically and deeply related to their work, and to their professional knowledge. Their work conditions and settings constantly change; constantly, new demands are placed on the shoulders of teachers, and this, in a myriad of ways, has impact on their sense of being a teacher, their efficacy, and, indeed, their lives. The construction of teacher knowledge, therefore, cannot be regarded as detached from their work environment or setting demands. More specifically, it may more likely be the case that teacher activity and agency in their work environment constitute the prime source of teacher knowledge. A cognitive view on knowledge construction would state that knowledge drives agency, but this might be too simple a view on the intertwined relationship between teacher action and knowledge. Not so much a 'knowledge-comes-first view,' but instead an agency-dependent perspective on knowledge construction, might bring us to a better understanding of identity formation in teachers.

#### **4            PART THREE: PERSPECTIVES ON TEACHERS' PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIVES**

In teaching, teachers' personal lives and characteristics are intrinsically intertwined with their profession. Specifically in teachers' professional development, 'identity' and 'authenticity' are often seen as basic concepts that have implications for ways of introducing educational change. This section contains studies into the relationship between personal and professional aspects of teaching and teacher development. It is a complex relationship, unfolded in this section from different perspectives.

The chapter written by Per Laursen is called: “The Authentic Teacher.” In this chapter, Laursen explores the concept of authenticity in teacher’s lives. Based on the seminal work of Taylor, who defines authenticity as the freedom to decide for oneself, Laursen collected data on the competencies the teachers practiced in their classrooms. Authenticity proves to be an important explanation of how teachers realized their intentions in their classrooms. Authentic teachers, according to Laursen, intend to build good relations with students, as well as introduce them to the content to be learned. Although authenticity may be difficult to develop, as Laursen warns us, it is neither a matter of feelings nor of personality, but rather one of competence.

In their chapter “The Impact of Program Adoption on Teachers’ Professional Lives: Implications for teacher development,” Jane Ashdown and Barbara Hummel-Rossi address the question of how programs of teacher education or professional development might contribute to teacher identity and commitment. Their intention was to examine the impact of professional development experiences on teacher efficacy, commitment and knowledge. They conclude that high quality programs indeed produce high quality results, because they address the teachers’ needs and intent to have impact on the teachers’ sense of efficacy and self. This is more than having an impact on the teachers’ knowledge only. Professional development therefore, according to this study, should be viewed as an investment in teachers, i.e., building on their commitment and motivation, and supporting their efficacy.

David R. Goodwin’s chapter, “Comprehensive Development of Teachers Based on In-depth Portraits of Teacher Growth,” presents portraits of four individual teachers, thereby uncovering the nature of the phenomenon of growth and showing the actuality of experiences and consciousness of these teachers. These portraits become lenses through which development can be more sharply focused. They tell us about the consistency in a teacher’s life and the diverse nature of personal histories, which must free us from a too momentary look at teacher identity; instead, they make us aware of the unity of teacher’s growth. Teacher self-study and teacher research might help us to unfold multiple identities of teachers. It also enables us to be responsive to the central core of the teacher’s storied life as a consistent whole.

The chapter by Elizabeth Labone, Jude Butcher, and Michael Bailly, “Reconstructing Teacher Identity through Efficacy for Community Engagement,” shows how teacher participation and engagement in the wider community leads to experiences that are supportive in reconstruction of teacher identities. Socially committed teachers (for instance in the case of service learning) are involved in joint activities and initiatives together with students, parents, and experts (university personnel). This research suggests that community engagement prepares teachers who are committed to social

reconstruction. In the authors' opinion, programs that foster such teachers should include: raising social awareness, building empathy, and providing opportunities for successful engagement. These key factors add to the more common notion of knowledge construction prevailing in more traditional programs of teacher education.

In their chapter "The Dichotomy Between Large-scale Reform Rhetoric and the Perceptions of School-based Practitioners," Lynne M. Hannay, Connie Bray and Carol Telford report on their research on discrepancies in perceptions of teachers and school administrators, and relate these to political rhetoric and implementation of large-scale reform. Data from interviews of 72 participants and focus groups were analyzed according to four quadrants. The authors found that while political rhetoric reflects elements of the external/control quadrant, practitioners found student achievement far broader than reflected in high-stakes testing. When school improvement is based in rhetoric of the external/control quadrant, schools and/or school districts might be punished or rewarded using political criteria. This would exclude practitioners who are more disposed to the internal/commitment quadrant. If the purpose of education is to improve student learning, then school improvement must encompass the need to improve student test scores which reflect the external/control needs, though balanced with the increased capacity attributes contained in the internal/commitment quadrant.

Together these chapters provide an overview of various aspects of the relationship between teachers' personal and professional lives. When studying teachers' professional competence or development, researchers cannot and should not ignore the person the teacher is. Personal aspects form the starting point for their performance in class, as well as changes within their performance, and acknowledging this close relationship provides a more authentic view of the teaching profession.

## **5 PART FOUR: TEACHERS' WORKPLACE AS CONTEXT FOR LEARNING**

Within modern society, teachers are expected to constantly develop their teaching according to new viewpoints and changes in societal demands. The days of a limited and defined teacher education program are long gone; teachers need to use their own practice and their own school environment to develop their professionalism. The five contributions in this section contain studies about the ways teachers can use their own practice for developing their teaching, and the ways that researchers and policy makers should recognize this.

After a reform in Gujarat – a province in India – which demanded of teachers an expanded understanding of the workplace and the creation of a new ‘progressivist’ pedagogical environment inside the classroom, Vijaya S. Chand and Geeta Amin-Choudhury studied how societal expectations of teachers worked out at the level where teachers actually operate. They report their findings in their chapter “Learning from ‘Interpreted’ Work Contexts: Planned educational change and teacher development.” As part of their experimentation, teachers initiated a movement towards child-centred contexts through their strategic use of a handbook and by developing a range of enrichment strategies. Concluding that teachers’ experimentation had remained within the “closed individual cycle,” Chand and Amin-Choudhury take the position that helping teachers to learn from their own practice in community with colleagues is important when implementing large-scale changes in education.

Drawing upon 20 years of PEEL experiences, Ian Mitchell and Judie Mitchell describe how teachers use collaborative action research to address concerns about students’ learning in their chapter, “What Do We Mean by Career-long Professional Growth and How Can We Get It?” They explore what career-long professional growth can look like, and describe some conditions needed to stimulate and support such growth. Examples are given of sophisticated practical knowledge teachers develop within PEEL, and general principles of stimulating quality in student learning are derived. But if teachers are to try something new in their classroom, they need to take risks, to gain support through collaboration with colleagues, and to have some curriculum flexibility. This study implies that, for the design of professional development programs and materials, long (rather than short) time frames are needed, as well as support for teachers developing their teaching together with colleagues. Collaboration with university colleges can play a crucial role in building the perception that teachers have something important to say.

General standards for teacher competences focus mostly on how the teacher teaches, with little attention to the differentiating characteristics of large, diverse, economically depressed urban communities. In her chapter “Resiliency, Resistance and Persistence to Be an Urban Teacher: Creating standards that respond to the context of knowledge construction and learning to teach about teaching,” Francine P. Peterman states that context does matter in teaching. She describes new teachers’ reflections upon urban teaching and suggests a set of standards that are contextually responsive to urban teaching. Eleven new teachers teaching in urban contexts were followed. Their experiences confirm the need for an additional set of seven standards that might be used in preparing urban educators: identity formation, special needs, linguistic diversity, culturally responsive pedagogy, non-violence, and resiliency, resistance, and persistence.

The chapter of Annemie Schepens, “Design and Methodological Issues Related to Research on Partnerships between Teacher Education Institutions and Schools,” provides suggestions on how to study partnerships between teacher education institutes and schools, taking into account the restrictions and challenges of this type of research. In this chapter she explores possible research designs and presents seven design principles and difficulties to consider in partnership research. She considers conventional and restricted process-product approaches as limited, and argues that research on the impact of collaborative partnerships should be realised in consultation with all stakeholders in teacher education, while existing examples of alternative educational arrangements should be used as “laboratories” for strong educational research.

In the final chapter of this section, “Teachers’ Perceptions of Their Professional Autonomy in the Environment of Systemic Change,” Barbara Šteh and Barica Marentic Požarnik consider what happened to teachers’ conceptions of their professional autonomy after an all-pervading reform of school organisation and curricula at all levels of pre-university education in Slovenia. Although development of teachers’ professional autonomy was regarded as a main goal of the reform, the authors found that teachers’ conceptions of autonomy varied a great deal in complexity, and only a minority of teachers had the more complex conception that connects autonomy with professional responsibility. They found that weak conceptions prevailed among teachers. They therefore claim that a more systemic approach to school renewal and more powerful, teacher-centred and school-centred strategies are needed.

Together these five chapters provide a view of how teachers’ workplaces are subject to continuous change in all parts of the world. Recognizing this, teachers need to use their own workplace as a context for learning – a recognition that has gained ground in the last few years. Research into the ways teachers use their workplace as a context for their own development, and the effects of doing so, is still in its infancy. Future research needs to focus on gaining insight into what professional development in the workplace looks like, or needs to look like in the future, if teaching and learning is to continue to improve.

## **6 CONCLUSION**

The chapters in this book provide an array of approaches to understanding the process of teacher learning within the current context of the changing workplace environment. They also provide an important international perspective on the complex issues revolving around the international educational reform movement. Basically, they show how

teachers' workplace (inside and outside schools) are more than ever subject to continuous change and that, subsequently, standards for teaching must be flexible to these changing conditions. This asks for a redefinition of teacher professionalism in which, on the one hand, the role of context in teacher learning is emphasized. Researchers have an important role to play in revealing the ways in which teachers' workplace provide supportive environments for teacher professional development. They can show the various types and sources of knowledge that teachers (can) use and develop, and describe and explain the opportunities for teachers' professional development existing in their classroom experience. On the other hand, in redefining teacher professionalism, the emphasis is on improving the quality of teacher thinking and learning. Related to the ever-changing context of teaching, a dynamic approach to teaching and teacher learning is required, in which identity development is crucial.

The development of teachers' professional identity in a context of changing conditions for teaching requires different approaches to teacher learning and teacher evaluation. Firstly, it demands a focus on self-awareness and reflection of teachers to use their workplace when developing their own professional identity. Teacher educators need to model and stimulate such self-awareness and reflection in their work. Secondly, it asks for creating a variety of opportunities for learning in the workplace. To do so, we first need to understand the ways in which teachers' workplace provide supportive conditions for teacher learning. Researchers have an important role to play in revealing and explaining how teachers can build their professional identity, through self-awareness and reflection, in the ever-changing educational contexts throughout the world.

We hope that the selection of papers gives readers a helpful distillation of the insights made available by the research of active ISATT members, presented and discussed at the 2003 ISATT conference in Leiden.

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## PART 1

# PERSPECTIVES ON KNOWLEDGE, CONTEXT AND LEARNING BY TEACHERS



## Chapter 1

# KNOWLEDGE CONSTRUCTION AND LEARNING TO TEACH ABOUT TEACHING

John Loughran

### 1 INTRODUCTION

In recent times there has been a growing interest in the notion of a knowledge base for teaching, and, just as this development has partly been in response to the need to better value teaching, so too the same has applied to understandings of practice in teacher education. One upshot of this has been the development of self-study of teacher education practices (S-STEP). Self-study has captured the imagination of many teacher educators as they have sought to research and better understand the complex nature of teaching and learning about teaching in ways that might be informative for their own practice and articulable and communicative for others.

Self-study has grown from the common roots of reflective practice (e.g., Dewey, 1933; Schön, 1983, 1987), action research (e.g., Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988), and practitioner research (e.g., Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993; Day, Calderhead & Denicolo, 1993), and builds on earlier calls for studies into teaching about teaching involving teacher educators themselves (e.g., Lanier & Little, 1986). Although there is no simple definition for self-study (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2004) it is reasonable to suggest that, in many instances, it involves a closer scrutiny of one's own pedagogy in teaching about teaching in order to enhance the development of knowledge about such practice.

For many teacher educators, a catalyst for self-study revolves around dilemmas of practice, or what Whitehead (1993) describes as the recognition of being 'a living contradiction'. However, as explored in detail through the *International Handbook of Self-study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices* (Loughran et al., 2004), self-study must go beyond personal reflections of practice and begin to question theoretical underpinnings and illustrate rigour and systematic method in researching pedagogical concerns in order to add to the knowledge of teaching and learning about teaching. In

so doing, the knowledge base of teacher education might then be both better recognized and valued through an articulation of a pedagogy of teacher education (e.g., see Russell & Korthagen, 1995; Loughran & Russell, 1997; Samaras, 2002). In this way teacher educators' attempts to challenge 'traditional' approaches to teacher education may be better documented so that the subsequent knowledge of more meaningful and appropriate forms of teaching about teaching might be available to others.

## 2 WHY DOES A FOCUS ON TEACHING ABOUT TEACHING MATTER?

What Lortie (1975) described as the *apprenticeship of observation* can be viewed as sowing the seeds for the almost inevitable development of pre-service teachers teaching as they themselves were taught (Sarason, 1990). Not surprisingly then, many student-teachers enter teacher education programs expecting to learn 'the script' for teaching and can be quite resistant to alternative perspectives on teaching and learning (Britzman, 1991). As a consequence, two important issues emerge in relation to teacher education. The first is in the well-acknowledged difficulty of impacting student-teachers' views and practices of teaching and learning. The second is that there is a high likelihood that teacher educators, just like their student-teachers, may well replicate in their teaching about teaching that which they experienced in their own teacher preparation programs.

These two issues are deeply intertwined and attending to both requires a personal commitment to researching teaching about teaching. For example, many teacher educators were themselves once school teachers. Yet the very skills, knowledge and competencies that comprise being a 'successful' teacher may well be lost – or at least inadvertently overlooked – in the move to a tertiary setting. For many teacher educators, the move from school to university carries unanticipated changes and demands as the transition into a different career largely occurs with little guidance, mentoring or support. A 'successful' schoolteacher may rightly carry a sense of a need to offer recent and relevant experiences of teaching to student-teachers and therefore offer 'snapshots' from their own practice and/or share teaching activities that 'work'. Such a response may well appear appropriate in terms of the needs of student-teachers. However, even though such 'tips and tricks' and stories of teaching may 'hit the spot' and be enjoyable and entertaining for student-teachers, there is also the danger that this may be all that happens. And it is in such situations that the lack of support and mentoring creates difficulties for many beginning teacher educators, for although student-teachers may well be getting what they think they want, they are not necessarily being pushed to move beyond simply collecting a range of teaching activities.

Furthermore, a teacher educator may not even apprehend a problem in this situation. Therefore, a lack of mentoring and support can easily limit the development of one's knowledge and practice of teaching about teaching. Through a focus on a pedagogy of teacher education though, student-teachers may be developed as professionals in ways that move them beyond learning how to 'do teaching'. The problematic nature of teaching can (and should) be highlighted so that there is careful attention to the underpinnings of pedagogical reasoning; so important in thinking about teaching.

Inevitably then, the need for teacher educators to teach in ways commensurate with the expectations they have of their student-teachers becomes an important component of a pedagogy of teacher education. If student-teachers' *apprenticeship of observation* is to genuinely be challenged, there is an overt need for them to experience learning about teaching in ways that creates an impetus for change. Similarly, for teacher educators to develop their teaching in order to create such an impetus, they too must face the dilemmas of practice that underpin such an approach. Hence, there is an overarching need for teacher educators to explicitly pay attention to their own pedagogical reasoning, their own reflective practice and, to similarly create experiences for their student-teachers that offer access to this thinking about, and practice of, teaching.

Embedded in this argument is the view that teaching, and therefore, teaching about teaching, is problematic. A paradox then emerges, for within the dailiness of teaching there is little time or energy for school teachers to reflect on their practice in ways that might highlight the problematic nature of teaching, yet in academia, considering teaching in this way is the basis of theorizing practice. Clearly then, a pedagogy of teacher education requires considerably more than simply 'doing teaching about teaching' and making such a shift in understanding of teaching about teaching, I argue, is enhanced through self-study of teacher education practices.

### **3 SELF-STUDY OF TEACHER EDUCATION PRACTICES**

As noted earlier, there is not 'one way' to do self-study, but there are some aspects of self-study that are helpful in shaping understanding of such practice.

#### **3.1 Purpose, Framing and Reframing**

"So often we, in teacher education, see ourselves as agents for our student teachers: motivating them, informing them, guiding them,

preparing them. We do not think of it as a process that will also change and enrich us. However, we *must* be enriched by it if we are to prosper in this demanding profession. If we are to help our students develop we too must develop” (Kosnik, 2001, p. 65).

Kosnik (2001) draws attention to the important link between student-teachers’ learning about teaching and teacher educators’ learning about teaching. And herein lies an aspect of self-study that is crucial to shaping a pedagogy of teacher education. Both teaching and research should inform one another such that insights into teaching and learning might be apprehended by both teachers and students. This means then that one purpose for researching practice is to better inform one’s practice. However, self-study carries an expectation that there is a search for evidence from which practice might be interrogated. Without pushing the boundaries of knowledge about teaching and learning and without considering carefully the evidential basis that guides thinking and decisionmaking, change is less likely to be enacted.

Sometimes, evidence may be close at hand but difficult to uncover for the most common aspects of practice may simply go unnoticed – by the teacher. Choosing to pay attention to the ‘taken-for-granted’, deciding to adopt an open-mind to situations, and, searching for alternative frames, are ways of modelling a reflective stance. Acting on evidence is a tangible way of illustrating responsiveness to a need for change. Again, such approaches may be enhanced through a focus on self-study. Dinkleman (1999) learnt about his practice while teaching a social studies methods course:

“... as the class moved away from a discussion of the appointed topic, multicultural education, and toward a forum for airing grievances with the course, one class member began her contribution by saying, “I don’t feel safe in this classroom...” and burst into tears. I was taken aback... That our classroom had become a less than welcoming environment for some was an unsettling sentiment I had detected in the prior weeks, but try as I might to figure out what was so threatening about our class, I had few answers” (p.1).

Dinkleman explains how two months later, during a research interview, he asked the interviewee why some students did not feel safe to speak their mind in his class. He was ‘stunned’ to find out that his ‘look’ was perceived by many in the class as being judgmental, thus stifling honest discussion within his class. He was spurred into seeking further evidence about this claim and, as a consequence, came to see his own practice through his students’ eyes. He was confronted by an alternative frame that highlighted a hitherto hidden aspect (to him) of his practice.

However, and importantly, he did not draw away from the situation. Rather this revelation drew him closer to his practice in ways that encouraged him to examine his taken-for-granted assumptions about his teaching as he began to develop his understanding of teaching in concert with the expectations he had for his students' learning about teaching. In terms of the development of a pedagogy of teacher education, Dinkleman's experience must surely have been a critical incident in shaping his understanding of his practice.

### **3.1.1 Modelling**

In the self-study literature, 'practice what you preach' has consistently been highlighted yet it is easy to overlook that this statement carries much meaning beyond ensuring that teacher educators teach using the methods and approaches that they encourage their students to use – a lecture on running an 'interpretive discussion' does not seem to hold much promise for learning about the value of the teaching procedure! It seems reasonable to assert that modeling (practicing what one preaches) requires a commitment to involving students and sharing insights into all aspects of pedagogy and highlighting how the classroom is a site for reflection and inquiry. Thus, modelling should not be seen as a euphemism for mimicry ("teach as I teach") or the simple delivery of a range of teaching procedures. Modelling carries the realization that within a pedagogical experience there are many 'seen' and 'unseen' aspects that may influence a student's understanding of practice.

It is perhaps easy to confuse the notion of modelling with views of 'good teaching'. However, I would argue that *all* practice encompasses modelling for there are issues and concerns pertaining to pedagogical experiences regardless of the perceived success. Creating possibilities for 'unpacking' practice is therefore important in offering insight into experiences in ways that might help student-teachers better understand what is happening in pedagogical situations and why. Modelling the doubt, perplexity, uncertainty and risk-taking that encompasses the problematic nature of practice is important in teaching about teaching. Such modelling is invaluable in offering a 'close-up' of the seemingly smooth practice of experienced teacher educators for colleagues and student-teachers alike. For example, consider the response (below) of one teacher educator reflecting on the practice of her colleague:

"Most times I really believed that you had planned in advance what was going to happen and that you knew what you were doing and why. I didn't attribute the same level of risk to your actions as I did to mine. I guess I assumed that you were actually taking few risks,

because I assumed that because of your experience you more or less knew what was going to happen as a consequence of your actions in a class. It surprised me to find out later that you were unsure, that you felt uncomfortable and that you wished sometimes to have taken other decisions. Now I wonder, “Is that how my teaching looks to my students?” (Berry & Loughran, 2002, p. 20).

Modelling is also about creating spaces for student-teachers and teacher educators to dissect and discuss pedagogy and to allow their own practice to be the source of pedagogical experiences for such inquiry. Clearly then, all teaching involves modelling, not just the teaching that is intended to ‘model’ good practice.

### **3.1.2 Critical Friends**

A robust self-study should demonstrate how alternative views and interpretations have been taken into account in shaping one’s understanding of practice. Bullough and Pinnegar (2004) in fact describe a moral imperative to pursue contrary data.

This moral imperative is perhaps an unspoken but often implied aspect of self-study and is an imperative that winds its way through the work of many involved in the field and links to the importance of making the tacit explicit - whether it be of thoughts or deeds. Implicit understandings of practice need to be acknowledged and made explicit for all involved. This realization was exceptionally strong for Mitchell (1999) and Boyle (2002) whereby through their purposeful re-examination of their own practice, taken-for-granted assumptions that were not so evident before they initiated their inquiries became starkly apparent to each of them. Again, the need to make the ‘opaque workings’ of practice clear is important in shaping a pedagogy of teacher education.

### **3.1.3 Three ‘Levels’ of Self-study**

Self-studies commonly appear to be in one of three forms; they are about: oneself, collaboration, or educational institutions. Self-studies organized with a focus on oneself are those that explore the concerns, dilemmas, issues, and frustrations of teaching about teaching and are then an individual’s response to trying to better understand practice. Such self-studies may offer extensive detail about practice and the re-shaping of practice in order to lead the inquirer to new ways of conceptualizing his/her teaching about teaching. The large majority of self-studies may be categorized this way and these are perhaps the storehouse of ideas and

practices that offer access to the development of an individual's pedagogy of teacher education.

Collaborative self-studies appear to offer a different critical view of practice whereby the involvement of others is crucial in shaping not only the approach to self-study but also the outcomes. Hence, the ideas and understandings developed tend to be framed as 'learnings' that are intended to carry meaning beyond the initial context of the study. As collaboration has involved a form of validation and verification that impacts the nature of the outcomes in ways different to those of individual studies, and an explicit acceptance of an openness to contrary data shapes that which is learnt. Hence, the developing pedagogy of teacher education through these self-studies perhaps begins to fit with the notion of a 'shared' knowledge base of teaching about teaching.

Finally, those self-studies that focus on educational/institutional practices tend to offer insight into teacher education programs and practices in ways that are more distant from teaching and learning actions as they concentrate on the 'big picture' of policy and practice as a general shaping factor beyond the individual(s). These studies tend to question the foundational assumptions of teacher education programs by questioning the inability of institutional practices to change – often despite individual's desire to do so.

In developing an understanding of a pedagogy of teacher education, all three types of self-study are important. I would argue that the shift from an individual to a collaborative approach results in different forms and uses of knowledge as they serve different purposes. Further to this, the shift to institutional self-study tends to be as a result of the need for programs to 'practice what they preach' in terms of better responding to the needs of the educational community; rather than being 'comfortably numb' with the status-quo. Teacher educators tackling such studies are, perhaps, those who have grown in confidence about the value of learning from self-study and seek to explore new ways of enacting change at a different level (beyond that of personal practice).

### **3.2 Developing a Pedagogy of Teacher Education**

Korthagen has been an able ambassador in the growing push for the development of a pedagogy of teacher education (Korthagen et al., 2001) and his calls certainly 'ring true' with many involved in the self-study of teacher education practices. Self-study offers tangible ways of helping teacher educators link their teaching and research so that possibilities for an articulation of practice are better able to be realized through a sharing of teaching about teaching expertise and experience.

For me, thinking about a pedagogy of teacher education involves framing practice in terms of assertions. In the continued development of these assertions they are slowly being refined; as in this case, I attempt to draw clearer links between types of self-study, the ‘knowledge’ produced through each, and ways of conceptualizing a pedagogy of teacher education. I therefore offer the following assertions tentatively framed around the three features of self-study described in the previous section<sup>1</sup>. In so doing, I hope that they help others to carefully consider their professional knowledge of teacher education and to ponder how they might make that articulable and accessible to others.

### 3.2.1 Individual Practice

*Assertion 1: Learning about teaching needs to be embedded in personal experience.* Regardless of the site (university or school), student-teachers need their learning to be embedded in personal experience. If student-teachers genuinely ‘feel’ what it is like to teach and learn through authentic experiences, there is more likelihood that they will attend to the situation in personally meaningful ways. This is important in challenging the notion that learning through experience happens ‘best’ during the practicum and that learning of theory occurs at university. Creating a diversity of teaching and learning experiences for student-teachers in which they are actively involved is a focus that matters.

*Assertion 2: Start teaching as if you’re half way through the subject.* The ‘accepted’ wisdom about encouraging risk taking in teacher education classrooms is based on a building-up approach through developing an atmosphere of trust over time. An atmosphere of trust can be established immediately if teacher educators show that they are prepared to demonstrate their own vulnerability before asking student-teachers to do the same.

*Assertion 3: Be confident to be responsive to possibilities in learning experiences.* Some of the most powerful learning for teacher educators and student-teachers often comes from unplanned teachable moments (van Manen, 1991). Rather than prescribing and overly controlling the learning experiences, it is more important to create conditions for learning so that aspects of learning about teaching are more likely to be appropriate for the group (or particular individuals) at that particular time. Responding to the needs of individuals as they arise means that real and meaningful problems of practice must be apprehended and responded to. Since such moments cannot be, or are not, necessarily planned in advance, they require expertise

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<sup>1</sup> The grouping of these assertions under each of these headings is tentative in that it is difficult to allocate any of these assertions categorically to any particular grouping. Rather, they are organized this way as an indication to the ‘major’ thrust of the assertion in terms of the heading to which it is allocated. The grouping is not a definitive science.



on the part of the teacher educator to recognize potential teachable moments and make on-the-spot decisions about how, or whether, to respond.

*Assertion 4: An uncomfortable learning experience can be a constructive learning experience – risk taking matters.* Powerful learning occurs when there is some discomfort in the learning experience. This is almost inevitable if teacher educators want to help student-teachers see what they can not yet see in their own practice. Making decisions about what aspects of others' teaching to highlight is risky business. It is imperative that teacher educators' actions do not belittle or humiliate student-teachers, but, at the same time, it is important for them to feel uncomfortable enough about their practice to begin to examine the implications of their teaching decisions and actions. For the teacher educator, a constant reminder of the sense of vulnerability of student-teachers in such positions is crucial. Just as student-teachers may experience 'heightened sensitivity' during an uncomfortable learning experience, so the teacher educator should be purposefully sensitive.

*Assertion 5: Articulating personal principles of practice helps in better aligning practice and beliefs.* Understanding oneself is important. Developing and articulating one's own principles of practice offers one way of reflecting on the purposes and intents of teaching and learning situations and offers a framework for student-teachers to do the same. The development of principles of practice can be very important in helping a teacher educator reflect on their teaching intentions and their 'real' teaching actions. Attempting to remain true to one's principles of practice is an imperative in striving to 'practice what you preach'.

*Assertion 6: Teaching is about relationships.* Building relationships begins with a genuine concern to listen, to be aware of the changing nature of the teaching and learning context and to be interested in, and responsive to, the needs of student-teachers. Teaching involves consistently working at developing and maintaining relationships such that interpretations and actions in respect of (at least) honesty, trust, reliability, commitment and credibility continually recur in the building of interpersonal relations.

### **3.2.2 Collaborative Learning**

*Assertion 7: Student-teachers enter teacher preparation programs expecting to be told how to teach.* Teacher educators are constantly faced with finding a balance between responding to student-teachers' 'real need' to develop their skills of teaching and to empower them to be active learners and developers of their own teaching. This is difficult for many (student-teachers and teacher educators) to recognize and reconcile as they have a script of teaching that has been shaped by their learning through an *apprenticeship of observation* (Lortie, 1975). Experiencing the value of

developing variations and extensions of others' teaching ideas and approaches is important in facilitating a shift from the search for recipes for teaching to individually meaningful and purposeful pedagogical reasoning.

*Assertion 8: Student-teachers' needs and concerns shift during teacher preparation and the program should be responsive to these changes.* Self, task and impact concerns affect what student-teachers are ready to 'hear and do' in the development of their teaching skills and ideas. Ensuring that teacher preparation responds appropriately to these concerns while still creating challenges that push participants intellectually is an important component of any teacher preparation program.

*Assertion 9: The transition from student to teacher is complicated by situations that create cognitive and affective dissonance that need to be acknowledged.* Student-teachers are consistently confronted by issues that challenge their practice as they learn about how they are constructing their images of themselves as teachers. This has both cognitive and affective components and both need to be acknowledged. Continually seeking to balance the cognitive and affective domains is important in shaping learning and development of one's own practice.

*Assertion 10: Quality learning requires learner consent.* Teachers can not mandate learning. Teaching creates opportunities for learners to choose how (or if) they will engage in learning and how they will construct their understanding through such experiences. Teacher educators therefore need to pay careful attention to creating teaching and learning experiences that encourage students to be engaged in learning about teaching.

*Assertion 11: Modelling is crucial – student-teachers learn more from what we do than what we say.* If there is a commitment to modelling, student-teachers will continually be offered possibilities for experiencing learning about teaching in ways that give them real choices about the value of different approaches to, and procedures in, practice. Modelling is not simply 'doing' good teaching or using the teaching procedures and approaches that one advocates student-teacher to also use. Modelling occurs in all aspects of teacher educators' practice – modelling is not always positive!

*Assertion 12: A shared experience with a valued other provides greater opportunity to reframe situations and confront one's assumptions about practice.* Teaching with a trusted colleague means that both teacher educators and student-teachers feel a little braver to publicly try things that they might not try when working alone. The meaning and status of the knowledge gained through sharing such public experiences leads to more powerful learning than that which accompanies 'telling as teaching'. Shared experiences also give 'permission' to risk that which may be perceived as failure (when working alone) in order to extend the boundaries of practice through the support and 'critique' of a valued other. Shared responsibility for

planning, teaching, and debriefing of experience is a catalyst for valuable learning through experience in ways qualitatively different from doing the same alone.

### 3.2.3 Institutional Mores

*Assertion 13: Challenging “telling as teaching” must occur at a personal level if the rhetoric of teacher education is to be real for participants.* Myers (2002) states: “I have been troubled by what I see as the apparent reluctance of many fellow teacher educators to use self-study to reform their work of educating teachers. For some, the stumbling block seems to be the very activity of serious and thorough self-study of their personal practice. They just do not look at what they do professionally in a probing and critical way. For others, they study their own work and themselves in that work well, but they do not take the next step of expanding that self-study beyond themselves to include their teacher education colleagues and the programs in which they and their colleagues work. ...Teacher educators appear to be ready to study others’ teacher education practices, but not their own or those of the programs in which they conduct their practice of educating teachers” (p.130). From Myers’ argument, it seems reasonable to suggest that individuals need to change before programs change. Self-studies then need to simultaneously be enacted at individual, collaborative and institutional levels in order for the necessary understanding of practice to be translated into ‘global’ actions across a teacher education program.

*Assertion 14: Teacher education programs should be coherent and holistic.* There appears to be a tendency for teacher education programs to be organized around two common curriculum perspectives. One is that of ‘foundation subjects’ that generally comprise aspects of educational psychology and sociology. The other is that of ‘method’ subjects that generally comprise the school subjects or content areas in which student-teachers specialize to teach. In ‘traditional’ teacher education programs there is a major distinction between these two curriculum areas, often distinguished not only by the nature of the teaching, but also the perceived status of the teachers in each. For example, foundation subjects may be perceived by some to carry greater ‘academic rigour’ as they tend to be coordinated by tenured staff. Method subjects tend to be viewed as ‘hands on and practical’ and are often taught by school teachers of that subject. Within each of these two curriculum areas there may be some points of commonality, but across both there is usually little if any linking. Hence, the teacher education curriculum tends to be comprised of a number of discrete boxes packaged separately to make up a larger parcel. Programs therefore tend to be viewed as comprising separate and distinct areas rather than as

coordinated and coherent programs with clear over-arching, inter-linking intents, purposes and practices.

*Assertion 15: Teacher education programs need to acknowledge and value the important differences between teaching and education as disciplines in their own right.* Teacher preparation involves an important interaction between the nature of the disciplines of education and teaching. The common focus on teaching as a vocation and the underlying concern for student-teachers to learn to ‘manage teaching’ often masks the importance of the distinction between the specific knowledge within each discipline. Knowledge from the discipline of education is easily under-valued if it is not viewed by participants as directly related to doing teaching, and the discipline of teaching is often misunderstood as the simple development of a technical competency of teaching skills in the rush to learn to ‘manage teaching’.

*Assertion 16: Teacher preparation is, by definition, incomplete.* Teacher education is a starting point in a career long process of learning about teaching. Teacher preparation should not be seen as an end unto itself. Teacher preparation should be a testing ground for experimenting with and developing an understanding of the complex world of teaching and learning. Encouraging collaboration and valuing shared experiences is important in supporting this approach to development in teacher education. Recognizing that teacher education must, by definition, be ‘incomplete’ (Northfield & Gunstone, 1997), is an important issue at the heart of understanding many of the aspects of teacher preparation, especially for the main stake-holders: student-teachers, teacher educators, and the teaching profession generally.

*Assertion 17: Student-teachers are teachers, learners and researchers.* There is a tendency in teacher education for the focus on the acquisition of teaching skills to overshadow the importance of student-teachers as learners and researchers. Student-teachers develop deeper understandings of teaching and learning when they research their own practice and are invited to adopt a student-teacher as researcher stance (Loughran, 2002). The acceptance of the need for such a perspective can be somewhat challenging for teacher educators as the ‘source of knowledge’ and impetus for change clearly resides with the student-teacher rather than the teacher educator per se. Encouraging a student-teacher as researcher stance is important. What is learnt as a result may not necessarily be ‘new’ from a teacher educator’s perspective, but it is new and personally meaningful from a student-teacher’s perspective.

*Assertion 18: Teacher education requires a commitment to researching teaching and teaching research.* “We hear the voices of university researchers, of law makers, and of policy analysts, speaking about what teacher educators do or fail to do, but we do not often hear the voices of teacher educators themselves” (Fenstermacher, 1997, p. viii). Fenstermacher

was conscious of the need for teacher educators to ‘take control’ of their own research agenda. Teacher educators research aspects of teacher education practices that can only be performed by those involved in teaching about teaching. Hence, the relationship between researching teaching and teaching research in teacher education is important in advancing both teaching and teacher education and encouraging all participants to better value the nature of their work.

## 4 CONCLUSION

The title of this chapter is *Knowledge Construction and Learning to Teach about Teaching*. My contention is that through a self-study approach (particularly, but not exclusively), teacher educators can begin to ‘unpack’ the complexities of teaching about teaching in ways that might lead to a deeper understanding of teaching and learning about teaching. One tangible outcome may then be a personal construction of knowledge of practice. However, there is a need to extend personal knowledge construction in ways that add to the developing ‘knowledge base’ of teacher education. For too long, the knowledge base of teacher education has gone largely unrecognized and undervalued partly due to the tacit nature of the knowledge of teacher educators’ practice but also because (for a variety of reasons) many of those involved in the work have found it hard to be heard in the ‘hallowed halls of academia’.

The challenge for all of us involved in teacher education is to begin to look into our practice with ‘new eyes’ and to find ways of creating learning about teaching opportunities for our student-teachers that are meaningful in their development as professionals. This is not necessarily an easy task, but it is an essential task. In responding to this challenge, a major benefit is that by moving beyond the development of understanding and knowledge for oneself, greater opportunities arise for teacher educators to describe and articulate this knowledge and expertise so that it can be valuable for others to learn from and build upon. Such development offers new opportunities for the growth of a pedagogy of teacher education and, in so doing, may help to raise the status and value of teaching and teacher education in the academy.

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## Chapter 2

### **SHIFTING STORIES TO LIVE BY**

*Interweaving the personal and professional in teachers' lives*

D. Jean Clandinin and Marilyn Huber

#### **1 INTRODUCTION**

Teachers teach what they know. Teachers teach who they are. Teachers teach what each situation, each encounter, pulls out of their knowing. These ideas are part of a program of research that has been ongoing for more than 20 years, a program of research that has defined teachers as knowers: as knowers of themselves, as knowers of children, as knowers of situations, as knowers of subject matter, as knowers of teaching, as knowers of learning. Connelly and Clandinin (1988) define teacher knowledge as:

“a term designed to capture the idea of experience in a way that allows us to talk about teachers as knowledgeable and knowing persons.... Personal practical knowledge ... is in the person's past experience, in the person's present mind and body, and in the person's future plans and actions.... It is seen and found in our practices” (p.25).

This understanding of teacher knowledge highlights the ways a teacher's knowledge is interwoven with a teacher's life, not separate from a teacher's life. We see teacher knowledge “in terms of narrative life history, as storied life compositions. These stories, these narratives of experience, are both personal – reflecting a person's life history – and social – reflecting the milieu, the contexts in which teachers live” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999, p.2).

In thinking about teacher knowledge as storied life compositions, we need to consider the kinds of contexts in which teachers live. Because a teacher lives both in and out of classrooms in school and both in and out of schools, we attend broadly to the contexts in which teachers work and live in schools and to the contexts in which teachers live outside of schools. A



metaphor of a professional knowledge landscape helps represent the complexity of school contexts.

“A landscape metaphor ... allows us to talk about space, place, and time. Furthermore, it has a sense of expansiveness and the possibility of being filled with diverse people, things, and events in different relationships. Understanding professional knowledge as comprising a landscape calls for a notion of professional knowledge as composed of a wide variety of people, places and things. Because we see the professional knowledge landscape as composed of relationships among people, places, and things, we see it both as an intellectual and a moral landscape” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995, pp.4-5).

In this way the landscape is seen as narratively constructed: as having a history with moral, emotional, and aesthetic dimensions. It is storied. While initially Clandinin and Connelly attended to the professional knowledge landscape with its in- and out-of-classroom places, shaped by secret, sacred and cover stories and filled with stories of teachers, teacher stories, stories of school and school stories, they recognized that teachers also lived on out-of-school personal landscapes. These off-the-school landscape stories also shape teachers’ personal practical knowledge (Clandinin, 1986).

## **2 NARRATIVELY LINKING TEACHERS’ KNOWLEDGE, CONTEXTS AND IDENTITY**

Attending narratively to a teacher’s personal practical knowledge, composed and lived out across the temporal span of a teachers’ life and within the multiple storied contexts in which a teacher lived and continues to live, drew Connelly and Clandinin to consider questions of teacher identity. Drawing on Bateson (1994), Carr (1986), Coles (1989), Heilbrun (1988) and Dewey (1938), they developed a concept of stories to live by, a way of understanding how knowledge, context and identity are linked and can be understood narratively (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999). In this way teachers are understood as living storied lives on storied landscapes, landscapes both in and out of schools, landscapes both past and present. Who people are is intricately interwoven with the lives they live and with the contexts in which they compose them.

A teacher’s identity is understood as a unique embodiment of his/her stories to live by, stories shaped by the landscapes past and present in which s/he lives and works. We do not intend to suggest a unitary smooth identity. Stories to live by are multiple, evolving, shifting, and contradictory. Over the course of a life, a teacher’s story to live by is in flux, shifting as new

situations are experienced, as new subject matter is taught, as new children are encountered, as new colleagues arrive, as new policies are enacted, as a teacher's life in school is lived. However, a teacher's story to live by is also in flux, shifting, as s/he finds new life partners, has and raises children, shifts in socio-economic status, loses parents, friends, colleagues, attends to larger socio-political events and so on. Clandinin and Connelly wrote something of this as a sequence of stories to live by on the professional knowledge landscape using Geertz's (1995) metaphor of a parade. Geertz wrote: "change, apparently, is not a parade that can be watched as it passes" (p. 4). Initially, Clandinin and Connelly's focus was mostly on teachers' and researchers' lives on the professional knowledge landscape, rather than their lives off the professional knowledge landscape. They wrote:

"the changing landscape and teachers' and researchers' professional identities, their stories to live by, are interconnected. Just as the parade changes – the things, the people, the relationships, the parade itself – as it passes, so, too, do teachers' and researchers' identities need to change. It is not so much that teachers and researchers, professionals on the landscape, need new identities, new stories to live by: they need shifting, changing identities; shifting, changing stories to live by as the parade offers up new possibilities and cancels out others" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999, p.131).

This focus on teachers' stories to live by within an ever changing parade draws our attention to what possibilities or changes have been offered up. One possibility that the parade has offered up are more diverse students. It is the diversity of the children that we teach that, in part, sets the research puzzle for this paper.

### **3 AN EMERGING RESEARCH PUZZLE**

We intentionally chose the idea of diversity rather than pulling on one or another thread of experience. As we thought about diversity, we did not begin with a formalistic category of diversity based on culture, economics, religions, languages, abilities, sexual orientations, or family structures. As Trinh (1989) notes, categories leak. Our interest was in inquiring into knowing diversity as it is lived, told, retold and relived in stories. Diversity lets us attend to the diverse cultural heritages, cognitive ability ranges, socio-economic statuses, genders, physical abilities, religious beliefs and so on that shape children's lives. Rather than pulling one thread forward, say, for example, cultural heritage, we attend more broadly to the diversity of

children's experiences and to the stories children live, tell, retell and relive as we work alongside and come to know one another's lives.

The changing parade of the children we meet each day over our teaching lives makes us attentive to how our stories to live by have shifted. We want to understand more about how teachers come to live lives which make them attentive to children of diversity, children whose life story lines are different from the story lines that they live. We realized our knowing, our stories of who we were, had shifted and changed, partly because of the contexts in which we found ourselves and the people with whom we came to live in relation.

We saw ourselves as learning to live and tell different stories of who we were, stories shaped in our early childhoods, in our school experiences, in our teacher education programs and by the children, families, teachers and contexts in which we worked. Understanding our knowing as personal practical knowing shaped and reshaped by our experiences both on and off school landscapes makes us attentive to the intertwining of the personal and the professional in our teaching lives.

This attentiveness to who we are as teachers and to what we know as an unfolding process across our lives as teachers and within the personal and professional spaces in which we live and teach brings us again to puzzle over how we have come to know who we are as teachers of children of diversity. We wonder how other teachers have come to know themselves as teachers of children of diversity.

## **4 FINDING TEACHERS INTERESTED IN THIS WONDER**

We are currently engaged in an eighteen month long inquiry with teachers, children and families in an urban elementary school in Western Canada. We are engaged in intensive participant observation work with children, teachers and families in four classrooms and with four additional teachers in the research reported in this paper.

### **4.1 Composing Field Texts**

The four teachers, Jeanette, Jim, Sally and Suzanne<sup>1</sup> were interested in sharing our inquiry into the ways their stories to live by had shifted over

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<sup>1</sup> The names of the participating teachers, other individuals, and schools and places are pseudonyms.

their careers and in the interwoven nature of the personal and the professional in their stories. Because we are in the school as part of a team of researchers, we interact with the four teachers in the staff room, in offices and hallways and at school wide events. However, the main field texts (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) for this paper were the transcripts of a series of conversations with each participant. Conversations ranged from one to three hours and participants were seen from two to four times each. We met in our homes, in offices and in school spaces. The audio-taped conversations allowed us to explore the complexity, the multiplicity and the reflexive nature of our lives as teachers and researchers within the three dimensional narrative inquiry space. The terms used within the narrative inquiry space are:

“personal and social (interaction); past, present and future (continuity); combined with the notion of place (situation). This set of terms creates a metaphorical three-dimensional narrative inquiry space.... [It] allows our inquiries to travel inward, outward, backward and forward and situated within place” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, pp.49-50).

Working within the space allowed us to travel back to early childhood and school experiences, slip forward to teacher education experiences and slide forward to present day experiences. We traveled inward to feelings and responses and outward to remembered events. We moved from home places to school places throughout our lives.

## **4.2 Research Text 1: Word Images of Stories to live by**

Multiple readings of the field texts were undertaken with attentiveness to the three dimensional narrative inquiry space. Initially we represented each teacher's story to live by as we read their stories of early childhood, school experiences as children and teacher education experiences. We did this through selecting words from the transcripts that created images of each teacher. We shared these accounts with all four teachers.

### 4.3 Research Text 2: Shifting Stories to live by

In another reading of the field texts, we selected moments where the teacher signaled a moment of heightened awareness, perhaps a moment of tension where s/he was awake to bumping up against some new possibility the passing parade offered up. These moments offered the possibility of a shift in the teacher's story to live by.

In this second reading of the field texts we wanted to attend to the moments where teachers' stories to live by bump into, rub against, and possibly disrupt either the teacher's stories to live by or the story of school as moments where scaffolding shifts in stories to live by are possible. For example, sometimes the bumps allow an experience with a child to scaffold a shift in a teacher's story to live by; sometimes the bumps allow an event to scaffold a shift in a teacher's story to live by. Sometimes the teacher draws on storied experiences from off the school landscape to affirm a story to live by or to scaffold a shift in their story to live by. Lyons and LaBoskey's (2003) work with scaffolding through the use of portfolios was helpful.

For each teacher participant, we composed word images of their early stories to live by and then show how their stories to live by are shifting. In this chapter we include partial accounts of two teachers, Jim and Sally.

#### 4.3.1 Jim: Word Images of Stories to live by

Middle to upper class white families  
 Living on expensive acreages  
 Most of the houses quite large  
 Ours an ordinary bungalow

Don't remember what happened in school  
 I can't picture anybody that wasn't white  
 Mostly white protestant and white catholic

Very shy and quiet  
 Teacher's pet  
 Goody goody  
 Didn't get into trouble  
 Scared to get into trouble  
 My parents said,  
 "If we get any news from school,  
 You are going to get it twice as bad at home"  
 That's how they raised their family  
 Traditional

My parents were old country  
Brought up with pretty strict upbringing  
Father the head of the household  
You don't talk back  
You don't lip off  
Do what you're told  
Do it quietly  
Do it properly  
When you're done you can go play  
I admire the job they did raising us  
I think they did the right thing

Spoke German at home  
Didn't speak English until I started to play  
With the neighborhood kids  
Probably around 3 or something  
[No] recollection of ever having trouble [speaking English when I  
began school]

Elementary school  
I don't think anybody knew [I spoke German]  
It never came up

First time I really remember was in high school  
I started taking  
German 10, 20, 30  
Everyone took the language they knew

First time I remember  
Seeing other kids who might have had similar traditions  
The same kind of upbringing

A lot of things I do  
At home, on holidays  
Still based in German traditions  
And the way things were  
When I grew up  
Like Christmas wouldn't be Christmas  
If I didn't have certain things that I did  
Or certain music that I listened to  
Or food that I ate  
It wouldn't be the same

Teacher education  
Programming for individual kids  
Individual needs  
Each child treated as an individual  
Never really told what a real classroom is like

Individual differences, to me, meant  
Some boys will like soccer  
Some boys won't  
Some girls will like art  
Some girls won't  
Never made really clear what kind of difference  
Not just academic differences  
But social and family differences  
Kids coming to school not being able to speak English  
Kids don't speak English at home  
Barely just get by in school  
All that was ever said was you need to plan  
Each child is an individual

Student teaching  
Didn't even consider where these kids were coming from  
I wasn't thinking that deep yet

Day care... beginning work  
Half the staff was male  
Day care parents  
University educated  
More open to different kinds of things  
Different ways of doing things  
More liberal

Ten years I worked there  
Never one problem with a parent  
Questioning why I was working  
With little kids  
People assume  
A man working with little kids  
Must be a pervert or a pedophile  
There must be a hidden agenda

I was full time with the little ones  
Just blew some people away

Not friends  
Family was pretty accepting

The daycare helped  
Seeing what kind of differences there are

The most evident narrative thread in our conversations with Jim was one of learning to belong in school, in his community. While he recognized that he was different because he spoke another language, he kept this invisible as he learned to fit in at school. His parents lived a story of school in which children were to learn, to obey and to respect their teachers and to do well. This was the family narrative for children at home and at school. Jim lived this story and, as he did so, he quietly fit in without making his German language and German traditions visible outside the home. In high school he became aware other students may have shared his German language and cultural upbringing. While he learned the rhetoric of treating children as individuals in teacher education, he did not experience how he might teach in this way. With his own school experience of fitting in to whatever the dominant story of school was, he knew only that there might be superficial differences with respect to student preferences. Not until he began work in a daycare did he begin to question his stories to live by and to wonder about the diversity of children's lives and what that might mean for him as a teacher. It was then that he began to attend to diversity in a "deeper" way. He did awaken, however, to how others might story him as a male primary school teacher and daycare worker. Supportive friends and family sustained him as he struggled to live on a professional knowledge landscape that questioned who he was as a male teacher of "little kids".

#### **4.3.2 Shifting Stories to live by: Jim**

We draw on two stories from our field texts with Jim where we learn something of how his stories to live by are shifting. In the first Jim tells of his experiences with young children who speak a first language other than English.

"I know sometimes some of my East Indian kids in my classroom they'll hang out together and speak Punjabi together and then when it comes to conference time, the parents will ask me, "Well how are they doing with their English?" and I'm saying, "Well you know what? They're not practicing it enough because they don't do it at home and then here the only English they're hearing is mine." (Transcript, December 16, p.21).



This fragment of transcript drew us back to Jim's stories of his experience as a child who spoke another language. As he told of his childhood experiences, he said he began to speak English when he went outside to play with his friends. While his family narrative was one where the German language and cultural traditions were sustained at home, another family narrative shaped Jim's school experience. He knew as a child he had to do well at school and not cause trouble. As a child he must have learned and practiced English enough to do well at school. His story to live by, that is, to fit in and do well at school by keeping his German language and heritage invisible, is not one that seems to work for his students of East Indian heritage. He finds himself foregrounding the plotline of doing well and fitting in by telling parents to have their children speak English at home. As his own story to live by collides with how he stories his students who are speakers of English as a second language, he restories his own story of keeping his cultural heritage and language at home and recommends a different story to the parents.

In the second transcript fragment, Jim again wonders how different families' cultural and religious narratives shape children of diversity.

“Every month we do this thing called Chicken Soup with Rice and every month there is a poem about chicken soup with rice. We have chicken soup with rice at the beginning of every month. All the primary kids do it and there is a poem that goes with it and there is a story and they sing the poem and all of this stuff. It is just sort of a fun thing to do. But a couple of my East Indian kids don't eat meat so they can't have the soup. So I always offer them crackers but they are sort of left out and I feel bad for them. It must be hard for them too because I'm sure they probably don't understand why, and they know they can't have it because they would say “I can't have that” but they probably don't understand really what the significance of it is for them. They just know that they are not getting it and all the other kids are. But I feel bad for them because they are missing out.”  
(Transcript, May 5, 2003, p.34).

Here Jim tries to make sense of his stories to live by as a teacher of children of diversity when their cultural and religious beliefs bump up against school stories, stories he is organizing and promoting as a teacher. In Jim's childhood school experiences, his cultural understandings and differences lived smoothly alongside the dominant school stories and, at times, created places of belonging. Now, the Chicken Soup with Rice activities, activities designed to be fun and to build community in the primary grades, are causing some children of diversity to be excluded. As we attend to the narrative thread of learning to belong that is woven throughout

Jim's story to live by, we see how he is trying to live out this thread with the children of East Indian heritage by incorporating them in the song and poem activities and by offering them crackers. He wants to show the children possibilities for how they can live stories of belonging even though they cannot participate fully in all of the activities. We see him trying to scaffold a shift in the children's stories to live by in school, a shift that encourages them to learn to negotiate school stories and search for openings where they can belong. But, this experience is also scaffolding a shift in Jim's story to live by as teacher. Repeatedly Jim explores how the exclusion of the children causes him to "feel bad" and links his feelings both to not knowing if the children really understand why they are not allowed to participate and to how the children are "missing out." We know from Jim's stories how strongly he believes school should be a place where children feel they belong and we know from stories of his childhood that his sense of belonging as a student came from fitting into the school stories that surrounded him. Jim's tension shows us that he is not expecting the children of East Indian heritage to fit into the school story of Chicken Soup with Rice but, rather, that he is searching for ways to widen the school story so it can become a story where all children can fully belong.

#### **4.3.3 Sally: Word Images of Stories to live by**

Junior high Elementary school  
All white kids

All white  
High school  
Went to school with someone who wasn't white  
Didn't phase me in the least

I was Ukrainian  
That was different than anybody else  
That was what I knew  
[My parents] both Ukrainian  
Did our Ukrainian background

Dad was a teacher  
Taught in [inner city schools]  
Never a conversation around the dinner table

Mom talked a lot about the ladies who worked for her  
East Indian and Chinese  
I met them

Saw saris and all these different things  
 Staff parties  
 Potluck  
 Every kind of food under the sun

My brother  
 Best friend was Pakistani  
 Was just my brother's best friend  
 A non-issue in my family

[Our community] was pretty white  
 Only as far as I could ride my bike  
 was my experience

High school  
 Had a close group of two or three friends  
 Started to get really involved in Ukrainian dancing  
 Spent most of my time dancing  
 Went to school and left

University same thing  
 Never was diversity talked about  
 It was never anything brought to my attention  
 Elementary generalist. Minor was counseling  
 Even in counseling they didn't talk about diversity  
 Talked about kids with emotional difficulties  
 or academic difficulties  
 Just touched on that  
 That was it

As we attended to stories Sally shared about her childhood, school and teacher education experiences, we were drawn to the important place culture held in her stories. As a child, Sally's Ukrainian heritage was a central focal point in both her immediate and extended family. Not only was it celebrated within her family, it also made her "different from anyone else in her community." The plotline of celebrating cultural diversity extended beyond Sally's family and was lived out at her Mother's work place where staff parties included "every kind of food under the sun" and women of East Indian and Chinese heritage dressed in their cultural clothing. While Sally grew up with an understanding that cultural diversity was something to be celebrated, she also experienced ethnic diversity as a "non-issue." Perhaps it was for this reason Sally was not attentive to the lack of ethnic diversity in her elementary and junior high schools and in her community.

Sally's teacher education program did little to help her learn to attend more closely to the experiences of children of diversity. Here, diversity equaled children with emotional or academic difficulties and even that was "just touched on" in her university courses.

#### **4.3.4 Shifting Stories to live by: Sally**

Sally shared many stories that suggested possibilities where her story to live by shifted. The first occurred in her first year teaching in a grade one classroom in an elementary school with an ethnically diverse population. In the following she speaks of a moment of awakening:

"I was hired during the summer. I walked into [the multicultural school],... and the first day... got my class list... first name on my class list, Ananth Bandura or something like that. And there was Ami and Pav and Preet and Whammy... these wonderful names I couldn't pronounce worth beans. And all I remember is having so much fun meeting these kids... I could care less about anything other than they came in with big, huge hugs... We had so much fun together and they laughed at me trying to pronounce names because this is the first time that I had to go through a class list that didn't have your basic names on it. I started to meet some of the parents and it was [my] instinct to talk to the mother. And so as the parents would come in I'd introduce myself and... immediately [I would] talk to the mom and I noticed lots of grandmas were coming in and dropping off their little ones. I'm not really paying attention to any of this. And then my first conference in November, Ananth's family came in. Mom and Dad came in, sat down, so I naturally started addressing Mom. And every time I asked a question Dad would respond. Not Mom. Dad would always answer it. Okay fine... I just kept on talking mostly to Mom but Dad kept on responding. Then I finally clued in. Okay, this is a pretty patriarchal family... And I thought, "Okay I have to kind of shift a little bit here." So that's when I finally started to address more of my conversation to Dad... when I finally shifted my conversation [the mom] kind of relaxed into her role and I had my conversation with Dad.... The whole conversation kind of shifted. All of a sudden, I realized I'm addressing the right person, I'm doing the right thing, I'm in the right situation.... That was probably the first time that I realized that there are some cultural differences in the world and I'm in a situation where I need to start to learn some of these things." (Transcript, March 24, pp.6-7).

Here, Sally describes her first teaching position. She is excitedly looking forward to meeting the class and is initially startled when she gets the class list. The names of the children, mostly of South Asian origin, are unknown to her, not what she calls “basic names.” However, she knows the story of school, knows there are class lists, and when she meets the children, they seem like all children “with big, huge hugs.” She proceeds with her enthusiastic story of who she is as teacher and the children work to help her understand how to pronounce their names. Nothing in who she is as teacher needs to shift except she needs to learn to pronounce names shaped within another language and culture. She continues to live out her story to live by, a story in which both parents share equally in parental and professional jobs. In her story to live by, she assumes mothers play the most central part in children’s early years. She also lives a story in which the family that lives together is not an extended family so she does not attend to the parts grandmothers play in schooling. She continues to live what she knows from her own family narrative until the first parent conference. In the moment of meeting parents she begins to awaken to another cultural and family narrative. As she at first enacts her story to live by, she senses tension as her stories bump into the parents’ stories to live by. She notes the tension and in the moment struggles to shift, at first naming the tension as a result of a “patriarchal” family structure. She continues to search for a way to be respectful and eventually begins to live a new story with the parents. This moment of tension, this heightened awareness scaffolded the beginning of a new story to live by as she realized “there are some cultural differences in the world and I’m in a situation where I need to start to learn some of these things.” (Transcript, March 24, pp.6-7).

In other stories not included here, Sally tells of her experiences in a second school. There, she draws on her experiences in her first school as well as her personal experiences within her family and cultural narrative to awaken to ways to continue to shift her story to live by. It is the intersection of these experiences from her personal and professional landscapes that begin to scaffold a shift in her story to live by.

## **5 SUMMARY**

Attending to teachers’ accounts of their experiences of learning to teach children of diversity helped us see again the interweaving of the personal and the professional in teachers’ lives. Who they are becoming as people is intertwined with who they are becoming as teachers. In each of the four teachers’ lives, we see this intertwining. For example, we see this as we hear Sally draw on her childhood experiences to make sense of who she is becoming as a teacher.

Perhaps what was most interesting as the four teachers told of their lives of learning to teach children of diversity were the ways the teachers drew on who they were, their stories to live by, as they encountered diversity on their school landscapes. Sometimes they drew forward threads situated more closely with who they were off the school landscape, sometimes they drew forward threads shaped by experiences on school landscapes. Always the personal and the professional were entwined. As Bateson (1994) wrote: “life is not made up of separate pieces” (p.108).

Several things stood out as we attended to the four teachers’ accounts. A notion of identity scaffolding was helpful to think about how those shifts occurred in stories to live by. We noticed that change did not happen in an all-transforming kind of way but as each teacher encountered a situation, met a child, heard a story and began to use that moment as a trigger to restory who they were in shifting, evolving ways. For example, Sally used the experience of meeting children from different cultural heritages which she initially attended to because of their different sounding names to begin to shift who she saw herself as a teacher. At first she assumed she needed only to learn to pronounce their names and she could proceed to live out her story to live by. She then awakened, as she interacted with one child’s parents, to knowing the child’s family narrative was also a cultural narrative. She needed to learn more about the family story of school. As she awakened, she began to scaffold a new story to live by, one in which all children were not the same but were shaped by family and cultural narratives. She is in the midst of restorying who she is as a teacher of children of diversity, a restorying that occurs from the “overlapping of lives, the resonance between stories” (Bateson, 2000, p.243).

Something similar happens as Jim too begins to wonder about who he is as a teacher around a previously unquestioned practice, the sharing of a classroom activity. At first he saw this as a community building, fun activity. It has now become a moment for him to question who he is as a teacher of children of diversity. The initial wonder about the activity has begun a process of restorying who he is as a teacher. This process of shifting is not smooth and quick but is slow, uneven and a gradual evolving of a shifted story to live by, a story that draws forward some things from the past even as new understandings are added.

It is most often in moments of tension that the possibility of a shift in a story to live by is possible. We heard stories of tension that suggested that when something does not fit, does not slide seamlessly into who we are, we are most able to awaken to other possibilities. For example, as Jim notices that some children cannot have chicken soup, he feels the dis-ease, the tension that helps him see he needs to shift his practice. At first he gives crackers so the children of East Indian heritage do not feel excluded. Even then he feels uncertain, the tension not quite dissipated. He experiences an

ongoing awareness that something is not quite right. The something is something that leads to a gradual shift. He awakens to some aspects and then realizes there is more that needs to shift in who he is as teacher. It is in the moments of tension that we can perhaps become most attentive to the contradictions in who we are.

The teachers drew on their childhood and school experiences as they tried to make sense of who they were. As Greene (1995) wrote: “the narratives we shape out of the materials of our lived lives must somehow take account of our original landscapes if we are to be truly present to ourselves and to partake in an authentic relationship with the young” (p.75). Sally first looks to her childhood experiences with her mother's colleagues as to what it means to be of a different cultural heritage. Diversity initially meant *saris* and different food. Sometimes those familiar stories could be what holds a teacher locked into a certain story to live by. However, as we learned from these teachers, when the old story to live by becomes unstable and when tension results, such tension enables shifts in our stories to live by. However, sometimes it is only as we look back at our practices that we realize that who we are as a teacher has shifted. The scaffolding that enabled a shifted practice has occurred almost without our conscious attention to it.

This sense of stories to live by as the interweaving of the personal and the professional and as evolving, fluid and multiple draws us again to teachers' lives in school and in teacher education. Where are the spaces, we wonder, for this kind of questioning that will enable each of us to imagine other stories we might live by as we learn to live in relation with children of diversity. We need to make spaces in schools for the kinds of conversations that Jim might lead us to. How can his experience with the children's experiences with *Chicken Soup and Rice* create a space for a conversation about diversity? In her work with South African teachers, Pillay (2003) wrote: “these teachers experience their lives in a state of homelessness, constantly shifting and changing in the stance they adopt in the new situations in which they find themselves” (p.217). As we reflected on the shifting stories these four teachers experienced as they shifted from their certain stories to live by forged in their early years, their schooling and their teacher education to stories to live by reshaped by encounters with children of diversity, we too wonder about the feelings of homelessness that they might feel. One response is to stay fixed in who they are as teachers, secure that their story to live by is the only one. These teachers, however, are in the midst of shifting, changing who they are becoming as they try to stay awake to their sense that it could always be otherwise. We wonder where the spaces are for making sense of the tensions we and they feel and for imagining alternative stories for ourselves and schools where the stories to live by of children of diversity are honored. It calls us to reconsider the kinds of learning spaces we need to create for teachers, children and ourselves in

schools, spaces for imagining and beginning to live and tell our shifting changing stories to live by as we dance along in this parade.

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## Chapter 3

### THE CRUCIBLE OF THE CLASSROOM

*A learning environment for teachers or a site of crucifixion?*

Les Tickle

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

“But the most influential aspect of ecologies of practice seemed to be the *crucible of classroom experience*. It was there that innovations seem to have been tested, adapted, resisted, embraced, or ignored. It was there that things had to ‘work’. And it was there that a sense of the vocational commitment and reward of the teacher was most vividly expressed” (Stronach, Corbin, McNamara, Stark & Warne, 2002, p.124).

The ideas in this chapter have a long, as well as a very recent, history combining ancient wisdom with topical relevance for today’s intensely personal but also global teaching environments. The global aspects of those environments are manifest in the interconnectedness of economic interests, new communication systems, military conflict, human migration and political movements. The ecology of education is bound up with the world news on international relations and security. It resides in questions of cultural identity and allegiance to different faiths. The manufacture, trade, distribution and use of armaments, food, and energy on a global scale impacts directly but discretely on questions of what education and schooling are for, how they should function, and in whose interests. The same is true in relation to the destruction of and concern for the global as well as the local environment; in the existence of monopolies on the production, pricing and sale of drugs and of information technology devices and software, and so on.

Within that wrapper, the issue of what education is for, questions about how it should be organised and resourced, and debates about the role and power of teachers form a family of controversy. Within education, environmental forces show up directly as international comparisons and competitiveness in educational standards, seismic shifts in curriculum

ideology, and systemic disturbance in examination arrangements. They impact on the profession in the form of performance management, the imposition of multiple innovations, conflicting expectations, removal of professional authority, the denial of authentic intellectual experience, intensification of work, blame and lack of trust, doubt and uncertainty (Delors, 1996; Elliott, 1998; Smyth et al., 2000). Stronach et al. (2002) identify the direct impact on teachers' lives and work in terms of disorder, struggle, tension, dilemmas, contradictions, uncertainty, uneasiness, ambivalence, and the fragmentation of identities, resulting in their conclusion "that professionals walk a tightrope of an uncertain being" (Stronach, Corbin, McNamara, Stark & Warne, 2002, p.121). However, criticising many researchers before them, they argue that it is important to hold on to this perspective of tensions and contradictions inherent in the environment and in experiences of the classroom, rather than to seek to reduce or resolve them. This, they say, is the only 'hope of a politics that is *for professionalism*'.

In this chapter I want to explore those tensions, and that hope, in some detail. I want to see what it is that lies, or needs to lie, between the *crucible of classroom experience*, that buzz of teaching, and the classroom as a site of professional crucifixion, which Stronach et al.'s (and many others') data seem also to describe. The tension is by no means new. It was illustrated nicely when England's national teacher appraisal pilot project report in one of the six pilot local education authorities, Suffolk, was published under the title *Those Bearing Torches*, in the sense of lighting the way towards an optimistic future for teacher development. In response, Marion Dadds from Cambridge University published her evaluation of those same trials under the title *Those Being Tortured*, a reference to the actual experience of teachers being appraised in classrooms.

The difference is that the latter saw "politics as something done *to* human subjects, or done in order to *create* them" (Holstun, 2000, p.68; original emphasis). The former "encourages us to view politics as something done *by* human subjects in groups – a complex array of elective practices by which people can at times remake themselves and their own history" (*ibid*). That difference reflects Giddens (1991) concern with a long-standing question in attempts to understand human life, society, and social processes. That question is about the nature of the relationship between individual 'actors' who shape their own lives and social environments, and the already existing social structures which shape individuals' lives and experiences.

From one perspective it might be thought that teachers are simply culpable in their conformity, incarceration, self-torture, and crucifixion. Certainly the rock band Pink Floyd's view of teachers engaged in processes of mind control presents that challenge. Their 1983 video track *The Wall* is

haunting with its regimented ranks of goose-step-marching animated hammers accompanied by the lyrics:

We don't need no education;  
we don't need your thought control.  
Dark sarcasm in the classroom;  
teachers, leave them kids alone.  
Hey, teachers, leave them kids alone.

Social commentary like this 'from below' can have considerable emotional impact on committed professionals. So can recognition that students must submit to meaningless curricula and restrictive assessment and testing regimes. That adds serious disquiet about the education on offer in schools. The clash of pessimistic voice and optimistic intent can be found in both academic analysis (research) and phenomenal experience (classroom practice). They are articulated in work such as Anne and Harold Berlak's *Dilemmas of Schooling* (Berlak & Berlak, 1981), and Michael Huberman's (1993) *The Lives of Teachers*. They also occur in Gramsci's concepts of *professional* and *organic* intellectuals (see Becker, 1996), and Paulo Freire's (1970, 1972) activist educators. The Berlaks showed thoughtful primary school teachers wrestling to reconcile conflicting interests that were embedded in the very purposes of schooling and their own educational ideals. Huberman showed teachers whose states of being ranged from deep demoralisation and disaffection to joy and satisfaction. Gramsci challengingly (and hopefully incorrectly) ascribed teachers to an intellectual underclass serving the interests of tradition and social stability through the repetitive and mindless transmission of stagnant knowledge. Freire (1972) on the other hand provides the hope that we might become activists engaged in the evolution of knowledge; interacting with society as well as with our students; struggling to change minds in public debate as well as classroom discourse; defending academic freedom and the voice of dissent, and fighting for decent standards of personal well-being and social justice (see Tickle, 2001).

I use these stereotypes dangerously, just to make the point, aware of the warnings that teachers' lives and work are more complex than that (see ISATT's research record, and many others). It should not suggest either that it is the fault of teachers that we might be an underclass trading unworthy goods, but it does raise awareness of our contrary, unstable and potentially damaged and damaging states of being. Recently the author and ex-teacher Phillip Pullman (2003) commenting on England's national curriculum for teaching the mother tongue described the situation like this:

“(the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) thinks that reading consists of using strategies to decode, selecting, retrieving, deducing, inferring, interpreting, identifying and commenting on the structure and organisation of texts, identifying and commenting on the writer’s purposes and viewpoints, relating texts to the social, cultural and historical contexts. That’s it. Nothing else. That’s what it wants children of 11 to do when they read. It doesn’t seem to know that reading can also be enjoyed because enjoyment doesn’t feature in the list of things you have to do.”

He went on to summarise the requirements for writing, making lists of words, following a model paragraph, etc., and then observed:

“... day in, day out, hour after hour, this wretched system nags and pesters and buzzes at them, like a great bluebottle laden with pestilence. And then all the children have to do a test; and that’s when things get worse.”

He described classrooms as like prison cells with teachers and pupils locked helplessly inside. For many it is death row, so far as *being* human is concerned, or it is the site of their professional crucifixion. But how should we account for and understand such phenomena in what on the face of it should be a socially progressive and morally committed purposeful pastime for all humanity? More to the point, how can we respond with hope?

## 2 A HOPEFUL START

Abraham Maslow (1973) applied his ideas about self-actualisation to teaching, in a now obscure article entitled ‘*What Is a Taoistic Teacher*’. Central to the principle of Taoistic teaching is a view of “great hope for and trust in personal potential, the wisdom of self-choice, and a tendency to self-actualize” (Maslow 1973, p.150). The pedagogical implications are explicit: trusting learners, avoiding manipulation or indoctrination or shaping learners into some pre-determined form, in favour of uncovering potential and reaching “the fullest height that the human species can stand up to or that the particular individual can come to” (*ibid*, p.153). This presumes a concept of the educator who can be entrusted with responsibility to evolve consciousness, on the basis of their own achievements and continuing intellectual engagement. The implication for educators is put like this:

“the best helpers of other people are the most highly evolved, healthiest, strongest, most fully developed people. Therefore, if you

want to help others ... clearly one part of your job is to become a better person” (Maslow, 1973, p.153).

Bruner, Rogers and Maslow claimed that personal growth is achieved by simultaneously helping others to grow, through an interactive and reflexive process in which the educator, too, has essential self-actualising needs and potentials. While these are capable of being nourished by the educational process, they can also be thwarted by bureaucratic and structural ones. As Maslow put it long before the intensification of accountability and performativity in schools:

“As Taoistic trust develops in the educational enterprise, there would be more leeway given to teachers, less regard for centralisation, fewer orders coming from the rule book” (*ibid*, p.156).

With these sentiments in mind the idea of self-appraisal was adopted in many of my own in-service courses for teachers, who were invited to investigate deeply personal issues that were relevant to their lives – matters of personal substance. They were also supported in researching, examining, understanding, and developing their professional and pedagogical practice – matters of concern in the classroom and the school. In doing so, the teachers pursued a wide range of imaginative, complex and delicate self-generated, self-defined, and self-managed projects (see Tickle, 1999, 2001). For example, a young female teacher experiencing sexual harassment from colleagues and pupils alike sought to understand *their* problem, and to help them become better educated. A gay teacher who felt vulnerable lest his sexuality should become known, and thus was not participating fully in school life, sought to understand and overcome his vulnerability in order to contribute more fully to his community in the way he believed he should. An art teacher, frustrated that real art was excluded from his own life and his pupils’ experiences, established an experimental studio in the classroom where he practised his own work during lesson time as a role model for student activity. Many such projects emerged, coupled with evidence of surprise, and delight, on the part of teachers who participated in these courses (see Tickle, 2001).

However, as I have already indicated, the dominant national and international climate of teaching and schooling has increasingly pursued a ‘skills’ orientation with a tightly managed curriculum, associated mechanistic testing, and both national and international league tables of results. Teacher education has followed suit, fostering the normative pursuit of technical competence and classroom routine, in an international search for ‘standards’, to the detriment of the teacher as a person (Lipka & Brinthaup, 1999). The award and confirmation of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) in

England is based firmly on a system of teacher assessment under managerial control of specified, technical performance criteria with little mention of personal development (Tickle, 2000, 2001). The classroom is seen here as a place of performance by teachers, rather than a place of learning for teachers.

### 3 THE PRESENT CONDITION

I want to argue that the kind of continuous self-education advocated by Maslow is especially necessary in the light of contemporary adverse conditions affecting the teaching profession across the world. For the moment I have simply called this condition ‘globalisation’, a word that has come to represent the particularly harsh environment that currently affects schools and classrooms. It is an environment of uncertainty, tension, risk, and paradox (Delors, 1996), of ‘change forces’ as Michael Fullan (1993, 1999) called them. It is characterised in the wider world beyond schooling by what Giddens (1991) sees as the cross-currents of social, political, economic, military, and symbolic aspects of human endeavours. In addition to the characteristics cited earlier, some commentators (e.g., Elliott, 1998; Stronach et al., 2002) have noted that the consequences for education include phenomena such as:

- the penetration of market forces into public sector social policy and provisions, resulting in changes in funding mechanisms, management structures and practices, and competition for clients and resources;
- competing conceptions of curriculum and pedagogy, experienced as contradictions and ambiguities by teachers;
- the treatment of knowledge primarily as an exchange commodity acquired and traded in the market economy of schooling and employment;
- rapid technological innovations, increased momentum in the knowledge explosion, and a focus on ‘new output’ performances of students.

I have previously argued, following Smyth and Shacklock (1998) and Smyth et al. (2000) that the sum result implies the delivery of bureaucratically defined curricula by people low in the chain of command. In these circumstances teachers become disaffected from their labour and alienated from what is unsatisfying and meaningless work devoid of opportunities for creative self-expression. What is more it leaves little room for personal agency, for curriculum ‘voice’, or for engagement in *praxis*, the life-blood of contributory, collective, social well-being. The condition is said to leave teachers bewildered and demoralised as they cope with conflicts,

contradictions, and crises in schools, becoming de-skilled and de-professionalised in the process (Huberman, 1993). Stronach et al. (2002) sound a little less pessimistic. Observing disorder in the struggle and contest that is the contemporary site of teachers' professional identities, they focus on:

“A crisis of non-identity, frequently expressed as an uncertainty and uneasiness about identity, role boundaries and client relationships (which depict) dynamic and ambivalent aspects of situated performance (and teachers engaged in) mobilizing a complex of occasional identifications in response to shifting contexts” (p.117).

Or, perhaps, expressing the right to sell their labour in other circumstances, leaving the profession in droves or not entering it in the first place. Or participating in National Union of Teachers ballots to disengage from setting Standard Attainment Tests for 7, 11 and 14 year olds. Or continuing to be locked in and disgruntled by newly imposed punitive exit rules applied through the teachers' pension scheme, which now exerts a five per cent *reduction* in pension for each year of premature retirement.

These consequences of the present condition have coincided with movements among curriculum policy makers and reformers as far afield as Hong Kong (HKEC, 1999), Australia (NSWDET, 1998), Namibia (MEC, 1993), and England (TTA, 1999) at least in the rhetoric of school based curriculum development, teacher self-actualisation, and teaching as a research-based profession. But around that rhetoric the impact of globalisation continues, while behind the rhetoric there is a need to understand what self-education means for teachers. My own re-conceptualisation of the teacher as organic intellectual educator was a move towards that (Tickle, 1991). But to achieve it we would need to ensure that several central elements, or counter-conditions, are present in relation to our work and lives, including:

- an open discourse and development of understanding about the purposes of education;
- a desire to educate teachers as an intellectual resource and social force;
- the will to define and appreciate the profession according to educational criteria.

Each of these presumes that we want as teachers to make a difference to the course of events in society through the medium of education, making a difference for ourselves and our students. That presumption is not at all clear in the world at large, since those elements appear to have been lost in the face of the contemporary adverse conditions. But I believe they are worth striving for. However, that striving will depend on us satisfying the need to

understand our relationship with learning and with the processes of professional self-education.

On the face of it, then, the condition of globalisation conspires against processes of teacher *education* and professional dignity, leaving teachers with crises in schools and little space to develop in person (Lipka & Brinthoupt, 1999). Yet as Elliott (1998) points out in sentiments reminiscent of Giddens' reflexive citizenry, it also presents opportunities to respond with imagination. Here I want to propose that the imagination can be found in pre-modern cultural traditions. I will draw upon Clarke's (1997) notion of "ancient wisdoms that can be adapted and applied to the present condition". This is a search for a contemporary, constructive response to the effects of globalisation upon teachers, to be found in issues of self-identity, individual action, and communal well-being in ancient scriptures. Indeed thanks to Clarke's study of hermeneutic encounters between Asian and Western thought, I want to celebrate and enjoy the possibility of a neat irony. It is that in the face of globalisation's immediate and recent impact on teachers and students in schools, the constructive response can be found in an equally global but long-standing interaction between ideas of educational interest and importance.

#### **4 TEACHERS AS SELF-ACTUALISING INDIVIDUALS**

This is a difficult mission to imagine in the current contexts of bureaucratisation, enforced curricula, accountability, quality audits, inspections, performance pay, and that violence which is being done to the individual identities of teachers and pupils alike. Bryant and Jary (2001, p.126) measure the mission thus:

"Maybe Giddens is at times ... too sanguine on the potential for individual agency and people power and too inattentive to the structural constraints of modern global capital."

But it has to be imagined to realise a radical transformation of teachers' work. The human failings of mistrust; simplistic views of teaching; and the surrender to technical performance criteria would be the first targets for those who commend the possibility of finding a counterpoint position. In these terms, the current curricula characteristics are anti-educational and require action in the promotion of alternatives. At the core of that action is the aim to maintain an intrinsic interest in learning and in lifelong



development of the self among those who are the professional educators, towards, as Maslow put it:

“learning to be and become a human being, and a particular human being. It is the learning that accompanies the profound personal experiences in our lives...the unique instances, not the results of drill and repetition... (educational) moments... very poignant combinations of the emotional and the cognitive which leave insights that remain forever. In such experiences we discover who we are, what we are, and what we might become” (Maslow, 1973, p.159).

Thus he argued:

“If teachers are going to be able to open their pupils to peak experiences, they must first learn to recognise them and to nurture them in their own lives” (*ibid*, p.163).

The sense of it can be gained from Rogers (1983, p.145) description of some of the characteristics of the self-actualised person:

- not necessarily adjusted to his culture;
- not a conformist;
- not necessarily happy with his situation;

but:

- at any time in any culture living constructively;
- continuing to be him/herself;
- creatively adapting and surviving under changing conditions.

Radically, this brings the possibility of new and positive meaning to words like disillusioned, disaffected, uncooperative, subversive. Such characteristics might result from reactions to unacceptable conditions and lead to the independent career-long learning that some of us continue to crave on behalf of our profession (Smyth et al., 2000; Stronach et al., 2002; Tickle, 2000; Woods, 2002). The assumption is that the self-actualisation of teachers is essential for the well-being of the education service and the future of an educated society. For example, in the Hong Kong Education Commission’s (1999) *Blueprint for Education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* self-actualisation is a key concept. The Learning Age, a slogan used by UK policy makers, includes the desire for a citizenry equipped with the capacity for life-long and life-wide self-education, producing adaptable, flexible, versatile, courageous, imaginative, problem-solving citizen-learners (Woods, 2002).

Of course, these particular characteristics are neither universal nor fixed in time. As Bruner (1985) said, decisions have to be made at a personal and

local level as well as nationally and internationally about “what a learner should be in order to assure that a society of a particularly valued kind could be safeguarded.” He pointed out that those decisions are made according to value judgements about how the mind should be cultivated and to what end. But his argument is that whatever those decisions are, they must apply first and foremost to educators themselves, in order that they can in turn be manifested towards and transmitted to students. They should not simply be applied to, but generated by, teachers. And it seems that certain qualities of mind appeal to the concept of the self-actualising teacher. For example, for Woods (2002) such teachers would enjoy the magic, thrill, excitement, enthusiasm, joy, and accomplishment of their work. They will also be charismatic, self-confident, independent, inventive/creative, innovative/ingenious. They will have ownership and control of their circumstances and decisions; engage in work that is relevant and meaningful in educational terms; and be capable of orchestrating role conflict and dilemma resolution. In short, they will engage in *praxis*.

## 5 THE TEACHERS’ SELF

These (or whatever is valued, in Bruner’s sense) can be viewed as individual ‘self-characteristics’, what it is that is to be actualised by the person who is fulfilling the role of the teacher. But there is a common imprint in ideas about an *educational self* that is concerned with the growth of the capacity to learn continuously, as an essential element in the deployment of personal responsibility (Gadamer, 2001; Cleary & Hogan, 2001). The common imprint is one that includes self-motivation, self-confidence and self-learning developed, to use Gadamer’s term, in conversation with others and with one’s circumstances. The place of a conscious reflexive self working in a dialectical relationship (conversation) with others, with events, and with the environment is a central component of Taoist, Ch’an Buddhist, and neo-Confucian traditions. In this view, the content of consciousness is experience, the sum of information that enters the mind and is interpreted by it (though the self may not be aware of the process in the normal sense of being aware, or being self-conscious, equivalent to intuitive action and tacit knowledge). Constantly aspiring to move oneself forward constitutes a process by which the self is built and rebuilt through interaction with others and through a reflexive capacity applied to the self. This is the theoretical basis of Symbolic Interactionism (Cooley, 1902; Kohut, 1971; Mead, 1934) which sought to understand the process of social/self construction. It is the reflexive self that renders us capable of interpreting, judging, analysing and evaluating circumstances, the expectations which others ascribe to us, and the meanings which we place on

our experiences of the world, i.e., our own perceptions, interpretations, conceptions, knowledge, actions, beliefs, values.

It thus provides a mechanism of self-interaction, a capacity to address, respond to, and re-address our values, beliefs and perspectives. It gives us the capacity to plan and organize action with regard to ourselves as well as towards our circumstances as we perceive them. Through this process it is possible to engage with experience in ways which involve self-consciously forming and guiding conduct, or guiding and forming the values and beliefs that lie behind that conduct towards ourselves, others, and situations. Action in this perspective is constructed through reflexive capability, as distinct from some behaviour which might be driven by instinct, or by instantaneous and overriding powers of emotion, or by indoctrination, or coercion, or prescriptions of what we should do and what we should be imposed by powerful others. It is thoughtful, ethical, participative and intelligent action. McLean (1999, p.58) articulates the case in relation to school teachers like this:

“Images of self-as-person and self-as-teacher are critical to the process of becoming a teacher because they constitute the personal context in which new information will be interpreted, and are the stuff of which a teaching persona is created...”

The worth of different kinds of self-image in helping to author personal and professional development becomes a crucial factor in this process, as McLean points out, arguing that some images do not help teachers imagine themselves coping with ambiguities, or negotiating conflicting demands, or managing dilemmas (McLean, 1999). Or in some cases perhaps they do not see themselves as managing events and experiences that contribute to the creative re-construction of themselves. Yet:

“Experienced people are those who have learned from events in their lives and have learned because they were aware of their fallibility. That is, they have learned because they were open to the possible refutation of their beliefs and prejudices and could therefore revise or supplement them in a productive way” (Warnke, 1987, p.157).

The orientation offered by Taoist, Buddhist and neo-Confucian concepts of the self and of knowing invite us to look closely at what Eisner (1979) called ineffable knowledge and experience. Against the odds of rational positivism’s grip on Western educational research and on curriculum policy, teacher performance and pupil assessment, such radical and dissenting voices continue to be heard. Dadds (1996) has raised the tone of passionate teaching. Hargreaves (2002) has mapped the emotional geographies of it.

Neufeld and Kompf (2002) want the seductiveness of a rational science of teaching to be overthrown by theories of professional knowledge which directly confront “the body’s passions, not to mention those passions’ relationship to the teaching and learning process.” The experimental project of a science of teaching cannot be fulfilled, they say, because it is doomed by its “desire to somehow grasp and control the flux of experience” (*ibid*, p.52). Here there is an internal paradox: the challenge is to overcome the self in order to cultivate one’s true self, and ensure that the essentialist outer world of supposedly objective knowledge and existentialist inner extreme are both confronted. That can only be achieved, they argue, through one’s own striving, in ways that renounce the outer circumstances that impede development and by cleaning house through the ‘exhumation’ of personal bias.

## 6 A RESPONSE TO GLOBALISATION

If Gramsci *was* correct in ascribing teachers to the dead weight of tradition and the ossification of knowledge, this concept of the passionate self-educating teacher would indeed create a culture shock for the profession. If he was *not*, the shock waves should be felt from below by those who seek to control the minds of teachers. In short, to return to Holstun (2000) politics should be something done by teachers from within their classrooms, rather than something done to them from without. Gramsci’s challenge raises the question: do we have a profession made up of organic intellectual educators, or must we create one for the well-being of society? A further question is: can, and if so where can, the individual imagination play a significant part in re-creating that external world, as well as one’s own internal world?

I want to make a further visit to the ideas of Anthony Giddens (1991) and the work of J.J. Clarke (1997) in order to find some answers to those questions. Anthony Giddens’ work is a gem in the current array of ideas. His self-reflexive citizen, though subject to “disembedding and disempowering forces that threaten the self” also has “equally strong tendencies to re-embedding and re-empowerment” so that s/he can “shape and redirect personal and social events” (Bryant & Jary, 2001, p.116). Rather than the alienated, repressed, fragmented, or spoilt identities that post-modernists report, Giddens’ late moderns are potentially at least part of a new response to the impact of both local and global inequalities and obstacles to progress (*ibid*, p.121).

One example of this response is Hutton’s (1999) analysis of ways in which self-awareness means that people no longer simply accept their condition and their circumstances. Hutton cites the mushrooming of black

and grey economies as evidence of such trends. Neither Giddens nor Hutton overlook the evidence that suggests some forces of globalisation continue to outrun the powers of new responses, or that shows events are patchy; but they offer hope of social participation in processes of transformation. And their analyses alert us to the need to bear in mind the characteristics of an environment where that is possible – characteristics in which uncertainty and risk are endemic, and change is inevitable. What appeals here is the idea that the intellectual economy – the accumulation of intellectual wealth and well being among professional educators – might need to be based on a mushrooming of a black and grey knowledge economy. This idea is so nicely disrespectful of the dominant agenda of school effectiveness regimes, prescribed curricula, and normative testing, and so potentially subversive of the official currency, that I shall follow the idea up on some other occasion, elsewhere.

For the moment I want to hold on to the idea of praxis: educational engagement is the practical pursuit of what is good, bonding the discernment of right ends with deliberation about the right means of bringing them about (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Elliott, 1991). That is, learning is not just about understanding why the world is as it seems but also about the space in which we envisage how it could be different and carrying out actions to make it so. In this vein Wang Yang-ming's (1472-1529) co-existing worlds of objective study and intuitive knowledge are reconciled in his unity of knowledge and practice, in which to know and not to act is the same as not knowing. Wang regarded separation of the two as leading to the undesirable consequence of theory being unrelated to practice and of people knowing what should be done but failing to act. This concept of praxis is said to have had widespread influence in reform movements in China up until the present time, one example of which was Mao Tse-tung's contention (in *On Practice*) that theory and practice must go together to both acquire knowledge and to change reality (Chai & Chai, 1973, p.155).

From a different countenance, Buddhist tradition also reminds us that we constantly experience a changing self, as well as facing the inevitability of changing circumstances. This has the implication that individuals must learn to live with psychological as well as social change, for that is the nature of a reality:

“Reflection on the simple fundamental facts of our experience brings immediate recognition of constant change. ...the characteristic thing about phenomena is their dynamism. ...everything is indeed in a state of transformation. In each moment the future becomes present and the present past” (Wilhelm, 1960, p.18).

Here the accent is on keeping within the flow of change. Influence is achieved through a knowledge of the laws of change, which enable actions to be introduced into its flow rather than against it, and by recognising the moment for intervening. Ch'an Buddhism also emphasises wisdom and the ability to handle critical situations in practical application, with both mind and external environment in constant activity (Chai & Chai, 1973). In keeping with the Chinese love of paradox, the one thing that is unchanging is change itself and mental activity is in union with mental stillness:

“In this point of view, which accords the responsible person an influence on the course of things, change ceases to be an insidious, intangible snare and becomes an organic order corresponding to man's nature” (Wilhelm, 1970, p.22).

The questions then are about where the sources of change are located, and who or what controls the process of change. This is the imponderable: whether and to what extent teachers can operate in a managed environment or as environmental managers. Clarke (1997) takes up the discussion about different concepts of self and self-development and the notion of the 'radical impermanence' that Buddhism teaches, by placing becoming above being.

In summarising the consequent emphasis on transience and the value of the seemingly insignificant, on 'emptying out' as a path to wisdom rather than constructing and confirming identity, Clarke is keen to point out that this does not deny the existence of a conscious self, but it changes our view of it. It is a view that allows for, even encourages, de-construction and radical reflexivity. It appears as a personal, releasing, form of becoming. Giddens it seems, like the neo-Confucian Wang Yang-ming, prefers the idea of life-politics rather than emancipatory politics (Bryant & Jary, 2001), but my intuition is that they go hand in hand.

The central tenet of Ch'an teaching and the reflexivity crucial to Wang's neo-Confucian principles and practices has questioning of social issues and the transformation of personal perceptions as both purposeful and nicely disrespectful. As Wang put it:

“If words are examined in the mind and found to be wrong, although they have come from the mouth of Confucius, I dare not accept them as correct. How much less those from people inferior to Confucius! If words are examined in the mind and found to be correct, although they have come from the mouth of ordinary people, I dare not regard them as wrong. How much less those of Confucius!” (cited in De Bary, 1970, p.155).

With regard to school teachers in modern times, Stronach et al. (2002, p.30) “round up as many optimistic indicators as we can muster (as) the only hope of a politics that is *for* professionalism as well as about professionalism.” Their ground for optimism lies partly in what they see as an irresolvable, imminent and necessary conflict between workers required to perform within externally imposed conditions to meet prescribed targets, and educators entrusted to live with risk and creativity in pursuit of educational excellence. This gives us the task of creating new identities, of ‘re-storying’ our selves in and against the school effectiveness culture, centralised national curricula, and the globalising tendencies of the present time. They argue that if that culture does not self-destruct because it is so evidently anti-educational, then it is certainly ‘easily mocked’ and ‘vulnerable’ (p.131). The task of exploiting that vulnerability will require us to follow Gadamer’s (2001) demand that we take responsibility for building the capacity to self-educate. Gadamer, too, found inspiration in ideas emanating from south and east Asia (Magee, 1997) that offered hope of a constructive, global response to the present threats of a different kind of globalising tendency.

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## Chapter 4

# PRACTICE, THEORY, AND PERSON IN LIFE-LONG PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Fred Korthagen

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Looking back to the time when the first ISATT conference took place, major changes have taken place in the theoretical frameworks and concepts guiding our thinking on teaching and teacher education. In this chapter, I discuss some of these changes, and their relations to each other. First, I focus on different models for teacher education, and more specifically, on a description of the tenets of the *realistic model*. Next, I explain the shift in teacher education towards a more realistic approach by relating it to new views of the intrapersonal sources of teacher behaviour including the non-rational and unconscious parts of a teacher's functioning. These new insights clarify why reflection is so important for teachers, and lead on to a specific view of what aspects are important in promoting reflection, and help us develop a different view on the role of theory in teacher education. Finally, I broaden my holistic view on teachers and teaching, and introduce a model of levels of reflection that helps to integrate into teaching the professional and the personal. I recommend attention to *core reflection*, for example, reflection that includes the levels of personal identity and mission.

## 2 AN ANALOGY FOR TEACHER EDUCATION

In order to sharpen our thinking on the issue of pedagogy in teacher education, let us consider an analogy. The Netherlands has a few rivers that are economically important. For example, using the river Rhine much cargo from Germany is brought to Rotterdam, a European mainport. Navigating a

ship on these rivers is often difficult and dangerous. There are many turns, unexpected streams, and the rivers are usually crowded with both commercial and recreational traffic. Hence, the people navigating these ships need to be competent. Suppose we wish to develop an effective education for these skippers. How would we do this?

One approach could be to bring them into a building with a sign saying: "Institute for Skipper Education". Within this building, experts would lecture on topics such as steering a ship, engine techniques, river traffic rules, and of course also on more theoretical issues: some physics related to water and the characteristics of streams. Novice skippers would have to study the Skippers Handbook, with several chapters on these issues. After one year, they would have to pass an examination testing them on whether they have acquired the necessary knowledge, and after passing the exam, we would say: "Congratulations!" We would then send the new skippers to their ships and say to them: "Now apply all this knowledge to practice! Good luck!" Later, we would offer them some inservice courses on anchoring and navigating at night, or in fog.

This approach is the *theory into practice approach*, also referred to as the *deductive approach*, since the content is directly deducted from the available scientific knowledge. We have to be aware that the deductive approach is not so much characterised by lecturing, but that its basic feature is that the educator decides what it is that is important to learn, on the basis of the available body of knowledge. This is characteristic of the traditional approach to teacher education. Nowadays, many people are starting to have doubts about such an approach.

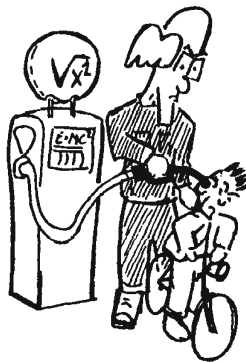


Figure 4-1. Knowledge transmission in education.  
(Drawings: Van Tartwijk; source: Wubbels, 1992)

We no longer believe in the possibility of a direct transfer of knowledge, and not only in teacher education. In all kinds of education, all over the world, the view of education depicted in Figure 4-1 is seriously questioned.

Somehow, something seems to be wrong if we still follow this approach in teacher education, where one would expect good examples of effective teaching to be shown.

Continuing the analogy, a second approach could be like this: we put the novice skipper on board of a ship. The educators, as experienced experts, offer a bit of advice and some tips (e.g., “stay away from the river banks!”) and then say: “Go! And call us if you meet any problems.” Some people in the field think that this is inadequate, and may advise an approach with the student first joining an experienced skipper, to observe how it is done. In either case, the approach is characterised as being *practice-based*, although we can also label it the trial-and-error approach.

I believe that in both approaches discussed so far, we ourselves, as teacher educators, *create* the gap between theory and practice. In the deductive approach, we do so by drawing too strongly on theory. In the practice-based approach we do so by giving practice too prominent a place. In both approaches, what Smith (2003, p.53) sees as educators’ basic challenge, namely to *link* theory and practice, is not adequately dealt with.

This brings us to a third approach. Let us start again with our analogy of skipper education. We could start by looking for a small river, not too crowded, but with sufficient challenges for the novice. Guided by an experienced skipper, the student can try to find his own way, with room for small experiments. Now and then, experts come on board to discuss questions and problems. In other words, the student’s own *concerns* serve as the starting point of the educational process. At regular intervals, the student reflects on his/her experiences together with other novices. Thus, under the supervision of their educators, students invent, or rather reinvent the best approaches to navigating a ship through a river. After some time, the novices will steer a ship on their own, and once a week the student skippers will gather to share experiences, to find solutions to problems, and to hear insights from experts that are connected to their own experiences.

### 3 THE REALISTIC APPROACH TO TEACHER EDUCATION

Characteristic of this third approach is a continuous commuting between practice and theory. In the case of teacher education, we call this the *realistic approach*. Its basic features are:

- working on the basis of real situations met with during teaching that have caused a concern in the student teacher;
- reflection by and interaction among the student teachers;
- guided reinvention;

- no Theory with capital T (a subject created by researchers), but theory with a small t (as a subject *to be created*, namely by the student teachers themselves; cf. Freudenthal, 1978, p.72).

The contrast between Theory (with a capital T) and theory (with a small t) deserves some additional explanation. It is related to a classic difference between what Aristotle named *episteme* and *phronesis*.

*Episteme* is characterised by the following features:

- it is aimed at knowledge about many situations;
- it uses general concepts;
- it is based on scientific research;
- it is *conceptual*: it helps us to understand many situations.

In contrast, *phronesis*:

- is aimed at concrete action, in a specific situation;
- focuses the attention on specific aspects of the situation (certain “cues”);
- is based on one’s own experiences;
- is *perceptual*: it shapes our perception of specific situations.

For example, the notion that feelings are important in educational settings is a principle that can be elaborated into a theoretical framework about relations between feelings and behaviour. This would mean that we have *episteme* about feelings, ideally a scientific framework. For practitioners, however, it may be much more important to become more aware of their own and their pupils’ feelings, while in the process of teaching. If they do develop such an awareness, and if this awareness starts to influence their behaviour, they have developed *phronesis*. Later in this chapter, I will further elaborate on this difference.

I can summarise the essence of the above discussion using the two dimensions along which we can see important changes taking place in our thinking on teacher education. They are shown in Figure 4-2. In teacher education all over the world, shifts are taking place from the top to the bottom of Figure 4-2, and from the left to the right.

The first, vertical, dimension has to do with the question of who is in charge of the learning. As already mentioned, constructivism has influenced a shift from the top to the bottom. There is also another important reason for this change in emphasis. If we want to promote life-long learning in teachers, we must develop their *growth competence*. Hence, we will have to invest in the development of their ability to direct their own learning, to structure their own experiences, and to construct their own theories of practice.

The second dimension is the dimension of the individual versus the group. In education, we have discovered the importance, for both pupils and teachers, of co-operative learning and the co-creation of knowledge. Hence, if we want schools to become communities of practice, with teachers further developing their own expertise together, we will have to help them get used to forms of collaborative or co-operative learning during teacher education.

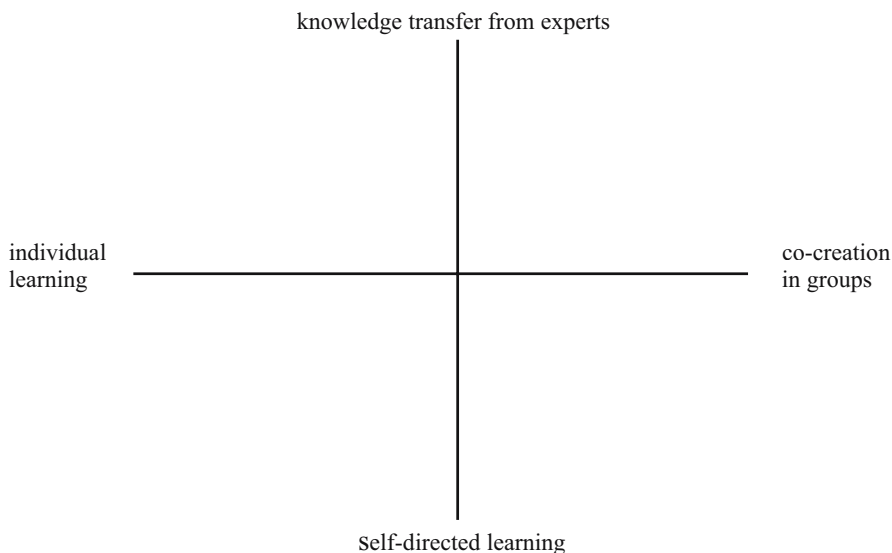


Figure 4- 2. Two dimensions of learning in teacher education.

#### **4 THE ESSENCE OF PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING**

The shift from the top left to the bottom right in Figure 4-2 is important for yet another reason, a reason grounded in new views on the sources of teacher behaviour. For a long time, especially around the time ISATT was founded, researchers believed that teacher behaviour was directed by teacher thinking, especially by the theories about teaching and learning in the minds of teachers (see, e.g., Clark & Peterson, 1986). If you believe in this assumption, it seems to be logical to use the traditional, deductive approach. As explained above, in this approach, teachers are introduced to 'useful' educational theories, with the aim of having them apply these theories in their teaching. However, serious doubts about the assumption have been raised. Many researchers have shown that teachers make a large number of instant decisions during their teaching (see Eraut, 1995), so that at least part

of these decisions have to be taken in an unconscious or semi-conscious way. Carter (1990, p.27) states:

“One of the major conclusions from this research tradition [the teachers as decision-makers tradition] was that prior assumptions about teachers' decision-making were often inaccurate. (...) during interaction, teachers seldom made logical choices among several different alternatives. Rather, their actions seemed to be largely governed by rules and routines, with decision-making in a studied, deliberative sense taking a minor role in their interactive thinking.”

According to Shavelson and Stern (1981), and Yinger (1986), such teacher routines are to a large degree based on habit formation. Talking about actions that we carry out spontaneously, Schön (1983, p.54) states: “We are often unaware of having learned to do these things; we simply find ourselves doing them.”

Dolk (1997) labelled the kind of teacher behaviour that occurs without much reflection and deliberate choice as *immediate teaching behaviour*. Korthagen and Lagerwerf (1996) consider such behaviour the result of an internal process, in which a dynamic conglomeration of needs, values, feelings, tacit knowledge, meanings, and behavioural inclinations all play a role. They call such a conglomeration a *Gestalt*. In their explanation of teacher behaviour, Korthagen and Lagerwerf not only emphasise the often unconscious sources of teacher behaviour, but also the non-rational aspects mediating between perception and behaviour. Using the analogy of the left and the right side of the brain, one could say that much teacher behaviour is not so much guided by the analytic, rational and verbal functions of the left hemisphere, but rather by the tacit, holistic, a-rational, and integral modes of information processing characteristic for the right hemisphere.

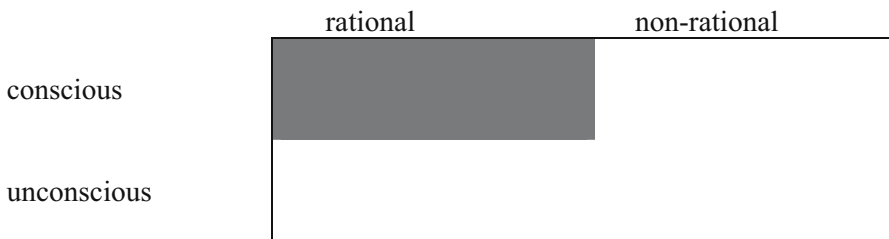


Figure 4-3. The intrapersonal sources of teacher behaviour and dimensions in reflection.

We can summarise this part of our discussion with the aid of Figure 4-3. Whereas 20 years ago, around the time of the first ISATT conference, the intrapersonal sources of teacher behaviour were sought in the grey upper left

corner of Figure 4-3, a broader view is now being proposed, also providing the three other cells with a place.

## **5 THE ROLE OF REFLECTION, AND HOW TO PROMOTE IT IN TEACHER EDUCATION**

This broader view has direct consequences for the promotion of reflection in teacher education. Assuming, as has long been done, that teaching is mainly guided by conscious and rational sources, one will tend to stimulate teachers' reflection on their conscious and rational decision-making processes. However, if assuming that the intrapersonal sources of teacher behaviour are much broader, then the whole notion of teaching changes, and reflection on the role of less conscious and/or non-rational aspects in teaching will get more emphasis. This is why in our realistic teacher education program at Utrecht University, we stimulate student teacher reflection in educational situations on each of the dimensions of thinking, feeling, wanting, and acting, and on their interrelations (see for an elaboration, Korthagen et al., 2001, p.121). This leads to a broadening of the concept of tacit or implicit knowledge, which can be located in the upper right cell of Figure 4-3, and leads to concepts such as implicit emotion, implicit attitudes, etcetera, concepts that are currently receiving much interest from researchers in the field of psychology (Eich et al., 2000; Damasio, 1999).

It is remarkable that only a limited number of research studies have focused on the non-rational, and unconscious or semi-conscious sources of teacher behaviour. For example, in a literature search into the relations between the fulfilment of basic needs in student teachers and their interpersonal behaviour in the classroom, Evelein, Brekelmans, and Korthagen (2002) failed to find any studies into such relations. In fact, the role of needs in teachers' functioning seems to be almost completely overlooked by researchers.

Our discussion has some far-reaching consequences. If the role of reflection shifts from an exclusive focus on analytic thinking on the theories people are conscious of, towards becoming more aware of the non-rational sources of one's teaching behaviour, this also implies a shift from an emphasis on episteme towards more attention for phronesis. Hence, in the ALACT model, which we use to scaffold our student teachers' reflections (Figure 4-4), the important third phase is called "awareness of essential aspects", and not, as is for example the case in Kolb's model (see Kolb & Fry, 1975), abstract conceptualisation. In this respect, Kolb's model seems to



fit better into the traditional view of teachers, namely as people who make conscious decisions based on general concepts and theories.

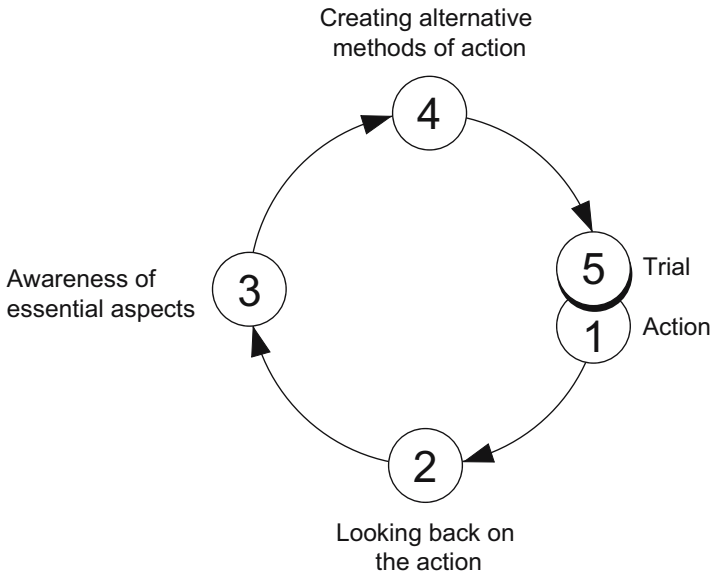


Figure 4-4. The ALACT model of reflection, named after the first letters of the five phases.

In phase 2 of the model, student teachers reflect on their thinking, feeling, wanting, and doing, and on the same aspects in their pupils. The aim is to become more aware of how they are guided by certain cues during their teaching, including cues coming from inside the person, for example feelings of irritation or haste. This is exactly what is often difficult for beginning teachers: while teaching, they are often quite unaware of their feelings and needs, and of the feelings and needs of their pupils. Our approach to reflection also tries to promote a development in their awareness of such implicit aspects, since we believe that they often have a much higher impact on these student teachers' behaviours than the theories they have been exposed to in teacher education. Moreover, we consider the development of an awareness of feelings as a prerequisite to becoming an empathic teacher.

Our approach is concurrent with the model of learning Marton and Booth (1997) present. They, too, put a strong emphasis on the role of awareness in the functioning of practitioners, and claim that when the learner has learned something, he or she "has become capable of discerning aspects of the phenomenon other than those she had been capable of discerning before" (p. 142). In previous work, Marton et al. (1977, p.23) referred to this kind of learning as "a change in the eyes through which we see the world." Marton

and Booth (1997, p.142) add that, through the changed awareness of the phenomenon, the relationship between the person and the phenomenon changes.

An important part of the reflection process is the transition from phase 2 to phase 3. Based on our assumption that problems in teaching are generally caused by discrepancies between a person's thinking, feeling, wanting and acting, and/or by discrepancies between such aspects and the same aspects in the pupils (see Korthagen et al., 2001, p.121-122), we stimulate our students to explore such discrepancies. As Loughran stresses in his chapter in this book, one frequently occurring type of discrepancy is that between a person's beliefs and his or her behaviour: teachers often act contrary to what they believe is right. When they start to realise this when reflecting on particular situations, they will more easily become aware of the influence of the emotional and volitional sources of their actions.

Of course, a focus on the non-rational sources of our behaviour can sometimes make people feel awkward: often it feels much safer to stick to the more rational aspects of our functioning that we are already conscious of. Hence, our broader concept of reflection more or less forces people to go beyond the present boundaries of their *comfort zone*: the zone in which one feels familiar and safe. Indeed, one never knows what comes up if one delves more deeply into the reasons for one's behaviour. It is helpful to make this problem explicit, as well as the tendency to stick to the familiar. It makes teachers aware of the fact that genuine professional development includes risk-taking. It also makes them aware of the fact that every day they are asking their pupils to stretch their comfort zones.

We can summarise our view of reflection as follows:

1. *It is beneficial if teachers are stimulated to reflect on their own classroom experiences on the basis of their personal concerns.* This first principle is a direct consequence of choosing the realistic approach.
2. *It is beneficial if reflection on the non-rational sources of behaviour is included.* The reasons for this principle have been discussed above.
3. *It is beneficial if this reflection follows a systematic structure, and if this structure is made explicit.* Making the ALACT model and the cognitive, emotional, volitional, and behavioural dimensions explicit as a guideline for systematic reflection, appears to help student teachers to go beyond superficial ways of analysing problems and solutions. It can become the cornerstone of life-long professional learning.
4. *It is beneficial if this structure is introduced gradually.* An important tenet of the realistic approach is that effective professional learning is based on personal experience of concrete practical situations. This idea is also applicable to learning how to reflect effectively: without sufficient teaching experiences, and experiences with reflection on these experiences, presenting student teachers with a reflection model early on

in the teacher education program is often counterproductive. Although it seems attractive to use such a model right from the start of the curriculum, one runs the risk of following a deductive approach, which often only results in resistance from the students against the “r-word”. Student teachers have to experience that any systematic structure for reflection that is offered to them adds something valuable to what they were already doing. For this reason, it is better to wait with the introduction of the ALACT model until there is an experiential basis, and even then, teacher educators should be careful not to offer too many guidelines for systematic reflection at the same time. (See for more details Korthagen et al., 2001, p.211-213).

5. *It is beneficial if meta-reflection is promoted.* If student teachers reflect on their own ways of reflecting (meta-reflection), and compare their habitual ways of reflecting with the ALACT model, this may help them to become aware of ineffective tendencies, such as lingering too long in phase 2 (looking back), or jumping too quickly to solutions (phase 4). If they decide to try to improve their usual ways of reflecting, regular meta-reflection on these attempts can again support further learning.
6. *It is beneficial if peer-assisted reflective learning is being promoted.* Support from peers is often more effective than attempts by the teacher educator to promote students’ reflection. If everyone involved in a teacher education program (the students, the teacher educators, and the mentor teachers) are familiar with the ALACT model, this offers them common ground to walk on. It raises professional learning to a higher level. Moreover, peer-assisted reflection prepares teachers for continuous professional learning with colleagues once they have become teachers, and thus counterbalances the highly individualistic and non-collaborative culture of teaching that Feiman-Nemser and Floden (1986) point to.

## 6 THE PROFESSIONAL AND THE PERSONAL

The above discussion has pointed towards a more holistic view of the teacher, a view in which the professional and the personal aspects of teaching are viewed from an integrated perspective. It may be indicative of the development in the field of teaching and teacher education that all the keynote lectures during the 2003 ISATT conference, in one way or another stressed the relation between the professional and the personal in teaching. I believe this relation goes to the heart of teaching, and below I discuss how this can lead to a deepening of the concept of reflection.

At conferences for teachers and teacher educators, I often do the following experiment. I ask people to think back to a really good teacher from the time they themselves were pupils or students. Next, I ask them to

name an essential characteristic of this teacher. Generally speaking, more than 90% of the answers are personal characteristics that are not specific to the teaching profession, such as care, sensitivity, humour, trust, courage, flexibility, openness, et cetera. Following Ofman (2000), I call these *core qualities*. As Tickle (1999, p.123) states, it is remarkable that such qualities are seldom discussed in the literature on teaching and teacher education.

Indeed, in the professional literature, there is much more attention to professional competencies. If we wish to incorporate the more personal aspects of teaching into teachers' reflections, the following model (called "the onion"; see Korthagen, 2004) may be helpful (Figure 4-5). It is an adaptation of what in the literature is often referred to as "Bateson's model", although Gregory Bateson never published such a model. It distinguishes between six levels of reflection, and demonstrates that an exclusive focus on competencies is too limited. Teachers can reflect on the environment (the first level), for example a specific class or pupil, their teaching behaviour (second level), or their competencies (third level). The reflection starts to deepen when underlying beliefs are also reflected on (fourth level), and relations with how one perceives one's own (professional or personal) identity (fifth level). Finally (on the sixth level), one can reflect on one's place in the world, one's personal mission as a teacher. This is a transpersonal level (sometimes referred to as the level of spirituality, see e.g. Dilts, 1990; Mayes, 2001), as it has to do with meanings that reach beyond the individual. It is the level that refers to the teacher's personal inspiration, to ideals, to the moral purposes of the teacher. On the deeper levels, people's core qualities emerge. For example, a mission to help pupils develop self-confidence will often be connected to core qualities such as sensitivity, empathy, and/or steadfastness.

It can be important for teachers to become aware of their core qualities in order to be able to use them more intentionally and systematically. It may be clear that this leads to a more person-oriented view of educating teachers than a competency-based approach, which is often based on standard lists of competencies.

The idea behind the onion model is that the levels are all interrelated, and that professional reflection is deepened by a search for these relations. Discrepancies between the levels (for example a tension between one's beliefs and one's behaviour, or a felt distance between one's mission and the environment one is working in) will cause problems. Stated more positively, reflection on these levels can help to foster *alignment* between the levels, which is experienced as inner harmony, and a sense of "flow" (a phenomenon described by Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Struggles on the level of behaviour or competencies, for example, obtain a different meaning when they are considered from the point of view of one's commitment to a long-term aim on the sixth, transpersonal level, and the development of personal

core qualities needed for this long-term growth process. So again, we see that reflection that is framed within a person's life-long professional development can have a different colour in comparison with reflection that is focused on separate teaching situations.

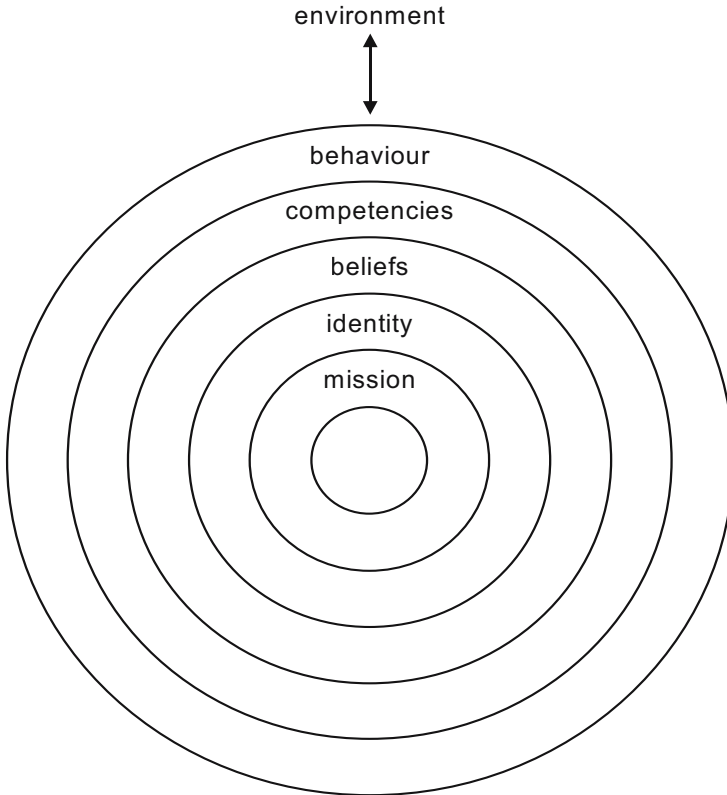


Figure 4-5. The onion: A model of levels in reflection.

If the levels of identity and mission are included in the reflection, we speak of *core reflection*, because these levels lie nearer to the core of the person, and because this kind of reflection brings people into contact with their core qualities.

Just as we have seen a change in our professional field from a focus on the conscious and rational sources of teacher behaviour towards the other cells in Figure 4-3, we can now also see another change taking place: whereas for quite a long time the attention of researchers was focused on the three or four outer levels of Figure 4-5, and the focus of the promotion of reflection by teachers was generally in line with this, today we see more

publications about the levels of identity and mission, and a growing attention for the need for teacher reflection on these levels (e.g., Beijaard, 1995; Kelchtermans & Vandenberghe, 1994).

Tickle (1999, p.136) states that “the teacher as a person is the core by which education itself takes place”, and both researchers and teacher educators increasingly acknowledge this. Palmer (1998, p.10) says: “Good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher.” It is my view that such insights should change traditional practices in teacher education, and that more attention for the inner levels of the onion model is a prerequisite for a balanced integration of the personal and the professional in teaching.

One example may further support this view. One of my colleagues, Anke Tigchelaar, is carrying out research into the development of second-career teachers. One of the striking results of her research is that people who change careers and go into teaching often do this on the basis of a deepened understanding of their personal identity, or a strong commitment to some personal goal, but that the teacher educators responsible for their education seldom ask questions about these personal aspects, or use them as a springboard for professional development as a teacher. In other words, the levels of identity and mission are often simply ignored, even in cases where they are of high personal importance to the student.

On the basis of my work with inservice teachers, I am inclined to believe that many go into teaching because of some deeply felt inner mission, but that the personal goals and commitments of a large number of them are frustrated by institutional pressures, and not in the least through lack of support from school leaders – and even close colleagues – for the translation of inner missions into concrete behaviours in specific environments. As one of my inservice teachers said:

“Everyone who decides to work with people must have ideals. Everyone has that ‘level’ inside, but at a certain moment you can decide to close the hatch.”

Teacher shortages have received a great deal of attention, and in many countries teacher educators are investing in specific curricula in order to attract more people into teaching. Perhaps it is no less important to support those already teaching in implementing their ideals, for research has shown that the loss of ideals, and lack of support in their realisation, have a great impact on the development of burnout and decisions to leave the profession. As Palmer (1998) says, finding answers to the question “What’s the sense of it all?” is not a luxury, but a necessity if teachers are to continue to put their hearts and souls into their work.

Together with Angelo Vasalos, I have developed professional development courses for teacher educators and mentor teachers to support their ability to promote core reflection in teachers (Korthagen & Vasalos, in press). It requires specific supervisory competencies, but most of all the willingness to reflect oneself on the deeper levels of the onion and to extend one's comfort zone.

## 7 PUPILS, TEACHERS AND TEACHER EDUCATORS

In this chapter, three main threads can be distinguished. The first thread is the idea of three different approaches to teacher education: the traditional deductive model, aiming at the translation of theory into practice; the practice-based approach; and the realistic approach, which tries to integrate theory and practice by building on student teachers' own teaching experiences and their concerns. The latter is, in my view, most concurrent with recent constructivist views of pupil learning. If we want pupils in schools to trust their ability to construct their own knowledge, to reflect on their own views of the world, and to develop their personal identity and mission in life, I believe teacher educators have to model this by stressing the same things in our student teachers' learning.

This generally requires a change in the teacher educator's role. Working within a realistic approach requires the ability to build on student teachers' concerns, to help individual students go through the phases of reflection, to organise reflective interactions among student teachers, to teach student teachers how they can systematically develop themselves, to look at human development holistically, and so on. Based on my work in many institutions of teacher education, I conclude that this requires an intensive investment in the professional development of teacher educators, something that is at present often overlooked.

A second thread in the chapter was the role of reflection in teacher learning. Learning from experiences based on systematic reflection is a fundamental characteristic of the realistic approach, contributing to the capacity for life-long learning. I have emphasised that systematic and effective reflection is something to be learned: individuals can develop their way of reflecting, thus enhancing the quality of their learning from experiences. The essence of reflection is bringing the unconscious aspects of teaching into conscious awareness, so that people become more sensitive to important aspects of educational situations. I called this the development of *phronesis*.

This has to do with the third thread running through my chapter: the personal aspect of learning. Pupils, student teachers, and teacher educators

are human beings, with their specific individual fears, hopes, needs, values, missions. These not only influence their behaviour and their learning, but will often be the very source of it. I have argued that for a long time we may have focused too exclusively on the rational and conscious sources of behaviour, thus overlooking the human side.

My personal mission has to do with caring for the children in the schools. Through the years, it has become clear to me how important it is to develop their core qualities, to help them develop a positive sense of identity and mission. Again, we will have to model this in our work with student teachers, and thus in our own reflections as teacher educators. That is why I have asked for attention to core reflection, for example reflection focused on all the levels of the onion model, and have emphasised the importance of daring to step out of the expert role, and make ourselves vulnerable. Only when people are willing to extend their comfort zones, genuine change will take place. The tensions in today's world show how crucial this may be. Teacher educators could take the lead in showing the importance of an awareness of our own identities as teachers, and our personal missions, and of course, how these are related to our actual professional behaviour. For, as Hamachek (1999, p.209) puts it: "Consciously, we teach what we know; unconsciously, we teach who we are."

## Acknowledgement

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## Chapter 5

# NEW METHODS AND PERSPECTIVES ON TEACHER EVALUATION

*Who evaluates what and for which purposes?*

Kari Smith

### 1 INTRODUCTION

- “To be a teacher is to learn to talk and how to keep quiet, and to learn to keep quiet and how to talk.”
- “To be a teacher is to hide a smile and look a little angry, and to hide anger and give a smile.”
- “To be a teacher is to listen to the thoughts behind the words, and to listen to words without thoughts.”
- “To be a teacher is to teach pupils to respect teachers, and to learn to respect pupils.”

These sentences are selected from a list received by e-mail from an unknown source who obviously knows much about teaching. The statements present the complexity of teaching and the very tactic nature of the profession. From an assessor’s point of view, the above characteristics of a teacher make it difficult, if not impossible, to define teaching as a construct that can easily be evaluated. Nevertheless, this chapter deals with evaluation of teaching.

### 2 FUNCTIONS OF EVALUATION OF TEACHING

Evaluation has multiple functions deriving from the purposes of the evaluation activity. Gipps (1994) states three main functions of educational evaluation: accountability, certification, and learning. These functions are

also embedded in evaluation of teaching, but they need to be expanded and more clearly defined. Evaluation of teaching serves four main purposes: gate-keeping, accountability, promotion, and professional development purposes (Smith, in press).

Evaluation serves the function of gate-keeping at the end of pre-service teacher education when quality of teaching is evaluated for licensing purposes. Based on evaluation, decisions are made if student teachers are qualified to enter the gate of the teaching profession and to be licensed as professional teachers. This function of evaluation is summative and crucial to ensure the quality of the teaching force in a specific setting.

Accountability is another important function when evaluating teaching. Education systems are accountable to stakeholders, and foremost to the public. For accountability purposes, quality of teaching is often evaluated based on students' achievements, the outcome of teaching. Teachers are required to open their practice to public critique (e.g., Cochran-Smith, 2001; Craig, 2003), a type of evaluation external to the teacher which is likely to be of summative nature as teachers receive little informative feedback to be used in improving the individual teacher's teaching competency.

At more advanced stages in a teaching career, evaluation of teaching is carried out for purposes of advanced certification (Chartered Teacher Status, Scotland, 2002; National Board Certification, U.S.A., 2002) and for professional promotion purposes. This type of evaluation requires external as well as internal evaluation and focuses on professional knowledge as well as on professional behavior. It is summative by the fact that it serves decision-making purposes, however it is also formative in nature as the evaluation provides teachers who seek promotion, with informative feedback of how to improve the quality of their professional activities.

Evaluation of teaching for summative decision-making purposes is formal, external and of little use to the teacher beyond the decision made, whereas formative assessment for professional development purposes is informal, ongoing and engages teachers in self-assessment. This function of evaluation is probably the most useful function to teachers themselves, mainly because it is less threatening (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000).

The intended function of evaluation of teaching effects decisions regarding the object (the What) of the evaluation, the evaluators (the Whos) and the tools applied in the evaluation task (the How), in fact, it determines the design of the evaluation. In the following four assessment components (the What, the Whos, the Whys, and the How) these are being discussed separately before they are finally brought together in a summarizing table in the second part of the paper.

### **3 THE WHAT STANDARDS OF TEACHING FROM AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE**

Standards for teachers are recently being developed in various places throughout the world, not only for assessment purposes, but also to meet demands for accountability with respect to teachers' mastery of a core body of knowledge and skills (Oser, 1998). Standards reflect this core knowledge, and formative as well as summative assessment of teaching is carried out in light of expressed standards. For formative assessment purposes, standards guide teachers' professional development (Koster & Dengerink, 2001). Standards are being used as a tool for approving teacher education programs (Spolsky et al., 2002), for communicating goals to the public (Apple, 2001), and in summative assessment, standards serve evaluation of teaching for licensing and certification. Moreover, the development of standards sparkles off a public discussion on education in general (Darling-Hammond et al., 1998). In Scotland, the Scottish Executive has developed standards for Chartered Teachers, an advanced certification of teachers as a mile stone in teachers' profession:

- professional values and professional commitments;
- professional knowledge and understanding;
- professional and personal attributes;
- professional action (Standards for Chartered Teacher, 2002, p.1).

From the four key components more specific actions, behavior, and demonstrations are listed. Examples of these are:

- demonstrating effectiveness in promoting learning in the classroom;
- demonstrating a critical understanding of educational assessment and its interpretation;
- demonstrating empathy and fairness, being caring and approachable.

The Scottish standards draw upon a rich body of evidence representing views of Scottish teachers and the wider educational community.

A similar set of standards, also developed for advanced certification purposes, are the standards for the National Board Certification in the USA. These standards are based on five core propositions:

- teachers are committed to students and their learning;
- teachers know the subject(s) they teach and how to teach the subject(s) to students;
- teachers are responsible for managing and monitoring student learning;
- teachers think systematically about their practice and learn from experience;
- teachers are members of learning communities (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 1999).

These standards are developed by teachers for teachers; they represent a symbol for excellent teaching and are intended to complement State licensing. State licensing sets entry level standards for beginning teachers, whereas the above standards are meant for experienced teachers. From the five core propositions, as in the Scottish setting, detailed statements of desired teacher demonstrations are listed.

An additional source for standards for teachers is the OECD's (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) Education working paper by Coolahan (2002). Coolahan, in his paper, discusses the importance of lifelong learning and lists a number of key characteristics required of teachers, focus points for teachers' ongoing professional learning. There is much similarity in Coolahan's list to standards suggested elsewhere. In Israel five domains form the core of recently developed standards for teachers of English:

- content;
- learning and the learner;
- teaching and the teacher;
- assessment;
- classroom environment (Spolsky et al., 2002, p.4).

Each domain requires specific standards and benchmarks for evaluating the extent to which the standards have been met.

The Ministry of Education in Sri Lanka has published a list of 75 guidelines which are divided into 16 categories, some of which are:

- sensitivity to educational reforms;
- identification of children at entry;
- planning, organization, management;
- learning-teaching process;
- assessment;
- professional development;
- parents and community;
- research (Sri Lanka, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2000).

In spite of the fact that most lists of standards reflect goals and values in teaching within a specific context, they share a number of key-components considered to be important in any context and which are summarized in Table 5-1 which presents four focus levels in three domains of teaching.

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Behavioral</b>	<b>Affective</b>	<b>Cognitive</b>
<b>Level</b>			
Individual			
Group			
School			
Profession			

*Table 5-1.* Focus for standards for teaching (adapted from Cheng, 2001).

Teachers are expected to act at all four levels, to be competent at the individual level in their own classrooms, to work as members of professional groups such as groups of teachers teaching children of the same age or teachers teaching the same subject. Furthermore, competent teachers act as members of the whole school staff and promote professional development at the school level. The final level reaches beyond school level; competent teachers are expected to act to improve the teaching profession and education in general. For advanced certification, teachers are required to demonstrate they have the capacity to work in all three domains, in their actions (behaviour), in their inter-personal communication (affective) and by continuously updating and increasing their cognitive discipline and pedagogical knowledge (cognitive).

#### **4 PROBLEMS WITH STANDARDS**

Clearly expressed standards are essential in designing the construct of good teaching (the What), and they are a must when engaging in an evaluation process focusing on teaching. There are, however, frequent warnings of overuse and reliance on standards (Apple, 2001; Burroughs, 2001; Delandshere & Arens, 2003; Murray, 2001). Murray (2001) points out that there is a lack of consensus regarding standards, in spite of the fact that the teaching profession and the public are invited to engage in the development process and to comment on various drafts of standards before the final versions are published (INTASC and NBPTS, websites, 2003). Standards can easily narrow the view of teaching and learning (Cochran-Smith, 2001) and limit new initiatives and introduction of new ideas enhanced by professional autonomy. If education becomes too market oriented (Apple, 2001) and focuses mainly on outputs (Cochran-Smith, 2001), the importance of affective aspects of teaching are likely to be diminished. An additional problem with explicit standards for teaching is

that teachers draw heavily on private or tacit knowledge and life experiences, also called working knowledge, practical knowledge or craft knowledge (Marland, 2001). Van Manen (1999) claims that much of teachers' knowledge is embedded in the teacher's being in the three domains previously mentioned, the behavioral, affective and cognitive domain. Handal and Lauvas (1987) call this practical knowledge of teachers "practical theory": "A person's private, integrated but ever-changing system of knowledge, experiences and values which is relevant to teaching practice at any particular times" (p.9). It is difficult, if not impossible, to articulate this type of teachers' professional knowledge in a language of general standards. Teachers exercise good teaching within a specific context (Berliner, 1992), and what is suitable in one specific teaching situation is not necessarily suitable in other contexts. The advantages and disadvantages of explicit standards for evaluation of teaching as expressed in the literature are listed in Table 5-2.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Standards serve as agreements about what teachers should know, think and do	There is lack of consensus (Murray, 2001)
Standards serve as guidelines	Standards might lead to a narrow interpretation of teaching (Cochran Smith, 2001)
Standards serve evaluation	Teacher knowledge is non-cognitive knowledge (van Manen, 1999)
Standards serve as a means of communication to the public	Standards have negative backwash effect (Delandshere and Arens, 2003)
Standards serve as goals for professional development	Standards lack construct validity (Burroughs, 2001)
Standards serve as a common core of knowledge and skills	Standards might have dangerous consequences (Apple, 2001)
Standards serve as triggers for sparking a professional dialogue (Delandshere & Arens, 2003; Darling-Hammond et al., 1998)	Intelligent accountability (Crooks, 2003)

Table 5-2. Advantages and disadvantages of standards for teaching.

The development of standards for teaching has taken teaching as a profession a large step forward; there are attempts to define constructs of teaching reflecting teaching in specific settings. However, standards need to be applied with professional caution and a great deal of common sense when evaluating teaching.

## **5 WHO EVALUATES TEACHING (THE WHO'S) AND FOR WHAT PURPOSES (THE WHY'S)?**

Teaching has multiple stakeholders to whom the teaching profession is expected to be accountable. All stakeholders believe they have a justified right to evaluate teaching and they want their voices to be heard. Evaluation of teaching means collecting information from multiple sources that provide opinions about different aspects of the quality of teaching. The Center for Instructional Development and Research (CIDR) claims there are six perceptions to be taken into consideration, those of pupils, the public, administration, peers and colleagues, researchers, and the teacher her/himself (self-evaluation) (CIDR website, 2003, p.1).

The public (society in general, parents, businesses, financial resources, among others) are mainly interested in products of teaching, pupils' achievements, and teachers' professional knowledge, mainly subject matter knowledge. Do teachers of mathematics know enough mathematics to improve pupils' achievements at a local, national and international level? Comparative tests in mathematics and science (TIMSS) are examples of how teachers, schools and nations are evaluated based on pupils' scores on these international tests. The main function of evaluation of teaching carried out by the public and for the public is for accountability purposes, to make sure money is invested in accordance with the public's interest. Evaluation solely for accountability purposes is likely to have a negative backwash effect on teaching and learning unless the evaluation process is designed to reflect intelligent accountability (Crooks, 2003). Crooks argues that the use of intelligent accountability leads to increased enthusiasm and motivation among the participants if it develops trust, involves them, awakes a deep professional response, provides informative feedback, and also recognizes the limitations of the evaluation process (Crooks, 2003).

Administration of teaching and school management, at local and regional levels, are stakeholders interested in the product of teaching. Quality of teaching is, however, examined and evaluated within a specific context, and not only according to results of external examinations. A good teacher does not only deliver (produce high tests results), but is also a person who manages classes (Spolsky et al., 2003) and who is active in promoting teaching, education and professional development at a school level (Cheng, 2001), all of which is taken into consideration when decisions regarding tenure and promotion are made.

The teaching profession in a wider context evaluates teaching in terms of teachers' engagement in professional development (Berliner, 2001) and examines their contribution to the teaching profession. Examples of such contributions are active engagement in enhancing education at local and



national levels, to be involved in developing teaching materials and through research, thus adding to the body of professional knowledge of teaching. Advanced teaching certification, such as the Scottish Chartered Teacher and the NBC certification previously discussed, are examples of how the teaching profession exercises evaluation of teaching.

Colleagues provide an important source of information about quality of teaching mainly for professional development purposes, and the main function of evaluation by peers is therefore formative. In schools with an empathetic and supportive atmosphere, colleagues provide teachers with information essential for improving teaching within a specific context.

Ruddock (1999) claims that pupils are expert witnesses of teaching. High school pupils in Israel, for example, have been exposed to 13,000 hours of teaching upon completing 12 years of education. When designing a profile of teaching, it is impossible to ignore the “expert opinion” of the pupils. This audience owns essential information about teachers’ class behavior, affective and didactic skills, and teachers interested in improving their teaching depend on this information which needs to be elicited. Pupils’ input into teachers’ reflections for formative professional development purposes cannot be ignored (Smith, 2001).

Teachers, themselves, own reliable and rich information about the quality of their teaching and professional understanding expressed through their professional behavior in a variety of teaching situations. Teachers hold much tacit knowledge about teaching, what Connelly (2002) calls teacher knowledge which differs from knowledge for teachers. Other people have used different wording for the same concept, teachers’ personal practical knowledge (Handal & Lauvas, 1987), teachers’ professional knowledge landscape (Craig, 1998, 2003). Teachers can best evaluate their reasons behind actions in problem oriented situations, it is what Gitlin et al. (2002) call insider knowledge about teaching. Teachers are expected to think systematically about their practice and learn from experience and to have a deep understanding of themselves and of the nature of their work (Coolahan, 2002, p.13). Self-knowledge is important in improving performance (Marland, 2001; Smith & Tillema, 2001). Furthermore, teachers who are capable of articulating practical theories and self-awareness, can document these for evaluation purposes. The function of self-assessment is to a large extent, formative, however, documentation of knowledge drawn from experiences presented by teachers can also be used for certification and promotion purposes by other stakeholders.

So far, this paper has discussed the construct of teaching (the what), who evaluates teaching (the whos) and the purposes of evaluation of teaching (the whys). Table 5-3 provides a summary of the above discussion.

<b>Stakeholder</b>	<b>Focus of evaluation</b>	<b>Purposes of evaluation</b>
Public	Knowledge Pupils' achievements	Accountability
Administration	Achievements School behavior	Accountability Promotion
Profession	Beyond school behavior Contribution Knowledge	Certification Promotion
Colleagues	School behavior Practical knowledge	Formative Professional development
Pupils	Class behavior Affective and didactic skills	Formative Professional development
Teacher	All of the above Practical knowledge	Formative Professional development

*Table 5-3.* Stakeholders, focus and purpose of evaluation of teaching.

## **6 WHEN TO EVALUATE WHAT?**

Quality of teaching is not a static feature which is once achieved and remains unchanged. Teachers, as other professionals, develop and research has shown there are various stages or phases in teachers' developments (Berliner, 1992, 2001; Draper, 2001; Fuller & Bown, 1975; Hargreaves, 1999). It is therefore not possible to use the same standards for all phases. Evaluation of teaching needs to be carried out in light of the present phase of professional development of the teacher. Four phases of teaching can be defined for evaluation purposes: entrance to the profession, renewal of license, advanced licensing, and becoming a mentor (school-based teacher educator).

The first phase is evaluation of novice teachers which focuses on a common core of teachers' knowledge, theoretical as well as practical, which pre-service graduates are required to demonstrate to be licensed as qualified teachers. Novice teachers are expected to master their discipline of teaching and know how to teach it to others.

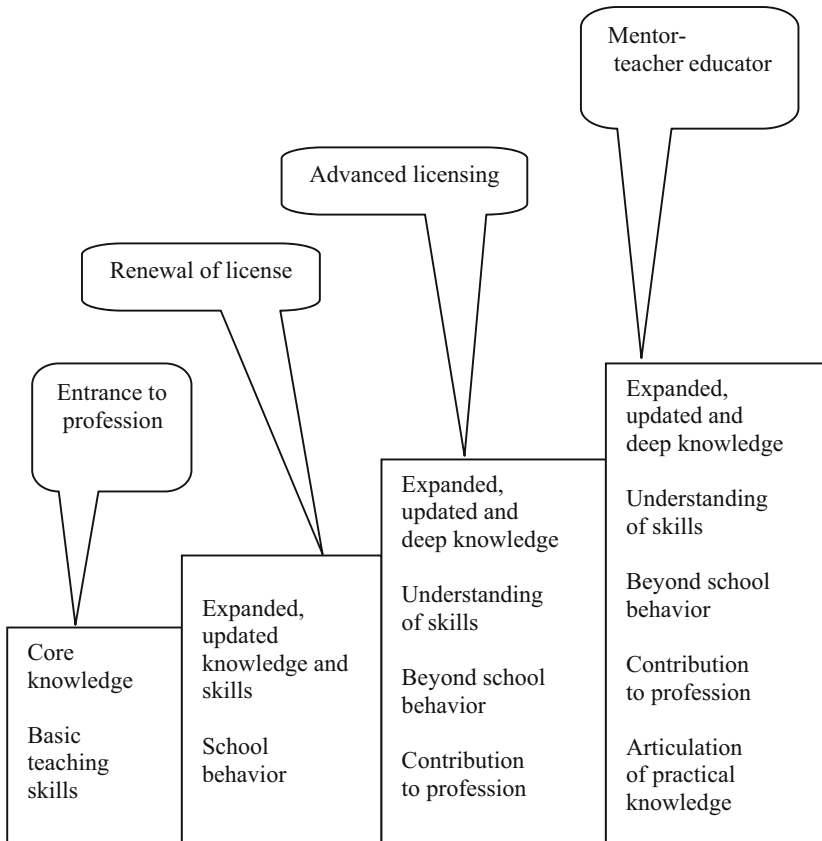
The second phase is renewal of teaching license. In some countries (Israel, for example) teachers are licensed for lifetime, and they are not

required to document they keep a jour with development within their profession. Professional development is to a large extent related to on-job learning, learning from practice and experience (Eraut, 1994), yet off-job learning, in-service training in formal educational settings which provide updating of professional knowledge, cannot be neglected. The position taken in this chapter is that teachers are required to renew their teaching license every three to four years, and the evaluation at this phase is based on demonstration of expanded and updated theoretical and practical knowledge. Teachers cannot, anymore than physicians, rely on knowledge acquired in their pre-service training; public and professional demands of having an updated teaching force justify ongoing evaluation of teaching.

The third phase is advanced licensing, an example of which is found in Scotland where The Chartered Teacher has recently been introduced. The advanced license documents professional career advancement in the form of a certificate for advanced teachers, and it serves as an incentive for teachers to undertake full professional responsibilities not only in terms of knowledge, but also in terms of professional behavior and actions (Scottish Chartered teacher, 2002) beyond the individual level of the classroom and school.

In the fourth phase in teachers' professional development, the teacher becomes a school-based teacher educator, a mentor. Experienced expert teachers (Berliner, 1992) have acquired a large amount of expert practical knowledge about teaching and in teaching which is essential to student teachers in training and to novice teachers in the beginning of their careers. Many teacher education programs have realized this, and in England a major part of teacher education takes place in schools. In other countries, partnerships between teacher education institutions and schools (Professional Development Schools-PDS) become more and more common. The school teaching staff acts as teacher educators in addition to being teachers of children, they become school-based teacher educators (Koster et al., 1996). Even though there is much overlapping in the level and type of knowledge expressed in standards for teacher educators (Koster & Dengerink, 2001), there are still major differences in the requirements of teacher educators (Smith, 2003). Teachers functioning as teacher educators are expected to have a much wider and deeper knowledge at an epistemological level, in order to be able to work with adults, to articulate their tacit knowledge, and make it available to student teachers. When teachers act as teacher educators, evaluation of teaching has to be given a much broader focus.

Figure 5-1 illustrates the focus of evaluation of teaching during different phases in teachers' careers.



*Figure 5-1. Phases of evaluation in teachers' careers.*

## 7 HOW TO EVALUATE TEACHING

It is possible to discuss evaluation in light of three paradigms, the psychometric, the contextual and the personal paradigm (Mabry, 1999). Understanding the various paradigms is essential in choosing tools for evaluating teaching as the paradigms are used for different purposes and require different tools.

In the psychometric paradigm the best-suited evaluation tool is a standardized objective test in which there is no room for discussion if the

answer is correct or not. Psychometric tests are developed from a definite body of knowledge, and the testees are tested to what extent they know that body of knowledge, independently of the context in which the test is given.

In the contextual paradigm, however, the context in which the evaluation takes place dictates the form and format of evaluation. Evaluation tasks derive from the context in which the evaluatee functions which leaves space for open and close evaluation items, and the evaluatee takes an active part in the evaluation process. Whereas the use of psychometric evaluation is summative, the use of contextual evaluation is often formative, but it can also be used summatively, for decision-making purposes.

The third paradigm, the personal paradigm, focuses on the specific evaluatee and examines the progress and achievements in relation to the individual. There is no comparison to others, so the evaluation is not normative, nor is it done in relation to explicit contextual criteria; so the evaluation is not externally criterion referenced. In the personal paradigm, the evaluation focuses on the development process of the individual, and it is therefore ipsative. The function of evaluation carried out in the personal paradigm is mainly formative and the evaluatee takes an active part in the evaluation activity.

When teaching is the object of evaluation, all three paradigms need to be applied. Teaching is a complex activity, and multiple assessment tools are required to create a profile of teaching competence (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000). Some tools are better suited for summative assessment purposes reflecting the psychometric paradigm, whereas other tools provide teachers seeking to improve their teaching with essential information for formative assessment purposes, mainly reflecting the ipsative paradigm. In the following the more common assessment tools are discussed, yet the list is far from being exhaustive.

## **7.1 Tests**

There is a core body of knowledge on which all teachers are to be tested. This body of knowledge represents the subject matter taught, related subjects, and basic theories in teaching and learning. The best way to evaluate if teachers master the core body of knowledge of teaching is by means of tests. Knowledge is constantly being updated, and teachers need to be repeatedly tested to demonstrate they are continuously updating their knowledge. Evaluation of this kind represents the psychometric paradigm, and the purpose of evaluation is mainly public accountability, to make sure the teaching force is sufficiently knowledgeable.

## **7.2 Pupils' Achievements**

Records of pupils' achievements in external examinations are an additional source of information in the psychometric paradigm for accountability purposes. The higher the scores of the pupils, the better the teacher is considered to be. Evaluation of this kind is standard-based and mainly summative, used for decision-making purposes. However, negative backwash effects, on teaching as well as on learning, resulting from evaluating the quality of teaching based on pupils' achievements only (Black et al., 2002; Black & Dylan, 1998; Gipps, 1994; Neill, 2003; Popham, 2001, among others) are well known and evaluation of teaching based on achievements should be approached with great care then.

## **7.3 Observations**

Teaching cannot be decontextualized and quality of teaching is to be evaluated in the context in which it takes place (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2001). To evaluate teaching in context, teachers are to be observed in that specific context, and observation of teaching is an authentic evaluation tool widely used in appraisal of teachers. Observation can be used for formative as well as for summative purposes. When the function is summative, the observer is somebody superior to the teacher, and the situation is a performance test, based on which decisions about the teacher's future career is made. Observations can, however, successfully be used for formative evaluation purposes, especially when the observer is a colleague of the teacher who has been asked to help identify problematic aspects of teaching in a specific class or with a specific subject with the aim of providing feedback used for professional development.

## **7.4 Pupil Feedback**

Pupils, who are major stakeholders of education, constantly observe teaching and have essential information to be used in the evaluation of teaching. Eliciting information from pupils can be done informally by teachers by asking for oral and written feedback. The advantages are that feedback is spontaneous, immediate and pupil-oriented and the pupils volunteer feedback on issues they choose using their own language. This direct and unedited form of feedback can, however, be a threat to teachers who are less confident about their work. A more formal and teacher controlled way of eliciting feedback from pupils is by means of a questionnaire which has been designed for the specific context in which

teaching takes place. The questionnaire, intended for formative evaluation purposes, is recommended to focus on four parts. The first part examines quality of good teaching in general, designed jointly by pupils and teachers. It represents the core elements of good teaching in a specific school. The second part of the questionnaire relates to good teaching of a specific subject matter, or with a certain age group. Good teaching of mathematics is not necessarily the same as good teaching of literature, and teaching teenagers is not the same as teaching primary school children. This part is designed by members of staff teaching the same subject and/or age-group. The third part of the questionnaire relates to the individual teacher, and statements are designed by the individual teacher for feedback on issues the teacher finds problematic and would like to improve. The last part of the questionnaire consists of open questions in which the pupils are invited to suggest ways of improving the interaction between them and the teacher. This design suggests that questionnaires used to elicit information on teaching from pupils are not standardized for all teachers, not even for all teachers in a specific setting. The information collected is best used by teachers themselves for professional development purposes, and not for management and administration for decision-making purposes.

## 7.5 Portfolio

The last tool to be suggested in this chapter is the use of portfolios for evaluation of teaching. Teacher portfolios have become very common, especially in the United States (e.g., Brown & Irby, 2001; Craig, 2003; Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000; Delandshere & Arens, 2003; National Board Certification, 2002; Shulman, 1988, 1998; Wolf, 1991; Zeichner & Wray, 2001). The main advantages of the portfolio have been found to be:

- portfolios monitor personal development;
- portfolios highlight self-perceived competence versus the opinion of others;
- portfolios encourage responsibility for professional development;
- portfolios provide evidence for professional competence (Smith & Tillema, 1998).

Whereas the main advantages of the portfolio lie in its incentive to professional development, the last point in the above list relates to portfolios as an evaluation tool; portfolios provide documentation of professional competence. As such, evidence to be presented in teacher portfolios are of two kinds: hard and soft evidence (Van der Westhuizen & Smith, 2000). Hard evidence documenting professional competence consists of official documents and certificates, reports from supervisors, letters of recommendations, and records of pupils' achievements. This type of evidence is external to the teacher, given by other people. Soft evidence

consists of the teacher's personal voice, views, and reflections related to teaching in a specific setting. This is the place for teachers to present their practical theories (Handal & Lauvas, 1987), their tacit knowledge of teaching. Examples of such are lesson plans, teaching materials, recordings of lessons, reflections on lessons, and essays on critical incidents. The validity of portfolios in evaluation of teaching is embedded in the variety of documentation representing external opinions and teachers' self-chosen evidence of professional competence.

There is, however, a danger that external standards dictate the content of the portfolio, and the backwash effect of evaluation limits teachers' choices in what to include, and the included evidence does not represent teachers' true voices. Another problematic issue by using portfolios for summative evaluation purposes is, according to Burroughs (2001), the construct validity of teachers portfolios. Most evidence included in the portfolio is in written form which advantages teachers with good writing skills and disadvantages teachers who are more apprehensive towards writing. It is, however, possible to minimize the problem by encouraging teachers to include audio or video recorded evidence of the quality of teaching, including recordings of reflections. The articulation of professional practical knowledge is yet another problem which is highlighted in the portfolio for evaluation purposes. Many teachers find it difficult to talk about their teaching (Burroughs et al., 2000); however, the ability to articulate tacit knowledge and to make it open to criticism and debate is part of advanced quality teaching (Craig, 2003; Hargreaves, 1996).

Another problem with using teacher portfolios for summative evaluation is the difficulty in achieving agreement among different evaluators, a problem of reliability (Baume, 2002). Due to its very subjective and personal character of the personal part of the portfolio (soft evidence), it is problematic to state explicit external criteria based on which teacher portfolios are assessed. Portfolios are best used as one out of several evaluation tools creating a profile of teaching for summative evaluation purposes, and as a main tool for professional development purposes presenting teachers' voices. Portfolios represent the personal paradigm of evaluation.

The tools discussed in this chapter, represent a sample of multiple instruments for evaluating teaching (see Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000, for more information). Evidence compiled by these tools provide, however, comprehensive documentation on teaching quality making it possible to design a valid profile of teaching on which various stakeholders agree. Tools used in evaluation of teaching need to be clear, trustworthy and feasible (Tillema & Verberg, 2002), not only in the eyes of stakeholders, but also in the eyes of teachers themselves.



Table 5-4 presents the framework proposed in this chapter of how to design a profile of teaching quality for evaluation purposes.

<b>Stakeholder</b>	<b>Focus of evaluation</b>	<b>Purposes of evaluation</b>	<b>Tools</b>
Public	Knowledge Pupils' achievements	Accountability	Tests Records of pupils' achievements
Administration	Achievements School behavior	Accountability Promotion	Tests Observation Pupils' feedback
Profession	Beyond school behavior Contribution Knowledge	Certification Promotion	Test Portfolio
Colleagues	School behavior Practical knowledge	Formative Professional development	Portfolio Observations
Pupils	Class behavior Affective and didactic skills	Formative Professional development	Informal and formal feedback
Teacher	All of the above Practical knowledge	Formative Professional development	All of the above Focus on portfolio

*Table 5-4.* Who evaluates what for which purposes by which tools.

Table 5-4 is an attempt to bring some order into the complex issue of evaluating teaching by suggesting possible links between evaluators (the whos), objects of evaluation (the what), the purpose of evaluation (the why), and the tools used for evaluation (the how). The table is not meant to be the only or the best way of creating a comprehensive profile of teaching, it is a modest suggestion which the reader is invited to take further.

## **8 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The incentive for writing this chapter is a strong belief in the importance of evaluating teaching and in articulating the difficulties embedded in doing just that. The reader might not have noted, but the chapter discusses evaluation of teaching and avoids discussing evaluation of teachers. This is done intentionally and due to awareness that we need to be modest in our trust in evaluation and careful of its consequences. It is possible to evaluate performance, what is exhibited by the performer, teaching or other documentation exhibited by teachers. This is the part of the iceberg on the surface of the ocean. From exhibited performance and documentation, we make inferences and draw conclusions about competencies and abilities of the performer, the teacher. Evaluation is “only” conclusions drawn in comparison with standards and criteria. The quality of conclusions drawn, the quality of the evaluation carried out, depends on the number, quality, and authenticity of performances and documentation collected in the assessment process. Our responsibility as evaluators of teaching is therefore to make sure we base all decisions about teachers and their careers on as much and as authentic evidence of teaching performances as we can possibly collect. How we go about doing this, for summative evaluation purposes, needs to be transparent to all stakeholders, and foremost to teachers themselves. “A good assessment system has no secrets” (Baume, 2002, p.12).

Formative aspects of assessment of teaching, collecting and presenting information essential to teachers for enhancing professional growth are, perhaps, the core of evaluation of teaching and precedes any type of summative evaluation. Teachers, who are supported and empowered when engaging in ongoing self-assessment, self-criticism, and continuous learning, on-job as well as off-job, are teachers who more confidently face the many challenges inherent in the complex task of teaching. The stronger the formative functions of teacher evaluation, the better the chances are that summative teacher evaluation meets required standards. Therefore, the main recommendations presented in this chapter are:

- quality of teaching needs to be evaluated in context;
- focus of evaluation depends on purpose and phase in teachers’ professional careers;
- evaluation needs to allow for different types of teachers and for various approaches to teaching;
- evaluation is best used to empower teachers;
- multiple tools are needed to compile a profile of teaching.

The recent rapid development of standards for teaching are likely to decrease teacher autonomy and creativity, harming the teaching quality, and thereby education in general, if standards are used for uniform evaluation of

teachers disrespectful of the teaching context and the purpose of evaluation. This chapter advocates an intelligent use of standards and evaluation which appreciates individuality and uniqueness in teaching and empowers teachers in a publicly transparent environment.

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## PART 2

# KNOWLEDGE CONSTRUCTION AND LEARNING TO TEACH

## Chapter 6

# ANALYZING TEACHER KNOWLEDGE IN ITS INTERACTIONAL POSITIONING

Jukka Husu

### 1 INTRODUCTION

Recently, a growing number of educational scholars have shifted their attention on teacher knowledge away from the individual perspective and have begun to explore teacher knowledge as socially negotiated (Britzman, 1991; Freeman, 1996; Husu, 2002; Miller Marsh, 2002; Wortham, 2001). The perspective aims to understand how pedagogical discourses work in and through teachers to position themselves in their profession. Discourses are frameworks for thought and action that teachers draw upon as they speak of their work with others. They are culturally and socially generated patterns of thinking and acting that are authorized by their distinct professional code (Fairclough, 1989; Gee, 1996). This chapter tries to illustrate and extend constructivist accounts of teacher knowledge through a detailed demonstration of how interactional knowledge construction occurs in verbal practice. By documenting how interaction and emergent processes play a constitutive role in knowledge construction, this chapter argues for a sociocultural perspective in teacher learning.

According to this stance, thinking occurs in the relationship between the individual and the environment, where the environment is seen to encompass both the physical environment and its social surroundings, as well as internal aspects such as individual's beliefs and knowledge (Roth, 1995). Consequently, a sociocultural approach does make particular claims about how the process of knowledge construction needs to be understood. This chapter tries to show how pedagogical knowledge, gained through participation in a range of communities, comes to bear on the processes of schooling, and how teachers value that knowledge. Also, the analysis will

reveal complex, socially situated, everyday practices that are part of teachers' narrative knowledge construction.

This chapter makes two contributions, a conceptual and a methodological one. First, it offers an account of the basis of narrative knowledge construction. It argues that pedagogical knowledge can be constructed through the interrelationship of represented content and enacted positioning in teacher narratives. Epistemologically, teachers enact characteristic interactional positioning while talking about their profession. Second, the paper offers a systematic methodological approach to analyze narrative discourse. It gives a detailed and concrete description of how narrative discourse can simultaneously represent the content and accomplish interactional positioning. The stance presupposes exploring teacher talk to see what it might offer in putting forth an understanding of teachers' pedagogical knowledge. The argument here is that these findings can have consequences on how to think about the form and the structure of teacher knowledge and its development.

## **2 TWO WAYS TO LOOK AT NARRATIVE KNOWLEDGE CONSTRUCTION**

In order to understand how teacher knowledge is positioned in narrative discourses, we need approaches that can give us a better view of teacher knowledge in pedagogical contexts. This chapter examines two basic assumptions that underlie the studies of teacher knowledge. Based on them, it presents two ways to analyze the narrative base of teacher knowledge. Separately, each of them provides a plausible and justified approach to study knowledge issues. Together, they propose an integrated approach that uses complementary ways to develop a fuller understanding of teacher knowledge in its social contexts. Also, they show the role that the research process plays in shaping the narratives as they are analyzed.

### **2.1 Representational Analysis: Foregrounding the Content**

As Freeman (1994) states, most studies of what teachers know depend on an analysis of what they say: “[t]his relationship between the inner world of the teacher and the language which the teacher uses to express that world has provided the foundation for the study of teachers' knowledge” (p.77). Within this stance, words are taken as providing a vehicle for thought, and teachers are usually “taken at their word” (Freeman, 1996). Teachers' words are taken for their capacity to reveal their knowledge and therefore “to *represent*



their thinking” (*ibid.*, p.734, original emphasis). What teachers know can be seen in the language they use in interviews or in the written documents they produce.

This predominant approach argues that teachers can construct and describe themselves by telling coherent stories that have the ability to put in the foreground certain characteristics of themselves as teachers – and by subsequently acting in terms of those named characteristics. This representational, plot-based explanation and interpretation enables this focus in terms of emplotment: a narrator selects from among the many events of her/his experiences and places them in a sequence that leads towards some end or conclusion (Gergen & Gergen, 1983; Polkinghorne, 1988). Because narratives have a certain direction, a teacher emerges from this version of the narrative looking as a certain kind of a teacher. This stance links a teacher identity with the issues of teacher knowledge: when teachers undertake teaching they analyze their situation (What is possible?), their students (What do their students need and what can they do?), and themselves as teachers (What kinds of teachers are they themselves?). In telling narratives of themselves, teachers can bring forth more educationally promising characteristics and free themselves from less productive story lines (cf. Witherell & Noddings, 1991).

According to Bakhtin (1981), this approach treats narrative as “monological.” Monological discourse assumes that a narrator and a listener/an analyst can understand a speaker’s meaning with a reference only to the content of that speaker’s utterance. Thus, the basic methodological challenge of this research mode is to gain access to the narrator’s views, perceptions, and understandings: stick to the contents of the mind. The narrator’s words are assumed to capture her/his thoughts and beliefs. According to Freeman (1996, p.734), in the representational view, language data is treated firstly as “data” or information, and only secondly as “language.” The data is studied for *what* it says.

In the use of narrative, representational analysis often employs extended passages of language data. It is hoped that within these passages of language data, the elements of teacher knowledge merge into an integrated whole. The task of an analysis thus becomes to uncover those qualities of knowledge construction: the analysis intends to integrate teachers’ words and their interpretation into a jointly interpreted whole.

## 2.2 Presentational Analysis: Interactional Positioning within the Content

For Bakhtin (1986a), monological approaches capture some aspect of meaning, but they can never suffice. As he states:

“[t]he expression of an utterance can never be fully understood or explained if its thematic content is all that is taken into account. The expression of an utterance always *responds* to a greater or lesser degree, that is, it expresses the speaker’s attitude towards others’ and not just his[/her] attitude towards the object of his[/her] utterance” (p.92; original emphasis).

Thus, while an utterance always represents some content as an object, it also contributes to the speaker’s position with respect to others. In a way, every utterance contains “two texts” (Bakhtin, 1986b, p.107). That is, an analyst cannot interpret narrated and represented content alone. Interpretation of an utterance requires the construction of a second, interactional level, because the words used in any utterance are part of larger contexts. This is just what the representational account ignores: how narratives position individuals in an ongoing dialogue with their contexts. Here, contexts are not simply made up of the physical setting – school, classroom, teaching materials – nor of combinations of persons (principal, colleagues, students). Rather, contexts are constituted by “what people are doing and where and when they are doing it” (Mehan, 1979, p.148). This means that people in interaction become environments for each other. This interactional view of language data is necessary in order to more fully understand the concealed relationships and social contexts that teacher knowledge embodies.

From this perspective, teachers’ words present meaning that can be taken apart through careful examination and analysis. The words are taken for their capacity to reveal how they are put together – through internally systematic relationships – to present the process of knowing. This stance aims to see teachers as participants in their own social systems where language is a function of that participation. Therefore, words are not expressions of individuals, but rather statements of connection to and within their social contexts. Therefore, language can provide a map of these relationships. The words that compose an utterance make certain aspects of the context relevant by pointing them out.

Bakhtin (1981) uses the concept of “voice” to describe the way that words draw attention to their relevant contexts. According to him, language

contains within itself forms that connect individuals with their environments. This is because:

“Language has been completely taken over.... All words have the ‘taste’ of a profession, a genre, a tendency, a particular work, a particular person.... Each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life” (p.293).

The presentational view approaches language as a social system in which individuals participate and through which they are defined (Gee, 1996; Wertsch, 1998). The study of language data focuses on the relationships created within and through language, and the sources from which they are drawn. Language is seen as a fabric of relationships that constitute teachers’ knowledge. In that process of knowledge construction, activities, tasks, and understandings “do not exist in isolation; they are part of broader systems of relations in which they have meaning” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p.53). Presentational analysis is an effort to uncover those relationships that can be found in a portion of language. Within this approach, language data is treated as language firstly, and data or information secondly. Language is examined for *how* it means by analyzing the relationships and the sources from which those relationships are drawn.

### **2.3 Combining the two Stances**

Wortham (2001, p.157) argues that narratives have particular power to construct teacher knowledge when the represented content and its interactional positioning run parallel. In their work, teachers engage in many types of complex activities simultaneously and the structures and processes that facilitate their behaviors often interconnect. Knowledge construction makes no difference: the same structures and processes in knowing can serve multiple functions. For example, the personal characteristics of a teacher belong primarily to her/his personal realm, but they also have consequences for a teacher’s professional quality. The capacity to produce teaching that meets both professional and personal standards takes advantage of and modifies many areas of shared practices of formal schoolwork. The presentation of linguistic structures and processes allows us to show the sources of the data content while the represented content allows us to track those hidden relations.

Many have argued that both the conceptual and practical problems of knowledge construction cannot be solved without developing a more adequate picture of human functioning (e.g., Shotter, 1993; Taylor, 1991; Wertsch, 1998). According to their proposal, the research must stop focusing

on self-contained individuals, who construct boundaries to distinguish themselves from others and their living contexts. In turn, they advocate the task of uncovering relational engagement with others in shared practices of knowledge construction.

### **3 DATA AND ANALYSIS**

The research method employed was narrative interview (Cortazzi, 1993; Mishler, 1986). Twenty-nine elementary school teachers, 20 females and 9 males, were interviewed. The duration of each interview was approximately one and a half to two hours per teacher. All the interviews were conducted in Finnish by the author and tape-recorded. Rough transcriptions of the interview data produced approximately 350 pages of text. Later, five interview texts were re-transcribed and translated into English for a more detailed analysis.

It required time and effort to perceive various qualities contained in the data. They did not become visible at a glance. As Jackson (1992) has emphasized, it was a matter of becoming sensitive to how certain qualities of teacher knowledge were characteristically expressed in the narrative data. The process of getting to know required various phases of reflection. Together, the representational and presentational analyses of the data caused “prolonged reflection” (Jackson, 1992): the data/reflection ratio was approximately the order of 1/10. This meant that one sheet of transcribed data was followed by about 10 pages of interpretative remarks of the two analyses. Thus, in the results section, this chapter focuses on one particular data excerpt and shows its combined analyses.

#### **3.1 Representational Analysis**

As mentioned, representational analysis was employed on the extended passages of data, not on short excerpts elicited from the interviews. This is because narrative ordering makes the individual elements of the data comprehensible by identifying the whole to which they contribute (Polkinghorne, 1988, p.18). However, one cannot understand a narrative simply by interpreting the storied events in sequential order. To grasp the narrative whole, the analyst must infer the general meaning of the narrative based on cues with the aid of her/his own knowledge of the context. The purpose was to provide an adequate account of a narrative analysis that described how cues made certain aspects of the narrative relevant in such a way that an analyst could justify her/his meaning.

Such an inferential process relied on the concept of mediation (Wortham, 2001, p.58). The interpretation or conclusion of *what* the data said was usually reached by inferring several cues. According to Bower and Morrow (1990), this process had two major components: 1) the task was to translate the surface form of the text into underlying concepts, then 2) use that knowledge to identify those areas of the text that refer to the same entity. This type of mediated account resembles Johnson-Laird's (1983) "mental modes," where an analyst first examines the cues in the narrative and then infers some pattern of these cues as to what their overall meaning can possibly be. This process of interpretation is not linear. Pre-existing mental models lead the analysts to interpret cues and elements in certain ways (cf. Kansanen et al., 2000).

The analysis itself consisted of four stages. Each of them brought the analysis to a higher conceptual level. The first stage involved numerous readings of the case data. During the process, certain chunks of the transcripts emerged more prominent than others and the first outlines of the phenomenon became visible. In this phase, these narrative segments were treated on their own terms, ignoring their possible relationships to other parts of the texts. In the second stage, these preliminary labels were used as a kind of lenses through which the transcript could be further examined. The task was to investigate how those chunks of the data cohere, and what implications they have for their conceptualization. The object was to go beyond their original form of narrative segments until their implications and possibilities were more fully played out. Here, the analysis relied on the "mental modes" of the teaching-studying-learning approach (Kansanen et al., 2000) that led to interpret narrative segments in certain ways. In the third stage, the narrative cues were developed in relation to other segments and their tentative conceptualizations. The fourth stage called for a review of the decisions made in the previous stages of the analysis. Here, the interpretation was concerned solely with representational values: the task was to write down the underlying conceptual propositions that narrative utterances communicated. At this level, the analysis depicted narrative utterances solely from the conceptual perspective.

### **3.2 Presentational Analysis**

While the represented content was relevant to interpreting narrative knowledge construction, it did not suffice. In order to understand the interactional positioning accomplished in narratives, we needed to know how the representational value of utterances could contribute to their interactional positioning. As the previous analysis indicated, the representational readings of the data only produced the conceptual frames of

narrative knowledge construction. When the same data was investigated with a concern for the contextual sensitivity of language, the analysis showed how the conceptual explanations of the previous analysis were established throughout the data. As Freeman (1996, p.757) has argued, this was charted through a close study of where the words came from, their sources in the language of particular communities, and how those words were combined to invoke special voices or relationships.

According to Wortham (2001, p.70), any narrative contains cues and voices that could establish more than one position for the analysis. The researcher's task is to identify such a structure when s/he comes across it, given that voices and cues are often ambiguous. In order to catch the relevant cues and make the right inferences, the analyst must know the culture where the narrative stems from – both the types of social groups and interactional events that characterize the narrative. Identifying the interactional positioning of a narrative is a contingent interpretative process: one needs to know the language, the culture, and pick up the relevant patterns of indexical cues as they emerge.

The presentational analysis itself consisted of three phases, which uncovered voices and positioned the teacher with respect to those voices. Reference and predication were the first decisive features of the presentational analysis (Wortham, 2001, p.70). Reference meant the picking out of units from the narrated speech. Predication characterizes the objects picked out. During the presentational analysis, certain units were referred to and it was predicated that in such a way they fit identifiable social types and contexts. In narrative utterances, that happened when the teacher put herself in a particular social relationship to a certain character or context and thereby related herself with that particular social space.

The second stage of the presentational analysis centered on the activity focus of the referenced units. Here, the interactional dimensions of those units became particularly analyzed. The analysis concentrated on the social organization of those speech units that referred to certain pedagogical contexts. The investigation relied on the premise that “the sense of an utterance as an action was an interactive product of what was projected by previous turns at talk and what the speaker actually does” (Drew & Heritage, 1992, p.18). The analysis started with the larger data units that were formed during the previous representational analysis. Thus, those data segments were deconstructed into smaller speech units.

Third, evaluative indexicals were used to describe those smaller speech units. With the choice of evaluative indexicals, the analyst could make the teacher speak with particular voices by describing her by using certain indexicals (Wortham, 2001, p.72). They did not only manifest particular voices but also positioned the teacher with respect to others in her context. Also, evaluative indexicals marked the speaker as belonging to a social

group of teachers that characteristically uses particular types of speech units. The conceptual framework of the representational analysis provided the labels for the presentational interpretation. Apparently, this was due to the fact that certain conceptualizations had become salient. As the analysis proceeded, previous conceptualizations set the context for presentational readings and guided the interpretations of speech units, too. At the end, a structure of mutually presupposing representational concepts and presentational indexes were solidified in such a way that both the conceptual utterances and evaluative indexicals had clear interactional implications.

## **4 RESULTS**

Together, the two methods made the conceptualizations of the represented content and its interactional positioning empirically more useful. In order to analyze the interactional positioning accomplished in narrative knowledge construction, the analyst could first study conceptual patterns across the narrative data, and then it was possible to use those patterns to infer the voicing of the presentational speech units. However, it should be clear from previous discussions that the analyst could not mechanically apply the methodological guidelines either to representational or presentational analyses. Any interpretation of a narrative required a contingent structure. However, these two analyses could nonetheless provide an analytic entry to the interpretation of narrative knowledge construction. By recognizing instances of the perspectives, the analyst was able to identify conceptual structures and to interpret interactional positioning taking place through the narrative.

### **4.1 Representational Analysis**

Basically, the teacher talked about three issues: her teaching, her students, and herself as a teacher. The issues were not separate. Instead, the teacher discussed them in quite an integrative manner. In the teacher's narrative, those three topics could often be heard simultaneously. When the teacher was talking about her teaching, she simultaneously told things about her students and about her own character as a teacher. This indicated the relational character of those utterances. Using these three conceptualizations, the data could be interpreted in a way that gave it more coherence. Table 6-1 shows a short example of the representational analysis and the interpretation of the utterances.

NARRATIVE UTTERANCES	INTERPRETATION: What do the words mean?
Interviewer: Tell me about your work in this school.	
01 Teacher: In this school I have a feeling that I am going somewhere. Here we are constantly developing our curriculum and updating our aims and projects. So far, I can say from my own experience that as a teacher you have many ways to do things, and there's not just "the one and only way" to do them.	School context
02 I have found that very inspiring. This has given me a kind of a boost to try out some new things in my work that I have learned from my colleagues. For example, they have encouraged me to base my teaching more on constructivistic principles and student initiatives and less on textbook-based routines. I am also eager to participate in some of my colleagues' teaching projects and get the chance to learn new ways of teaching.	Teacher: teaching & professional learning
03 I also find it very rewarding that my professional growth as a teacher doesn't depend solely on me any more. My colleagues share their knowledge and experience and they update my "tool kit," which is great because school life is filled with so many tasks and duties.	Professional self
04 I want to be able to create the kind of atmosphere that gives my students a feeling that they are safe: "School without tears" – that's my slogan. I see it as my professional task to be able to create the kind of good and enjoyable safe place where my students can spend their schooldays.	Students: studying & learning
05 That's the key element in my professional attitude that has to be taken into consideration whatever I do in my classroom: the feeling that school should be enjoyable for all students in my classroom. And when I reflect on my teaching career, this has not always been an easy thing to do.	Professional self
06 I have had a lot of students in my classes whom I had regarded as "weak" students, or as "difficult" students – whatever those definitions mean. At any rate, I use those terms to describe the great diversity of students I have had during my teaching career.	Students: studying & learning

Table 6-1. An excerpt of the representational analysis of a narrative.

Teaching was treated as a broad concept. Teaching consisted not only of the teacher's actions in school, it also involved the facilitation and promotion of change in others, also in the teacher herself. Within these processes, the



teacher's actions and intentions became a part of her professional learning. As the analysis shows, the students greatly defined the teacher's story of her work. Due to this, the concepts of teaching and studying were closely related. In the representational readings, teaching meant the teacher's activity while studying all kinds of students' activities taking place in the school context. Using these two concepts, the instructional process could be understood as active on both sides. Also, the teacher's talk was closely related to herself as a teacher. As the data excerpt shows, many utterances were imbued by this personal tone of the teacher's professional self. However, no matter what the teacher's personal and professional commitments were, she was strongly affected by her school context.

From representational analysis what emerged was that all the concepts used were broad frames. They were relational concepts through which the teacher could recognize herself as a certain type of professional. It is important that these conceptualizations are not interpreted as "fixed" or "natural categories," rooted in the teacher's mind. Instead, their fluid and loose character is essential. The different concepts represent differences in content only as we acknowledge the premise that they cannot be understood apart from the pedagogical contexts in which they appear. The purpose was to provide a generalizable structure that could be used as a working tool for the next stage of analysis.

## **4.2 Presentational Analysis**

As the previous analysis showed, the teacher's sample narrative consisted of six episodes that were conceptualized (see Table 6-1). However, exploring the interactional positioning accomplished in the teacher's narrative required more than the description and naming of the emergent concepts. In the next analysis, the representational concepts provided some cues for the interactional analysis of speech units. In order to develop a list of salient voices, which should characterize the teacher's narrative, the following section provides a more detailed analysis of the indexical cues the teacher used as she described her practice. Table 6-2 shows two episodes from the presentational analysis of the data.

NARRATIVE SPEECH UNITS		INTERPRETATION: Where do the words come from?
Interviewer: Tell me about your work in this school?		
01	Teacher: In this school	School context
02	I have a feeling that	Professional self
03	I am going somewhere.	Teacher: teaching & professional learning
04	Here we are constantly developing	School context
05	our curriculum and updating our aims and projects.	Teacher: teaching & professional learning
06	So far, I can say from my own experience that	Professional self
07	as a teacher you have many ways to do things, and there's not just "the one and only way" to do them.	Teacher: teaching & professional learning
08	I have found that very inspiring. This has given me a kind of a boost	Professional self
09	to try out some new things in my work	Teacher: teaching & professional learning
10	that I have learned from my colleagues. For example, they have encouraged me	School context
11	to base my teaching more on constructivistic principles	Teacher: teaching & professional learning
12	and student initiatives	Students: studying and learning
13	and less on textbook-based routines.	Teacher: teaching & professional learning
14	I am also eager	Professional self
15	to participate in some of my colleagues'	School context
16	teaching projects and get the chance to learn new ways of teaching.	Teacher: teaching & professional learning

Table 6-2. An excerpt of the presentational analysis of the narrative.

As the analysis reveals, both the representational and presentational approaches were not mutually exclusive – rather, their inclusive nature was evident. It emerged that the basic forms of teacher talk constituted a kind of target against which the presentational type of knowledge construction could be recognized. The analysis highlighted the importance of social dimensions in the process and development of narrative knowledge construction. Here, four features stood out: first, the narrative knowledge construction was interactional and was shaped by the social, cultural, and historical contexts in which the teacher's work was done. Second, narrative knowledge was not a monolithic entity but was always in the process of emerging. It did not occur in a linear fashion and through distinctly defined stages. Third,

narrative knowledge construction and professional development were recursive; they could happen jointly or one could happen in advance of the other. Fourth, the everyday school context seemed to be responsible for providing supportive interactions for the teacher in her processes of learning and development.

This study is not arguing that a parallel between conceptual representation and its interactional positioning is the primary mechanism of narrative knowledge construction. It is more plausible that various features of narratives can maintain and transform pedagogical knowledge construction. As Table 6-2 shows, the process can take the following form: while describing her narration, the teacher presents salient voices from her social world. The teacher arranges these voices in some pattern and positions her professional self with respect to those relevant voices and their associated contextual commitments. As Wortham (2001, p.154) suggests, this aspect of narration can itself contribute some structure to the teacher's pedagogical knowledge construction.

## **5 DISCUSSION**

The integration of representational and presentational analyses gives us a possibility to trace how teachers construct their pedagogical knowledge. Together, as Freeman (1996, p.758) argues, these two analyses can move us beyond simply documenting teachers' "mental lives" to mapping out how their knowledge evolves and what influences the development of that knowledge. We can also investigate more closely what creates changes in teachers' knowledge and the processes by which such changes are happening.

This opens new possibilities to study the development and changes in teachers' professional learning. These twin analyses can be used as tools for interpreting and understanding teachers' narrative knowledge construction. Shotter (1993, p.18) speaks about "the knowing of the third kind," which directs our attention from a focus on how teachers understand and apply educational theories and principles to how they understand themselves and others in their practical working settings. The stance focuses upon the teachers' use of certain ways of talking to construct their knowledge. Within this flow of responsive and relational knowing, socially significant dimensions of interaction originate and are formed. Here, teachers' responsive understanding of each other is the important issue. This kind of rhetorical-responsive view (Shotter, 1993) between teachers in their socially constituted situations, not just the teachers themselves, structures what teachers do and know. Attention to these processes reveals a complex and uncertain process of testing and checking teacher knowledge issues.

As presented, the social context of teaching is not the teachers' personal property. Rather, it is "out there" as an interpersonal domain that vastly constitutes both the teachers' professional practice and their knowledge of that practice. This does not mean to belittle the teachers' professional knowledge. Rather, it suggests that the knowledge teachers use cannot be placed on either side of the divide between specialized knowledge which particular individuals need in their occupational roles and common knowledge which all adult individuals need as members of the community.

Finally, the study of the teachers' narrative knowledge construction aims to understand the teachers' thought processes and relate them to the practical contexts in which they are formed and expressed. From this perspective, it gives both credence and importance to the teachers' personal commitments, meanings, and positions they take up. As presented, teachers operate with the meanings available to them in their practical settings and they organize their behavior in the light of those meanings. Therefore, we need to see teacher knowledge as a dynamic activity, as *knowing* rather than knowledge. Within this process, teachers are positioned in a range of interacting discourses. From those possibilities teachers make available, they attempt to fashion a relatively integrated and coherent knowledge base for their pedagogical practices.

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## Chapter 7

### **RECONSTRUCTING KNOWLEDGE-IN-ACTION**

*Learning from the authority of experience as a first-year teacher*

Ruth G. Kane and Tom Russell

#### **1 INTRODUCTION**

In October 2002, Tom Russell, a Canadian teacher educator, received an E-mail from a first-year teacher (Megan) who had, the previous year, graduated from an eight-month post-degree programme. Megan was in week seven of her first year teaching in a private secondary school in Canada and was responding to Tom's earlier inquiry about her first year of teaching. Some of her statements are extracted in sequence and presented below.

- I have been battling extraordinary insecurity about my teaching.
- The most significant effect of my insecurity was that it led me to question my instincts.
- So many things are hard that I didn't expect to be hard.
- I feel, as I think every other new teacher feels, utterly exhausted all the time. I don't have energy for anything else but teaching.
- All of that being said, I can unhesitatingly say that I love my job.
- It has really been useful for me to have a chance to articulate this all at once, knowing that someone cares about it. I really appreciate your checking in on me! It makes everything less lonely knowing there is someone out there keeping me in mind (Megan, first-year Canadian teacher, October, 2002).

In March, 2003, Ruth Kane, a teacher educator in New Zealand, was visited by a first-year teacher (Mary) who had graduated the previous year from a two-year post-degree preservice programme. Mary was in week eight of her first year of teaching in a regional secondary school in New Zealand. Ruth was interested to hear how Mary was progressing as a beginning teacher and in particular if she felt that her preservice course had prepared her for her role as a beginning classroom teacher. Mary's response to Ruth's inquiry is recorded below.

“I don’t think anything or anyone could have prepared us for the reality of the classroom. It is just so unpredictable that you couldn’t possibly know what it is like ’till you are really in it.” (Mary, first-year New Zealand teacher, March, 2003).

During discussion of these two encounters with recent teacher graduates from their respective courses, the authors began to question the efficacy of the preservice teacher education programmes of which they were a part. They decided to broaden their conversations with recent graduates of their programmes. The question underpinning their joint endeavours was: Can examining the first year of teaching through the experiences of beginning teachers provide important insights into how well we do (or could) prepare teachers for the reality of teaching?

## 2 TEACHER EDUCATION AND THE FIRST YEAR OF TEACHING

Teacher education programmes continue to graduate beginning teachers who are motivated and confident in their ability to enter the teaching profession and to engage in real teaching (Kagan, 1992; Kane, 1993; Loughran et al., 2001; Russell & McPherson, 2001). Yet it is reported repeatedly that the reality of the first year of teaching quickly shatters this illusion of adequate preparation (Cole & Knowles, 1993; Kane, 1993; Russell & McPherson, 2001; Rust, 1994; Weinstein, 1989). While they may well have developed skills of curriculum delivery, all too often beginning teachers lack a deep personal understanding of themselves as teachers or of what it means to be a teacher. Few teachers seem to recall their teacher education programmes as making a significant contribution to their understanding of teaching or of themselves as teachers.

Each individual admitted to a preservice teacher education program with a view to preparing to teach has spent a significant fraction of her or his life in classrooms at school and university. Images of the work of teachers are countless; memories of good and bad teachers are many. Assumptions about how teachers think about their work are abundant, but rarely checked against reality. All too naturally and easily, those who take a preservice course seem to accept the familiar view that they are there to be *taught how to teach*. Among other things, they expect to be taught the curriculum requirements, skills of curriculum delivery, and techniques of classroom management and motivation; they have very limited awareness of the need to examine personal attitudes, beliefs and assumptions about teachers and teaching (Kane, 2002). Yet the literature reveals that teachers’ personal dimensions

are powerful influences not only on teaching practice, but also on the ways in which preservice students *learn to teach*.

Borko and Putnam (1995) offer relevant comments as they conclude an analysis of research on learning to teach. In a discussion of personal factors that present challenges to learning to teach, they provide this summary of their findings:

“New teachers are likely to bring to their initial teaching experiences a host of assumptions that shape the instructional skills and routines they learn. In many cases, these beliefs about how students learn and the teacher’s role in facilitating learning – beliefs acquired over years of experience as students in traditional educational settings – are incompatible with the views of learning underlying the instructional approaches advocated by teacher education programs. These beliefs often remain implicit, serving as filters that help to shape how novice teachers interpret and learn new instructional strategies and approaches” (pp.699-700).

Then, in a section on “facilitating teachers’ learning”, they offer the following recommendations:

“Because the knowledge and beliefs that prospective teachers bring to their teacher education programs exert such a powerful influence on what and how they learn about teaching, programs that hope to help novices think and teach in new ways must challenge participants’ pre-existing beliefs about teaching, learning, subject matter, self as teacher, and learning to teach ... They must help prospective teachers make their implicit beliefs explicit and create opportunities for them to confront the potential inadequacy of those beliefs. They should also provide opportunities for prospective teachers to examine, elaborate, and integrate new information into their existing systems of knowledge and beliefs” (p.701).

Ethell and McMeniman (2002) also demonstrate the critical importance of making explicit and examining student teachers’ preconceptions and beliefs as a critical initial step in preservice teacher education. In spite of repeated calls for attention to the personal dimensions of becoming a teacher, all too often teacher education programs appear to prioritise other elements of teacher preparation. Cole and Knowles (1993, p.469) offer a provocative assertion that directs our attention to what might be missing in preservice teacher preparation: “Most preservice programs concentrate almost entirely on teaching pre-service teachers to teach; little attention is placed on helping them become teachers.” Following this line of reasoning,



it may not be unexpected that the first year of teaching is, for many, a difficult transition.

Russell and McPherson (2001, p.3) suggest that the first-year survival phase is accepted in staffroom folklore as “the way we learn to teach.” Yet for a significant number of beginning teachers, decisions are made within the first two years of teaching to leave the profession. In New Zealand, the Post Primary Teachers Association (PPTA) reports that “losses amongst beginning teachers are high” and the most common reason for resignation is to take up jobs outside of teaching (PPTA, 2002). Becoming a teacher is complex and it would be erroneous to suggest that beginning teachers leave the profession due to elements inherently lacking in their preservice programmes. Such high attrition in the early years of teaching, however, does cause us and others to examine whether beginning teachers experience significant discontinuities in the transition from pre-service teacher education to first year of teaching (Loughran et al., 2001).

The encounters reported in the preceding introduction between the authors and their graduates and the repeated references in the literature to the first-year survival phase give rise to this ongoing enquiry into how beginning teachers learn from their first year of teaching.

### **3 THE PARTICIPANTS**

In soliciting participants for this project, the authors contacted graduates from their 2002 classes by E-mail. In Canada, Tom contacted three graduates whom he had supervised during practicum. In New Zealand, Ruth sent an invitation to her 14 graduates, some of whom had maintained regular contact via an E-mail list.

The four New Zealand beginning teachers – Jane, Kim, Cher and Chloe – graduated in December 2002 from a two year post-degree programme. Each of the teachers had previously completed a three-year bachelors degree in a specific discipline area: Jane and Cher hold Bachelor of Science degrees in Biology, Kim holds a Bachelor of Arts in Japanese and Mathematics and Chloe holds a Bachelor of Arts in English and Mathematics. As the person responsible both for the design and the coordination of their preservice programme, Ruth had a particular interest in critically evaluating whether the two-year post-degree model (which is unique in New Zealand) enabled student teachers to develop as teachers. Ruth had worked with these graduates over the two years of their course and had built respectful and trusting relationships with them.

Three of the New Zealand teachers (Jane, Kim, Cher), at the time of initially responding to the questions (April 2003), had completed 10 weeks of their first year of teaching. Chloe had left New Zealand on graduation and

taken up a position in an urban school south of London in the UK. She maintains contact with her 2002 cohort through participation on an E-mail list and intermittent personal E-mails and phone calls to Ruth and others.

The three Canadian teachers – Elspeth, Megan and Nora – graduated as certified teachers in May 2002 from an eight-month post-degree programme that has one significant difference from a traditional design: after an initial four-week period of university-based classes, candidates spend 10 of the next 12 weeks in one school, thereby gaining both early and extensive classroom experience. Each of the three teachers had previously completed a four-year bachelor degree in a specific discipline area: Megan in English and Elspeth and Nora in physics. As a person with a longstanding interest in how the practicum experience helps people learn to teach, Tom has an ongoing interest in critically evaluating the influence of early extended field experience. Tom worked with these teachers as practicum supervisor and in classes at the university, developing trusting relationships that led to continuing conversations by electronic means during their first year of teaching. The Canadian teachers, at the time of initially responding to the questions posed in Table 7-1, had completed eight months of their first year of teaching.

## **4 METHOD**

To understand better the reality of the first year of teaching and to gain a sense of how well prepared the participants perceived themselves to be, the authors invited participants to respond to a series of questions. The questions were presented in a three-column table in Word (see Table 7-1) that allowed for any length of response as the space would expand as participants entered comments in any cell in the table. Both Tom and Ruth responded to the beginning teachers' comments and the table was then returned to participants who were invited to add further comments if they wished.

The goal of the questionnaire was to initiate ongoing conversations with the teachers (and between Ruth and Tom) about the experience of the first year of teaching and the degree to which the respective teacher education programmes provided adequate preparation for the reality of being a teacher. The questions posed were intended to provide graduate teachers with the stimulus to think and “talk” about their experiences as first-year teachers and to reflect on and consider their own learning to teach experiences. It was hoped that the responses from Ruth and Tom would stimulate further reflection and thought and engage the beginning teachers in an ongoing conversation about the ways in which they were learning from the first-year experience.

Questions	First-year teacher response	Comments by Ruth & Tom
What do you see as the most positive aspects of your first-year teaching experience and why are they positive?		
What have been the greatest challenges as a first-year teacher?		
Thinking of the joys and the challenges, can you explain what and how you have learned from these experiences?		
What do you now see as the strengths and weaknesses of your preparation for teaching?		
What sources of support inside and outside the school have been most helpful?		
To what extent have your students helped you find your way as a new teacher?		
What advice would you give to someone just starting to learn how to teach?		
Are there any ways in which you feel you have taken charge of your own professional learning?		
Are there any other aspects of the first year that you want to comment on?		

Table 7-1. Questions for beginning teachers.

The first-year teachers' responses were read by both authors, who added comments and questions in an effort to clarify and extend each participant's thinking and responses. The tables were then sent back to the participants who would in turn respond, the authors would again comment, and so on, in an ongoing dialogue.

In reading and re-reading the first-year teachers' responses and in offering responses to them and to each other, the authors began what they hoped would be a continuing dialogue that focused on understanding better how these first-year teachers negotiated their new roles and learned from authentic experience. The participating graduate teachers were only a small proportion of the 2002 graduates of the respective programmes and there is no suggestion that they might in any way be representative. The themes identified in their responses signal ways in which the first year of teaching provided new and continued opportunities for their learning and development, which in turn raise issues for the consideration of teacher educators.

Tentative themes were identified by each author conducting repeated readings of each teacher's evolving table as a means of identifying recurring themes related to the participants' experiences as a first-year teacher. The authors subsequently communicated by E-mail to refine and determine the themes presented below and supported by the voices of the teachers in the form of verbatim quotes from the participants' responses.

## 5 THEMES FROM THE FIRST MONTH OF TEACHING

Bearing in mind that the participants in this project come from two different teacher education programs situated in different countries, it has been particularly interesting to find that the participants report similar first-year experiences. The first-year teachers' responses provide useful insights into how they continue to learn from the authority of experience as a beginning teacher. Here we draw on Munby and Russell's (1994) identification of the authority of experience, which they contrast to the authority of theory and research, on the one hand, and the authority of other people's experience, on the other.

### 5.1 The Challenge of Learning from being a *Teacher* in my *own* Class

Each of the teachers presented "having my own class and being solely responsible for their learning" (Jane) as a key factor in developing a sense of being a teacher. Responsibility for students' learning repeatedly emerged in the teachers' responses and there was a strong sense that the teachers had spent their initial months in school coming to terms with "who do you want to be as a teacher?" (Elspeth). In particular this was expressed in terms of opportunities for their own learning as teachers:

"I'm loving the challenge of being the teacher in my own class where I can develop my own teaching strategies that I'm comfortable with and that work for me. Each class is different and I am learning so much. ... I'm going to keep on learning, and as I learn, my teaching is going to improve as a direct result of this." (Cher).

What was important to the teachers was that their classes were there to stay. There was a clear message that it was the sustained nature of their role as teachers that brought a dimension that hitherto was not available through practicum experiences.

"Being part of kids' lives on a sustained and regular basis has invigorated my teaching, motivated me to work harder and inspired me to "push the envelope." (Megan).

This sustained ownership of the class was interpreted by Jane as being liberating in some ways, while simultaneously endowing her with particular responsibility:

“The responsibility of finally having my *own class* and being able to do what I want to do without having to explain to someone that “while this doesn’t really make sense now, the long term plan is ...” (Jane, emphasis in original).

## 5.2 Building Relationships with Students

All the first-year teachers reported that establishing effective relationships with students was fundamental to their ongoing development as beginning teachers. They understood these relationships to be explicitly linked to student learning and their responsibility, as teachers, for promoting that learning.

“Connecting with students. Actually being able to get through to students and seeing them light up when they understand.” (Kim).

Megan’s introduction to teaching and her growing sense of self as teacher are grounded primarily in the relationships she developed with students, with colleagues, and with students’ parents. Relationships were reported as fundamental to her work as a teacher and her role within the school and beyond. She viewed the relationship with students as reciprocal and grounded in care, trust and love and she credited her continued learning to:

“being loved by students has also given me a confidence and security which has transferred to other areas of my life, as I learn to trust my instincts.” (Megan).

For all these beginning teachers, relationships with students were paramount. For Kim, it was the students who had “allowed me to feel comfortable being myself” and for Cher, the students were central to her ongoing development as a teacher:

“Without students I wouldn’t be a teacher. If I show an interest in the students they respond. My students at the moment, I suppose, for a lack of a better phrase, are my guinea pigs. Just by being in my classes, they are helping me develop as a teacher. Yes, even the “interesting characters.” (Cher).

Nora located the joys of teaching predominantly in her relationships with her students and in how those relationships signal student engagement and learning. In addition, Nora reported that:

“relationships formed with students are everything – I feel like a different person now. I have more confidence, and can relate to them more easily.” (Nora).

Chloe reported that a positive sign in the struggles of her first few months of teaching in an urban school in England has been her ability to form relationships on a personal level with students.

“I have really good relationships with the students on a personal level. They like me, and although it has taken a long time, they are beginning to trust me (a huge feat for such lonely, isolated and untrusting kids).” (Chloe).

When responding to the question that asked her to report on the extent to which her students have “helped you find your way as a new teacher,” Chloe wrote that “mine have nearly driven me out of teaching!” For Chloe it had been an endless struggle of seeking ways to connect with her class and to try new ways of engaging them in learning.

“The different ways they challenge me, every single day, has made me develop new ways of dealing with things, given me confidence to try anything, and have forced me to re-focus my teaching approach and style.” (Chloe).

In talking about the students and their relationships with them, these teachers position the students as belonging to them – “they’re *my* students.” This statement of ownership was always linked in the participants’ responses to the responsibility that they felt for fostering their students’ learning.

“Sometimes they are a source of inspiration, sometimes they make me want to just walk away. In the end, they’re not just students, they’re *my* students. I’ve got a responsibility to give them my best. Maybe it’s that connection with them that has shaped my feelings towards the job.” (Elspeth).

### **5.3 Support Networks: Overcoming Isolation**

All of the participants wrote about the importance of support networks that sustained them as beginning teachers and enabled them to counter feelings of isolation that accompany challenging classroom experiences. The beginning teachers in New Zealand (Cher, Jane and Kim) had the benefit of an induction requirement that assigns beginning teachers a 0.8 teaching load

and a teacher-mentor in their first year. In addition to this formal time allowance, these participants reported that the internal support from their school mentors was significant in helping them negotiate the school culture, school politics, and the workload of a first-year teacher. They each also identified their ongoing E-mail communications with their fellow graduates and lecturers (Ruth and Jenny) from the 2002 cohort as a critical support network.

Jane reported “support from my teacher training peers and lecturers is really amazing. I know that I can get in contact with them anytime and they give whatever help they can.” Cher used her colleagues at schools and peers from her 2002 student teacher cohort to reassure her that “we are all having the same problems” and to “add a different perspective and objectivity that only someone looking in can provide.”

While Chloe appreciated the support of her peers through the regular E-mail list, she was experiencing a very different school environment from that of her fellow New Zealanders. She noted the collegial support of a colleague who “is fabulous, trustworthy and has a knack for putting things into perspective” and another whose shared experiences reassured Chloe that she is not alone. These avenues of support were informal rather than structural and this was evident in the way Chloe reported the lack of support from the leaders of her school.

“Sadly, my support networks have not been terribly good... Senior management are renowned for staying behind closed doors and refusing to take on behavioural problems when all other avenues have been covered.... I have unfortunately been put in a situation where I can only rely on myself, so I have had to take charge of my professional learning, purely as a means to survive.” (Chloe).

In the absence of formal structures, Chloe formed allegiances with parents as a way of recruiting some support for her role as teacher. She reports that “Surprisingly, I have found parents to be extremely supportive.”

The Canadian teachers reported that both experienced colleagues and neophyte peers contributed to building important support networks both within school and externally. Megan stressed the importance of participating in the school-based formal mentoring programme, although she also warned of the need to be aware of school politics. She suggested that beginning teachers should become cognisant of and care for their colleagues and acknowledge and “appreciate colleagues’ good work,” as this has the potential to positively influence staff dynamics.

Elsbeth suggested that “veteran teachers who give you their binder” can ensure that you do not have to “re-invent the wheel every day” and may also assist when your well-thought plans go awry. Likewise, other “rookies,”

first-year teachers “who you can just sit down and talk with [and] swap horror stories” provide relief and the freedom to realise that “other people really do have the same difficulties as you do” (Elspeth). Support of peers undergoing similar socialization experiences reassured participants that as beginning teachers they were not alone, that their experiences have been and continue to be experienced by others, and that there are ways to support each other.

## 5.4 The Role of Reflection in becoming a Teacher

In the first-year teachers’ initial responses there was an overwhelming awareness that they were still undergoing a process of becoming a teacher. They made references to how much they were learning and, for some, this learning was facilitated through considered and personal reflection, both on their teaching practice and who they were as teachers.

For Elspeth, the opportunity to teach two different classes in the same subject allowed her to immerse herself in the role of teacher in front of different audiences. The opportunity to re-teach content enabled Elspeth to focus on her interactions with students and on *how* she was teaching, which in turn enhanced her teaching. She reported that “slowly, I think I am getting better at observing myself in the role of teaching as I am doing it.”

Cher’s responses show clear evidence of her purposely engaging in reflection both on the mechanics of the classroom interactions (technical reflection) and on the ways in which her teaching resonates with her own personal beliefs and theories about the role of the teacher and the purposes of education (critical reflection). She is conscious that her actions and decisions in the classroom have effects on students that extend beyond those initially evident in the classroom.

“Listening to how I feel about a situation and learning why I reacted that way – do I have subconscious prejudices against a student?... Am I being fair? This is part of my reflection as well. ... The self-analysing of what I think went wrong/right and how I can improve on a lesson or a way I have reacted to a situation in class/school. In a situation in class I ask myself why did I react that way? Was I feeling threatened? Did I react or respond?” (Cher).

In seeking to understand whether she reacts or responds to class situations, Cher’s responses revealed an ethic of care in the classroom that transcends the curriculum and goes to the heart of the teacher-student relationship. She acknowledged that her students’ reality is complex and is not discarded as they enter the classroom:



“I also remember that I am dealing with teenagers and they can be very unpredictable and they are trying to fit into two worlds (child/adult) and are experimenting themselves what works for them and what doesn’t. How I react affects them.” (Cher).

In her ongoing dialogue with the authors, Megan reflects a deep care for her students and for ensuring that she provides them with a “safe place where they can succeed,” where success is measured not necessarily in individual achievement, but rather in the ways in which each of them (students and herself) can contribute to the wider good of the group and, in turn, of society. Megan demonstrates her disposition towards critical reflection on her own practice as she acknowledges that her goal is to introduce students to critical ways of looking at the world around them.

“I hope my love for my students manifests itself as engagement: not just about things which concern them (the war with Iraq), but also with things that concern me and I think should concern them (the way the war is presented to us on CBC Radio News).” (Megan).

Chloe reported that her experience of and aptitude for reflection were significant factors in her ability to survive the initial months of teaching. Her continued attention to examining her own practice within the wider socio-cultural context of the school community enabled Chloe to negotiate her way into meaningful relationships with the students in her classes.

“If I wasn’t constantly reflecting on why my classroom (and my mind) was blowing apart all the time, I wouldn’t be trying new things, using and improving things that work, and accepting and amending things that don’t. I feel because I am constantly reflecting. ... I have really grown and I am conquering a difficult school and difficult kids. It isn’t as bad as when I first started, and I think this is because I am learning to manage myself and my teaching better through reflecting on everything that happens in each lesson. Something new springs itself on me everyday. (Really wish I had started a journal from day 1, Ruth!!! It would have been an excellent indicator of how far I have come!)” (Chloe).

## 6 BECOMING A TEACHER: WHAT DO FIRST-YEAR TEACHERS' RESPONSES TELL US?

For teacher educators, understanding better *how* beginning teachers learn from the first year of teaching provides a frame for examining the degree to which teacher education programmes prepare student teachers for the role of classroom teacher. It may also enable us to challenge the accepted staffroom folklore that the first-year survival phase is “the way we learn to teach” (Russell & McPherson, 2001, p.3). The beginning teachers' initial responses signal a number of questions that can be asked of teacher education:

- To what degree do preservice programs provide opportunities for student teachers to examine aspects of personal beliefs about teaching and being a teacher?
- How can we ensure that student teachers have opportunities to examine and experience relationships as a basis of teaching and learning?
- How can we support student teachers to develop dispositions required to learn from experience, and thus support *becoming a teacher* as a process of lifelong learning?

Recent literature points to the importance of *becoming a teacher* rather than *learning how to teach* (Korthagen, 2001). The importance of taking time within preservice programs to articulate and examine student teachers' beliefs and personal conceptions of teachers and teaching is reinforced by Allender, who privileges the voices and stories of his student teachers in the following statements:

“Intellectual and experiential knowledge are important to the ongoing development of teaching skills, but preferring personal knowledge builds confidence in the power of self and self-study. When personal knowledge is in the forefront, conscious epistemological changes are feasible” (Allender, 2001, p.3).

Participating first-year teachers reinforced the importance of beginning teachers purposefully interrogating, “Who do you want to be as a teacher?” (Elsbeth). In responding to the question that sought their advice to preservice programs, they stressed the importance of student teachers taking time to “know thyself” and being clear on their philosophy as a teacher. Elspeth wrote: “Try to firm up what your philosophy is as a teacher. If you are not sure what your beliefs are, it will be easier to be led astray from them by outside forces.” References to knowing your self as a teacher also appeared in comments by Cher and by Jane: “How far you are prepared to go in being yourself in front of a class [influences] how good a teacher you are going to be” (Jane). We suggest that the data in this limited investigation call for us to

give greater attention in preservice programs to the degree to which we do enable student teachers to articulate and examine their personal conceptions of teaching and being a teacher.

The first-year teachers' responses suggest that establishing relationships with students is fundamental both to their students' learning and also to their own learning and development as teachers. The ways in which teachers establish relationships grounded in trust and an ethic of care are certainly an important element of preservice teacher education. The data emerging from the beginning teachers suggest that more time might be given to this dimension across preservice teacher education. Their responses indicate that their practicum experiences did not provide the opportunity for such development. All respondents emphasized the difference associated with being solely and completely responsible for the learning of their students, in contrast to their practicum experiences where their associate teacher had ultimate responsibility and had built the initial teacher-student relationship on which they subsequently "intruded."

As teacher educators, we need to consider ways in which we can structure practicum experiences that enable student teachers to establish sustained relationships with students over a time period that supports the development of autonomy and responsibility as teachers. It must be acknowledged, however, that there will always be limits on the student teacher's ability to feel full responsibility, and it may well be more important to acknowledge explicitly these inherent restrictions on student teachers' relationships with students in an associate teacher's classroom. In most practicum situations the student teacher arrives after the "real" teacher-student bond has been established and leaves before it concludes. The first-year teachers contributing data to this chapter indicate clearly that establishing their own personal relationships with students without competition from another and more experienced teacher launched them on a new level of professional learning from experience.

The first-year teachers' responses demonstrate that becoming a teacher is an ongoing process that is initiated, not completed, in the formal preservice teacher education program. This suggests that the practicum, while typically identified as the most important part of the preservice experience, is *not*, in hindsight, interpreted by these participants as an authentic experience of being a teacher. *Through these teachers' responses we are reminded that it is only during the first year of teaching that these participants took on the identity and responsibility of teachers.* As student teachers they were not given the responsibility and autonomy that appear to be critical to their identification with the role of teacher that is grounded in sustained relationships with *my* students in *my* class.

In reviewing the participants' responses it also became clear that there is significant potential for teacher educators to be more involved in the early

years of teaching, supporting and working with beginning teachers. In a small but apparently important way, this is the approach taken by Ruth in the cohort E-mail discussion group. Not all of the original 14 members of the 2002 cohort contribute regularly to the E-mail discussion list. Some lurk in the background and only emerge when dramatic events draw or push them in; others seem to have fallen away but may be listening on the edges. Even so, some two years following graduation, it is not uncommon for 10 of the original cohort to regularly communicate on the list. Four of these members contribute from teaching positions overseas, offering and seeking support and providing a mystique of alternative experiences.

## **7       AUTHORS' REFLECTIONS ON RELATIONSHIPS**

These seven first-year teachers responded to our questions in the context of our previous trusting relationships with them; they took the time to respond and readily agreed to our use of their comments for this paper. Their prompt, frank and generous responses remind us of the importance of the relationships we established with them while they were on their preservice courses. We hope that their time with us then was productive. Clearly, their time with us now is grounded in that initial relationship; in an important sense, they have become our teachers. The data provided by these seven teachers make us question the taken-for-granted structure that assumes that a teacher educator's relationship with future teachers ends as they leave their pre-service course. Perhaps new teachers regret the fact that those with whom they "connected" while preparing to be a "real" teacher are no longer available to them at a time when conversations could really help sustain them and nurture their growing confidence and understanding.

*The primary reality in becoming a teacher may well be one of relationship.* We are reluctant to make too much of the data provided by a small number of individuals. Nevertheless, our reading of the data directs our attention not only to the personal dimensions of becoming a teacher that are inherent in the relationship between first-year teacher and her or his students but also to the issue of relationship between first-year teacher and teacher educator. We know that we cannot maintain close contact with all our former students, but these data direct our attention to the importance of doing as much as we can with those who are interested. These are questions that continue to challenge us as teacher educators and our pursuit of these questions over time will reveal whether the new understandings gained from this project will enable us to reframe and reform our own practice as teacher educators.

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## Chapter 8

### REVISITING TEACHING ARCHETYPES

*Re-conceptualising student teachers' lay theories and identities*

Ciaran Sugrue

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

Increasingly, as the pace of change quickens to unprecedented speed, education systems are being deregulated and subject to market forces as a general tendency to privatise the public sphere (Beck, 2000a). Globalisation, or glocalisation as Beck (2000) prefers to name it, as a more accurate description of the asymmetrical relationship between the local and the global, and the impact of the 'infotainment telesector' (Homer-Dixon, 2001) is impacting very differently within national educational systems depending on how these forces are 'refracted' at the national and local level (Goodson, 2004). Consequently, there is a growing tendency also to increase regulation of teacher education, to mandate and to prescribe particular kinds of programmes, their requirements and delivery as well as the process of certification and re-certification. This kind of hyper-rationality applied to teachers' lives and work contrasts with Government mandates that increasingly also broaden the role of teachers to include care and concern, to foster self-esteem, identity and citizenship while simultaneously seeking to develop skills that are marketable in the global economy, to boost individual country's market share and to improve competitive edge in the 'Knowledge Economy', to address simultaneously the knowledge economy and the knowledge society (see Hargreaves, 2003; Stoll, Fink & Earl, 2003).

In such circumstances, it is appropriate to ask: what has teaching and schooling already done to student teachers before entry to a teacher education programme and what are the factors that appear to contribute most to their professional identities in the making and the lay theories of teaching that they have already well formed and we know from previous research to be tenacious and powerful?

The primary purpose of this chapter is theoretical rather than empirical. It sets out to re-conceptualise student teachers' and beginning teachers' professional formation by connecting teaching archetypes with lay theories and identity formation. Part of the purpose of this re-conceptualisation is to create greater awareness of the relationship between continuity and change: that teaching archetypes, lay theories and identity are constructed from past present and future. The chapter concludes with some comments on the implications of this re-conconceptualisation for initial teacher education and early professional learning. Teaching archetypes and lay theories are discussed simultaneously, and this is followed by consideration of identity formation as a means of extending discussion. However, the discussion is intended to be cumulative in its impact. Due to the fact that I am located within the Irish educational system, this discussion takes on heightened significance. It is generally accepted that Irish society has changed rapidly and radically during the past twenty years (see Corcoran & Peillon, 2002; O'Toole, 2003; Sugrue, 2004). Consequently, finding continuity in such circumstances becomes more of a challenge, but is crucially important also for individual integrity and social cohesion. It is anticipated that due to global forces, these realities will resonate with other contexts also.

## **2 TEACHING ARCHETYPES AND LAY THEORIES OF TEACHING**

This paper takes for granted the importance of personal narrative, metaphor and experienced knowledge as having significance for student teachers' lay theories (Calderhead, 1987; Calderhead & Gates, 1993; Clandinin, 1986; Clift, Houston & Pugach, 1990; Connelly & Clandinin, 1988; Day et al., 1990; Elbaz, 1983; Holt-Reynolds, 1992; Hunt, 1987; Johnson, 1992; Pollard & Tann, 1987; Russell & Munby, 1992). It also seeks to situate these theories within the more broadly-based historically and socially situated literature on life-history and biography because of its significance for shaping the beliefs and professional behaviours of teachers (Ball and Goodson, 1985; Goodson, 1992; Goodson & Sikes, 2001; Goodson & Walker, 1991; Sikes, Measor & Woods, 1985; Woods, 1985). A contextualised analysis of this nature is warranted because "the traditions through which particular practices are transmitted and reshaped never exist in isolation from larger social traditions" (Goodson, 1992, p.242). Due to the absence of life-history and teacher biographical inquiry in the setting, in the past I have turned to Irish literary sources to identify the archetypal contours of the "Master" and the "Mistress" (Sugrue, 1996, 1997, 1998): both of whom have assumed the status of "cultural myths in teaching [in the Irish

context] which provide a set of ‘ideal’ images, definitions, justifications and measures for thought and activity in schools” (Day, 1993, p.12). My analysis assumes that these archetypes have significance for popular perceptions of primary school teachers, an assumption that is supported by Wertsch’s assertion that “collective memory simplifies; sees events from a single, committed perspective; is impatient with ambiguities of any kind; reduces events to mythic archetypes” (Halbawachs, 1992, pp.3-4, quoted in Wertsch, 2002, p.19). Consequently, in addition to their apprenticeships of observation, these archetypes are a subterranean influence also on student teachers’ orientation towards teaching as a career and their personal constructions of themselves as intending teachers, their identification with teaching and their professional identities. The personal and the wider socio-historical context of their schooling and socialisation shape their reconstructions of these archetypes of teaching through apprenticeship of observation and through interaction with the socio-cultural forces of daily life. They are the “palimpsest” from which new identities are hewn (Southworth, 2002). However, rapid social change may promote a kind of individual and collective cultural amnesia to the extent that lay theories become rooted in the present but have extremely ‘shallow roots’ (Cuban & Usdan, 2003).

Holt-Reynolds (1992, p.326) describes lay theories as:

“...beliefs developed naturally over time without the influence of instruction. Pre-service teachers do not consciously learn them at an announced, recognised moment from a formal teaching/learning episode. Rather, lay theories represent tacit knowledge lying dormant and unexamined by the student (see Barclay & Wellman, 1986). Developed over long years of participation in and observation of classrooms (Lortie, 1975) and teaching/learning incidents occurring in schools, homes or the larger community (Measor, 1985; Sikes, 1987), lay theories are based on untutored interpretations of personal, lived experiences.”

The personal experiences of these student teachers form a nexus between their apprenticeship of observation and the embedded cultural archetypes of teaching. By deconstructing student teachers’ lay theories, therefore, insights are gained into the most formative personal and social influences on their professional identities. These insights are critical to the process and substance of initial teacher education and subsequent professional growth. However, because this theoretical framework has been previously developed and published (see Sugrue, 1996, 1997), a summary only is provided here, sufficient to give the reader a ‘flavour’ of the terrain and to develop the theoretical argument and lens of this chapter.



### 3 THE 'MASTER' AND 'MISTRESS' AS CULTURAL ARCHETYPES OF TEACHING

The terms master and mistress share identical origins in the Latin word *dominus*: to be head of a household and servants, including slaves. Archetypal teachers are, therefore, likely to *dominate* classrooms and students and, their teaching styles, to *dictate* the learning process through a transmission mode of teaching.

Though not specifically referring to the school master as a cultural archetype, McCurtin asserts that the dominant cultural agenda of the 1930's was "the macho culture of the Gaelic Athletic Association" which was frequently administered at local level by the master. By contrast she suggests that Irish women's values were dominated by "convent culture" and this was particularly so for entrants to primary teacher education who, until the seventies, were segregated on gender lines and educated by religious during their teacher training if not for their entire formal education (quoted in Sugrue, 1997, p.23).

Traditional (archetypal) teaching is well documented in recent research literature under the terms "teaching as telling" (Bullough, 1992, p.242) or "teaching as transmission of knowledge" (Samuelowicz & Bain, 1992, p.100). In some jurisdictions with an increasing emphasis on 'standardization' such approaches have been resuscitated (see Darling-Hammond, 1997; McNeil, 2000). The octogenarian writer MacMahon, in his appropriately titled biographical text, *The Master* (1992), describes the social conditions during the first half of this century which shaped Irish primary teachers' perceptions of themselves and circumscribed their role when he says:

"It was enjoined upon us by the state to undertake the revival of Irish as a spoken language<sup>1</sup>, ... and it was also enjoined upon us by the Catholic Church<sup>2</sup>, which, to put it at its mildest, was powerful at the time, to transfer from one generation to the next the corpus of Catholic belief ..." (p.89).

Similarly, McCourt, in his celebrated and controversial book, *Angela's Ashes* (1996), helps to flesh out the consequences of this prescriptive over-bearing curriculum agenda from a pupil perspective. In a purple passage, he

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<sup>1</sup> It is compulsory for each child on commencing primary schooling, typically at age four, to learn the Irish language.

<sup>2</sup> The vast majority of primary schools in Ireland are owned and managed by the Catholic Church – a state funded parochial school system though during the past two decades there has been a significant growth in Irish language medium primary schools (currently 144) and more recently in multi-denominational schools, currently approximately 40.

begins with a brief description of the teachers, in the all boys school he attended (Leamy's National School) where the macho culture dominated. He says of the seven teachers: "... they all had straps, canes, blackthorn sticks. They hit you with the sticks on the shoulders, the back, the legs, and especially the hands" (p. 80). He continues by indicating what warranted such brutal treatment when he says: "they hit you if you're late, if you have a leaky nib on your pen, if you laugh, if you talk, and if you don't know things" (p.80). Significantly, in terms of MacMahon's insider account above, McCourt singles out three issues in particular that he clearly considers noteworthy: language, religion and history. Regarding language he states: "they hit you if you can't say your name in Irish, if you can't say the Hail Mary in Irish, if you can't ask for the lavatory pass in Irish." From a religious perspective, "they hit you if you don't know why God made the world, if you don't know the patron saint of Limerick, if you can't recite the Apostles' Creed", but the oppressive emphasis on facts and recitation is not confined to prayers and saints for further 'treatment' awaits you "if you can't add nineteen to forty-seven, if you can't subtract nineteen from forty-seven, if you don't know the chief towns and products of the thirty-two counties of Ireland or if you can't find Bulgaria on the wall map of the world ..." (p.80). Further difficulty arises for the pupils when it comes to dealing with history for while there may be an 'official' view of the subject in post-independent Ireland, individual teacher's have a more idiosyncratic interpretation of civil war politics that can also get you into trouble, where local knowledge derived from "listening to the big boys ahead of you" becomes part of your survival kit as "they can tell you about the master you have now, about what he likes and what he hates." Consequently, it is necessary to choose wisely and locally your response to major historical questions, because "one master will hit you if you don't know that Eamon DeValera [former Irish prime minister and President] is the greatest man that ever lived. Another master will hit you if you don't know that Michael Collins was the greatest man that ever lived" (p.80).

In such circumstances, daily life in school becomes a kind of living hell made more Dante-esque by the personal preferences of individual teachers in their enactment of official curricula. Power, control, passivity, rote memorizing and obedience are major elements of this teaching as a means of indoctrination for conformity, for breaking the spirit. As Fallon (1998, p.32) argues: "blundering from ancestral semi-poverty into middle-classness, caught up in the *embourgeoisement* of a largely peasant society, Irish people had little firm ground under their feet and, in many respects, were a typical post-colonial society in search of new, stable patterns of living." In such circumstances the largely peasant primary teachers shaped and were shaped by the Irish Ireland that the fledgling state wished to create, they were both its creators, promoters and its prisoners. Do such archetypal figures have any

resonance with or relevance in the lives and identity struggles of contemporary student teachers?

Though the “Mistress” was a reality in many children’s lives, she does not feature very prominently in literature. Nevertheless, within popular culture she shared many characteristics in common with her male colleagues though this may have been due to suppression of her “private world” from her public sphere while frequently being assigned to do “women’s work” at the junior end of the school (Grumet, 1988, p.56). In *Excursions in the Real World*, Trevor (1993) gives a vivid account of his teacher who, despite her youth, wore the mantle of the village school mistress. He says of Miss Willoughby<sup>3</sup>:

“[she] was stern and young, ... she was Methodist and there burnt in her breast an evangelical spirit which stated that we, her pupils, except for her chosen few, must somehow be made less wicked than we were. Her chosen few were angels of a kind, their handwriting blessed, their compositions a gift from God, I was not among them. ...I vividly recall Miss Willoughby. Terribly she appears. Severe and beautiful... ‘Someone laughed during prayers,’ her stern voice accuses, and you feel at once that it was you, although you know it wasn’t. V. *poor* she writes in your headline book when you’ve done your best to reproduce, four times, perfectly, *Pride goeth before destruction*” (1993, p.7).

Being strict, presenting a stern face, being distant from learners, insisting on strict adherence to rules, sticking to the letter in relation to prescribed curriculum content and demanding accuracy without taking the learners’ perspectives into account are very dominant features of the female archetype of teaching. However, it is legitimate to ask the extent to which such archetypes have resonance in contemporary lay theories and identities among student teachers. Fallon (1998, p.29) frames this question rather differently when he asserts that “there is a basic difference between being tied to the past and coming to terms with the past – in other words, understanding it and learning from it.” In contemporary Ireland there tends to be a collective amnesia about the past where a ‘culture of contentment’ (Galbraith, 1992) has taken on “shallow roots” (Cuban & Usdan, 2003). There is a tendency towards a continuous present only and, in such circumstances, the past may be reconstituted in an unreconstructed manner,

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<sup>3</sup> One of the more fascinating aspects of this account is that it has led to correspondence between Trevor and Willoughby. She has suggested to him that she was oblivious to the fact that he perceived her in such a negative light. However, this reinforces the deep-seatedness of lay theories and cultural stereotypes and their unconscious reproduction by generations of teachers. (I am grateful to Cliona Uí Thuama for making me aware of this correspondence).

re-formed rather than transformed. It is necessary therefore, from a more theoretical perspective, to acknowledge with Wertsch (2002, p.18) that:

“... human action is inherently connected to the cultural, historical, and institutional contexts in which they occur ... that humans think, speak, and otherwise act by using the cultural tools ... that are made available by their particular sociocultural settings.”

Describing the contemporary Irish landscape, while indicating also some of the major ruptures with the past, particularly the archetypal past of teacher identity identified above, becomes all the more critical to a more adequate and more grounded understanding of student teachers' lay theories and identities, to identify continuities and change and, by doing so, indicate also the extent to which the forces of transformation rather than 'restoration' are at work (Ball, 1994). Such an analysis is both 'intrinsic' and 'instrumental' (Stake & Mabry, 1998) with potentially important consequences for the content and delivery of teacher education in a context of 'life-wide' learning (European Commission, 1996). It is necessary, therefore, to connect culturally embedded notions of lay theories and teaching archetypes with more theoretical perspectives on identity construction.

#### **4 IDENTITY: ITS MAKING AND RE-MAKING**

I concur with the argument that “one of the most distinctive features of Bourdieu's work ... has always been his insistence on joining theoretical and empirical work in an indissoluble approach to analysis” (Postone et al., 1993, p.11). My primary purpose is to increase understanding of the lifeworld of student teachers. In asserting this, I am conscious that the self, the identity of each student teacher has had, and continues to have, a unique learning trajectory, their own biography and 'apprenticeship of observation' throughout their schooling and university education. While these various experiences are likely to have distinctive features they are also connected to and are part of the field of education as historically and socially situated. Each habitus, while having its own 'tradition' and 'learning trajectory' (Wenger, 1998), also shares in and is shaped by the 'field' of education wherever that field is located (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). Therefore, it is necessary to examine continuity and change within these traditions as well as individual learning trajectories to establish the manner and extent to which teaching archetypes, lay theories and teaching identities are transformed or re-formed within a system.

Much has been written in recent times on distinctions between the modern and postmodern, the certainties and securities of the former, the

precariousness and potency of the latter (Hargreaves, 1994). This concern has a subterranean theoretical influence with importance for the present discussion and is consistent with Bourdieu's perspective when he asserts that: "what exists in the social world are relations" (1992, p.97). Though the concept of Globalisation continues to be contested, there is little doubting the globalising tendency of the postmodern age (Beck, 2000; Giddens, 1990). However, I am in agreement with Beck when he suggests that the process should not be understood "as uniform McDonalozation of the world" but that "[t]he framework in which the meaning of the local has to establish itself has changed" (p.46). He describes the consequences of this dialogical-relational process in the following terms:

"In place of that knee-jerk defence of tradition by traditional means (which Anthony Giddens calls 'fundamentalism'), there is a compulsion to relocate detraditionalized traditions within a global context of exchange, dialogue and conflict" (2000, p.47).

Beck uses the term 'glocal' as a means of acknowledging that it becomes increasingly difficult for local identities and traditions to 'hide' or to be inured from the pervasive tentacles of globalisation.

Identity is not like a fingerprint that is distinctly individual and unalterable. Rather: "[s]elf-identity is ... *the self as reflexively understood by the person in terms of her or his biography* (Giddens, 1991, p.53). Consequently, Giddens suggests: "[s]elf-identity ... is not something that is just given, as a result of the continuities of the individual's action system, but something that has to be routinely created and sustained in the reflexive activities of the individual" (1991, p.52). In general terms, according to Giddens (1991, pp.35-69), identity continues to be formed as the nexus between 'ontological security' and 'existential anxiety'. This constant dance between certainty and uncertainty, between security and risk, is lived out everyday. All individuals are, in a Heidegger's (1962, p.80) sense, beings 'in the world', they in-habit (habitus) the world and it is out of this that identity is fashioned on an ongoing basis. In the case of student teachers, they have selected the world of teacher education, the field of primary teaching/schooling, but this is not entirely new as they have all served an 'apprenticeship of observation' of at least thirteen years, as well as at least three years while completing a degree (Lortie, 1975).

Within Bourdieu's notion of relations, they are simultaneously positioned by the role and position themselves within the role (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Giddens's comments on the 'everyday', the habitus in the following terms:

“The orderliness of day-to-day life is a miraculous occurrence, ... it is brought about as a continuous achievement on the part of everyday actors in an entirely routine way. That orderliness is solid and constant; yet the slightest glance of one person towards another ... may threaten it” (1991, p.52).

Identity, therefore, is at once robust and fragile. It is fashioned continuously between chaos and order, between neurotic attachment to the ‘certainties’ of the past, and a creative risk oriented leap of imagination beyond slavish adherence to routines as previously enacted. The individual must have “the capacity to keep a particular narrative going” (Giddens, 1991, p.54). This continuity is achieved and sustained by “maintaining ... habits and routines” (p.39) because such commonplaces provide what Giddens calls a “protective cocoon” (see Sugrue, 1998a). However, it is important to recognize that the cocoon is not impervious to outside influence. He expresses the cocoon’s permeability thus:

“The protective cocoon is essentially a sense of ‘unreality’ rather than a firm conviction of security: it is a bracketing, on the level of practice, of possible events which could threaten the bodily or psychological integrity of the agent” (Giddens, 1991, p.40).

The ‘cocoon of practice’ therefore, is a comfort zone within which student teachers operate that provides ontological security for the identity of the individual concerned. It may be argued that their ‘lay theories’ are an important element that provide the ‘ballast’ as security in daily routines, while research-based theories of the academy or professional teacher educators, seek surreptitiously or directly to undermine this security and to create a zone of uncertainty, spaces and opportunities in which lay theories are transformed into more elaborate theories while simultaneously reconstructing their identities in more complex and elaborate ways.

Giddens’ protective cocoon is Wenger’s community of practice and the latter asserts the symbiosis between “issues of identity ... and ... issues of practice, community and meaning” (Wenger, 1998, p.145). Wenger is keen to identify with Bourdieu’s articulation of the mutuality of theory and practice, and he outlines his thinking thus:

“... my use of the term does not reflect a dichotomy between the practical and the theoretical, ideals and reality, or talking and doing. ... We all have our own theories and ways of understanding the world, and our communities of practice are places where we develop, negotiate, and share them” (Wenger, 1998, p.48).

These comments suggest that initial teacher education, as a first step in the identification and transformation of student teachers' lay theories should create learning situations in communities of practice where this work of transformation is facilitated and encouraged. To avoid creating such a community of practice is to promote the creation of two worlds that co-exist and often conflict rather than coalesce.

While Giddens begins with the individual, Wenger (1998, p. 146) starts from a sense of practice, of community, yet recognises that "[t]alking about identity in social terms is not denying individuality, but viewing the very definition of individuality as something that is part of the practices of specific communities." Because "[w]e cannot become human by ourselves," it is through the interaction of the individual and the community that identity is continuously buffeted and reshaped (Wenger, 1998, p.41). Learning, as the conduit between individuals and their communities is the key to identity. Wenger describes learning, and identity by extension, in the following terms:

"Viewed as experience of identity, learning entails both a process and a place. It entails a process of transforming knowledge as well as a context in which to define an identity of participation. As a consequence, to support learning is not only to support the process of acquiring knowledge, but also to offer a place where new ways of knowing can be realized in the form of such an identity" (Wenger, 1998, p.215).

Practice has potential to be "transformative" if it creates opportunities for learning, but the environment must be such that the identity in the making can be acted on. Otherwise, in Britzman's (1991) terms, practice (re-)makes practice rather than transforms practice.

The 'habitus' of a student teacher is "an *open system of dispositions* that is constantly subjected to experiences ... that either reinforces or modifies its structures" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p.133). In these terms, initial teacher education in a crucial 'time' is a place and opportunity for the transformation of both lay theories and identities. Giddens argues that it is necessary to think "about time in a positive way – as allowing for life to be lived, rather than consisting of a finite quantity that is running out – allows one to avoid a helpless-hopeless attitude". In the 'new' Ireland of the much vaunted 'Celtic Tiger' and a relentless glocalising tendency, many routines that owe much to tradition and precedent may be on 'borrowed time.' Previous teaching 'archetypes' (see Sugrue, 1996, 1997) of the 'master' and the 'mistress' may be in retreat, but some important features of those archetypal teachers may be re-invented also. Consequently, contrasting previous archetypes with contemporary lay theories becomes an important means of identifying both continuity and change in dominant aspects of

student teachers' identities in transition from student to teacher, as well as more enduring, deeply embedded aspects of lay theories in the setting.

While creating identities takes time, it also involves taking risks. The cocoon of practice is frequently about minimizing risk, thus staying close to routine, while a community of learning is about creating the conditions necessary so that members will be more likely to 'risk' steps in the interest of their own learning and identity and in the interests of the community's well-being. Giddens explains such tensions when he says: "that the psychologically liberated person faces risks while the more traditional self does not; rather, what is at stake is the secular consciousness of risk, as inherent in calculative strategies to be adopted in relation to the future" (1991, p.78). This is inherently more risky than maintaining the status quo. Giddens argues that:

"The notion of risk becomes central in a society which is taking leave of the past, of traditional ways of doing things, and which is opening itself up to a problematic future" (1991, p.111).

There is an onus on teacher educators, therefore, to create opportunities for risk taking but much of the routines around teaching practice for example, promote orthodoxy and reward 'playing safe' rather than risking new pedagogies and routines that may deteriorate into chaos and a poor grade. Giddens argues that it is no longer feasible to rely on established orthodoxies. He says:

"In the charged reflexive setting of high modernity, living on 'automatic pilot' becomes more and more difficult to do, and it becomes less and less possible to protect any lifestyle, no matter how firmly pre-established, from the generalized risk climate" (1991, p.126).

Perhaps, it is for this reason that more and more experienced practitioners in the setting are talking about seeking 'early retirement' as a means of avoiding risk while recognizing that 'business as usual' will no longer suffice in classrooms.

But risk alone, is not sufficient. Forging an identity more in tune with the vicissitudes of the age is an act of imagination. Wenger's comments are particularly apposite:

"Imagination is an important component of our experience of the world and our sense of place in it. It can make a big difference for our experience of identity and the potential for learning inherent in our activities" (1998, p.176).



The act of imagination necessitates a “process of expanding our self by transcending our time and space and creating new images of the world and ourselves” (Wenger, 1998, p.91). But the very act of imagining, of transcending time, requires time and space in which to do it. This is one reason why learning communities under various guises have been mushrooming in recent years as the press of the postmodern intensifies. They can be spontaneous or contrived (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995). But learning communities are part of the globalisation of identity formation in a postmodern age (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1998; Grossman Wineburg & Woolworth, 2001; Lieberman & Gronlick, 1996; Little & McLaughlin, 1993). Consequently, identity has never been so exposed (and supported) as part of a general globalising tendency. Support groups and learning communities are part of this landscape also and subject to the same compression of time and space. Initial teacher education is an identifiable family or community that may nurture, sustain transform, or be dysfunctional. Whether it has a positive or negative impact on the identity construction of student teachers, as contrived communities they cannot be regarded as value neutral, they are a very specific ‘intervention’ in the identity construction of entrants to the profession. If teaching archetypes and lay theories are significant ingredients in the identity transformation of student teachers’ identities and those of beginning teachers, what are the implications for initial teacher education, induction and early professional learning?

## **5 PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY: LEARNING IDENTITIES**

In the first instance, it may be valuable to construe initial teacher education as a community of learners rather than a meeting place for ‘experts’ and ‘novices’. Such a community seeks to reposition tradition and transformation, continuity and change as part of a single process. For Beck (2000a) this is part of a wider challenge to civil society in a European context:

“For many people, especially the young, the argument that we must regain a sense of community through the old values and hierarchies sounds cynical, sentimental or morally two-faced. It cannot be stressed often enough that any attempt to create a new meaning for community and the public good - and thus to clear a way for the civic soul of European democracy - must start by recognizing the degree of

the diversity, skepticism and individualism that are inscribed in our times and our culture” (2000a, p.152).

Kingswell (2000) echoes this perspective when drawing on the Socrates/Crito encounter – he says that the key lesson is to “remember that when it comes to the world outside ourselves, the social and political world, we are at least as much formed by as forming” (p. 43). As the EU itself welcomes new members, the challenge of finding ‘situated certainty’ (Hargreaves, 1994) amidst increasing diversity is daunting. There is a cacophony of voices that seems more like a tower of Babel than anything approaching polyphony. Hargreaves argues that state education, as one of the last surviving public institutions has, in such circumstances, a particular responsibility for “the relationships and the sense of citizenship” that global forces are systematically undermining (2003, p.160). As Stiglitz (2002, p.273) indicates, this emergent ‘interdependence’ wrought by the reality of globalisation, calls for ‘collective action’. In teaching as in other spheres, the call to collective action is the central paradox – how to transform the routines and rituals of tradition, frequently elevated to mythic archetypes, into identities that are more inclusive and tolerant of difference, beyond narrow nationalistic agendas, while refraining from collective amnesia that jettisons what is valuable. Perhaps more than anything else, teacher education needs to develop perspective, what Sennett (1998, p.31) describes as ‘the long term’, for without this “the bonds of trust and commitment are loosened” and teachers’ identities, as well as society in general, are the poorer. The old Greek adage of ‘know thyself’ in the present context takes on new significance and resonance. Teacher educators too must reinvent their identities while holding past, present and future in productive tension beyond prescriptive agendas. I concur with Wenger when he states:

“Educational imagination is about looking at ourselves and our situation with new eyes. It is about taking a distance and seeing the obvious anew. It is about being aware of the multiple ways we can interpret our lives ... it is about identity as self-consciousness” (1998, pp. 273-274).

It is about serious and sustained commitment to the project of learning identity in community, where imaginative risk-taking breathes new life into archetypal images and understandings as part of the process of building continuity and change into future identities and practice. This is the challenge and opportunity that awaits collective action.

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## Chapter 9

# DEVELOPING SCIENCE TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE ON MODELS AND MODELLING

Rosária Justi and Jan H. van Driel

### 1 INTRODUCTION

Research on the nature and the development of teachers' knowledge has increased in the last decades (Munby, Russell & Martin, 2001). Still, however, little is known about how beginning teachers construct and develop their knowledge in the context of learning to teach. In particular, this applies to knowledge which is related to the teaching of specific topics or issues, such as content knowledge, curricular knowledge, and pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986; Magnusson, Krajcik & Borko, 1999). The research literature shows that beginning teachers often have difficulties developing these types of knowledge, and that teacher education programs usually contribute to this development with only limited success (De Jong & Van Driel, 2001; Gess-Newsome, 1999). This chapter aims to contribute to a better understanding of the ways beginning teachers develop these types of knowledge. In particular, we will explore how and to what extent a specific design of teacher education, based on a theoretical model of professional growth, facilitates this development.

The chapter concerns a research project which was aimed at favouring and investigating the development of beginning science teachers' knowledge of a central issue in science teaching: models and modelling. The project was conducted in the context of a one year post-graduate teacher education program, which consisted of institutional activities in combination with working at practice schools (teaching about five to ten lessons per week).

## **2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Teachers' Knowledge Development**

According to Sprinthall, Reiman and Thies-Sprinthall (1996), there have been three main general models for explaining teachers' development: the craft, the expert and the interactive model. The first model advocates the view that teachers develop as a result of becoming experienced teachers. In this case, knowledge emerges from classroom experiences. However, the model does not make clear how teachers produce new meanings from their experiences nor why some teachers only reproduce the same experience many times without learning from it.

The expert model is focused on teachers' being taught what and how to do by experts. As discussed by Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002), for a long time changes in teachers' knowledge have been assumed to be the results of 'training', that is, of something that is done to teachers and in which they are relatively passive participants. Moreover, the outcomes of such changes are generally 'measured' at the end of the training. This situation may be compared with the application of a test to students at the end of the teaching of a given curricular topic, in which good results cannot be associated with the learning of the topic.

In order to support teachers' knowledge building, many researchers have recognised that such processes should involve active and meaningful learning. This is the basis of what Sprinthall, Reiman and Thies-Sprinthall (1996) characterised as "interactive models". These models require strong linkages between institutional activities and classroom practice. An example of this type of model for teachers' professional growth was recently proposed by Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002), called the Interconnected Model of Teacher Professional Growth (IMTPG). Their model is represented in Figure 9-1 and briefly explained below.

According to this model, the teachers' world is constituted by four distinct domains that change through the mediating processes of 'reflection' and 'enactment' (represented as arrows linking the domains). The multiplicity of possible pathways between the domains reflects the complexity of teachers' professional development. Moreover, the authors explain that:

"the term "enactment" was chosen to distinguish the translation of a belief or a pedagogical model into action from simply "acting," on the grounds that acting occurs in the domain of practice, and each action represents the enactment of something a teacher knows, believes or has experienced" (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002, p.951).

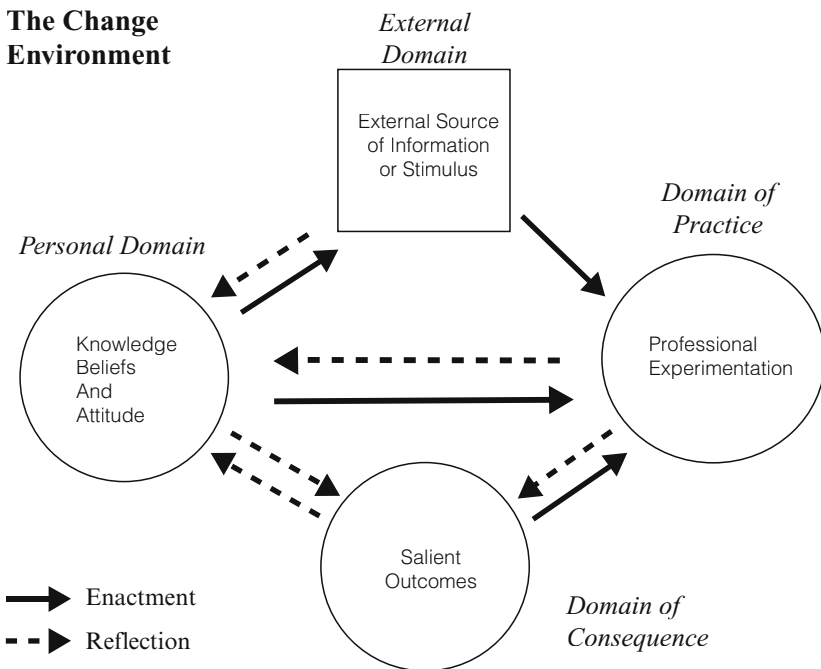


Figure 9-1. The interconnected model of teacher professional growth (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002, p.951).

In the present study, the IMTPG was used as a framework to study the development of beginning science teachers' knowledge in the area of models and modelling. In particular, teachers' content knowledge, curricular knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) were investigated. For this purpose, a more specific and detailed definition of the four domains in the IMTPG was used:

1. *Personal Domain*: At the start of the project, the personal domain consisted of the teachers' initial ideas with respect to specific aspects of models and modelling in science, in terms of content knowledge, curricular knowledge and PCK. In the course of the project, the personal domain changed as a result of the interaction of this initial personal domain with the other domains.
2. *External Domain*: This domain consisted of the activities in which the teachers took part during the meetings in the course of the project.
3. *Domain of Practice*: In general, this domain concerns all teaching situations in which the teachers used or expressed their knowledge about models and modelling during the time they were involved in this



project. Most of these situations occurred during an action research project which was conducted by each participant, in which they taught a series of self-designed lessons on models and modelling, and collected data in their classes.

4. *Domain of Consequence*: This domain concerns the outcomes of the teaching situations that characterised the domain of practice. In this project, the data collected during their action research project, which were described and analysed in their research reports (e.g., pupils' learning results), formed an important element of this domain.

## 2.2 Models and modelling in science and in science education

Scientists define 'model' from different perspectives, thus emphasising specific aspects. In an attempt to briefly summarise the various definitions, we may say that a model is a non-unique partial representation of a target (e.g., an object, an event, a process, or an idea) that is used for a specific purpose. The purpose may be to enhance visualisation, to favour understanding, or to make predictions about behaviour or properties (Justi & Gilbert, 2003b).

The purposes of science education have been summarised as (i) *to learn science*, that is, to understand scientific conceptual knowledge; (ii) *to learn about science*, that is, to understand issues in the philosophy, history, and methodology of science; and (iii) *to learn to do science*, that is, to become able to take part in activities aimed at the acquisition of scientific knowledge (Hodson, 1992).

Given these purposes, models and modelling should play a central role in science education. That is, (i) *to learn science*, pupils should come to know major scientific and historical models, as well as the scope and limitations of such models; (ii) *to learn about science*, pupils should have an adequate view of the nature of models and be able to appreciate the role of models in the accreditation and dissemination of the products of scientific enquiry; and (iii) *to learn how to do science*, pupils should be able to create, express, and test their own models. Moreover, modelling activities may also provide especially valuable opportunities for teachers to monitor pupils' progress in changing from their initial mental models to an understanding of established scientific or historical models (Duit & Glynn, 1996).

In the domain of science teaching, it is important to make a distinction between curricular and teaching models. *Curricular* models are suitably simplified versions of scientific and historical models that are taught to pupils. They are often introduced through the medium of specially developed *teaching* models – representations that are created with the

specific purpose of facilitating pupils' understanding of scientific or historical models (Gilbert & Boulter, 1995).

From the essential role of models and modelling in science teaching, the importance of encouraging and analysing the development of teachers' knowledge in this area emerges. Obviously, teachers' knowledge is of pivotal importance for the proposition and conducting of teaching situations where models and modelling activities are applied in a way which helps pupils to learn science. However, the recognition of the role of models and modelling in science education is recent; the main studies and proposals on this theme were published in the last two decades. Therefore, science teachers throughout the world have not been explicitly equipped with adequate knowledge and skills to teach from a perspective focused on pupils' *understanding* of science (Justi & Gilbert, 2003a). This has been shown by the results of some recent studies in this area (Crawford & Cullin, 2002; De Jong & Van Driel, 2001; Harrison, 2001; Justi & Gilbert, 2002c, 2003b; Van Driel & Verloop, 1999).

### **3 METHOD**

#### **3.1 Participants**

Five science teachers, who were participating in a one-year post-graduate teacher education program at a Dutch University, voluntarily decided to join our project. Before entering this program, they had obtained a Master's degree in Chemistry or Physics. All participants had already been teaching for some time, varying from three months to three years, before they took part in the teacher education program to obtain a formal qualification. In this chapter, codes are used to refer to the participating teachers (T1 to T5).

#### **3.2 Research Questions**

By using the IMTPG as a framework to study the development of teachers' knowledge, the study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How does the 'external domain' influence the teachers' initial personal domain and their domain of practice?
2. How do specific aspects of teachers' content knowledge, curricular knowledge and PCK on models and modelling (i.e., their personal domain) change when they participate in the project, due to interactions with the other domains in the IMTPG?

### **3.3 Data Collection**

Teachers' initial knowledge about models and modelling was characterised from a written questionnaire followed by an interview (Interview 1). Then, they participated in a series of meetings (12 hours in total) in which they were involved in activities that aimed at favouring the development of their knowledge. The decisions about which aspects of content knowledge, curricular knowledge and PCK on models and modelling would be emphasised in these activities were taken from both the consideration of the literature about teaching models and modelling, and the analysis of the data gathered initially (written questionnaire plus interview).

After the meetings, the participants planned an action research project to be conducted in one of their classes. Each action research project consisted of (i) the design of a series of lessons focusing on models, and including modelling activities for pupils, and (ii) the collection of data in connection with the teaching of these lessons (e.g., written responses of pupils, video tapes of lessons). Each project focused on one or some of the aspects which were discussed during the meetings. To conclude their action research project, each teacher had to produce a research report. Before the actual conducting of the research project, each participant was interviewed in order to characterise both his or her knowledge (mainly on the aspect they had chosen to focus on in their research project) and intentions concerning with the conduction of the research (Interview 2).

At the end of the process they were interviewed again in order to provide them an opportunity to reflect about their whole experience (Interview 3). Therefore, data for characterising their knowledge on different domains were obtained from the initial written questionnaire, their interviews, their participation in the meetings (from all written material produced by them and from the video recording of the meetings), their lessons in which the project was conducted, and their research report.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

Due to the complexity of the subject matter involved in our project (models and modelling in science), to be able to characterise the development of teachers' knowledge, we first need to clearly identify the particular aspects included in teachers' knowledge about models and modelling. These aspects, which, taken together, constitute the interpretative framework for the analysis of the data, are discussed below. Next, we will address the procedure which was adopted in the process of analysing the data.

### 3.4.1 The identification of aspects that characterised teachers' knowledge

In translating Shulman's ideas on teachers' knowledge (Shulman, 1986, 1987) into the context of both the teaching of the general idea of models and modelling in science education *and* the teaching of specific relevant scientific models, it is of pivotal importance that:

1. Teachers' *content knowledge* includes a comprehensive understanding of both the scientific models to be taught, and models and modelling in general. Therefore, in addition to the knowledge of each scientific model (an aspect that was not analysed in this project), this means:
  - 1.1. *Knowledge about models*: what a model is, the use to which it can be put, the entities of which it consists, its stability over time (Justi & Gilbert, 2002a).
  - 1.2. *Knowledge about the modelling process*: steps to be followed in the modelling process and factors which the modelling process depends on (Justi & Gilbert, 2002a).
2. Teachers' *curricular knowledge* includes when, how, and why the general idea of models and of specific scientific or historical models should be introduced to their classes. In other words, this means teachers' abilities to develop and/or change existing *curricular models* related to the topics that should be taught in their classes. Therefore, the aspects of curricular knowledge considered here were defined as:
  - 2.1. *Knowledge about curricular models*: the need to introduce them in science teaching and their nature as simplifications of scientific (consensus or historical) models.
  - 2.2. *Knowledge about the introduction of modelling activities in science teaching*: the need and main purposes of this (Justi & Gilbert, 2002b).
3. Teachers' *PCK* has been defined as "the knowledge that a teacher uses to provide teaching situations that help learners make sense of particular ... content" (Loughran et al., 2001, p.289). In the context of this project, *PCK* includes the teachers' ability to develop good *teaching models*; their ability to conduct modelling activities in their classes; their understanding of how their pupils construct their own mental models; and how the resulting expressed models should be dealt with in class (Gilbert, Boulter, & Rutherford, 1998). Therefore, the *PCK* aspects were defined as:
  - 3.1. *Teaching models – purposes of their use*: the main purposes of the use of teaching models by either teachers or pupils using teaching models (Justi & Gilbert, 2002b).

- 3.2. *Teaching models – production*: the nature of the models employed in their production and points that the teacher should take into account in producing different kinds of teaching models (all these points were discussed in our meetings).
- 3.3. *Teaching models – use in science teaching*: ways in which the notion of teaching models is deployed by the teacher (Justi & Gilbert, 2002b).
- 3.4. *Conducting of modelling activities in science teaching*: teachers' role, characteristics of the discussion of pupils' models and teachers' previous experience (Justi & Gilbert, 2002b).
- 3.5. Knowledge of pupils' ideas about models and modelling: status of this teacher knowledge.

### 3.4.2 Procedure

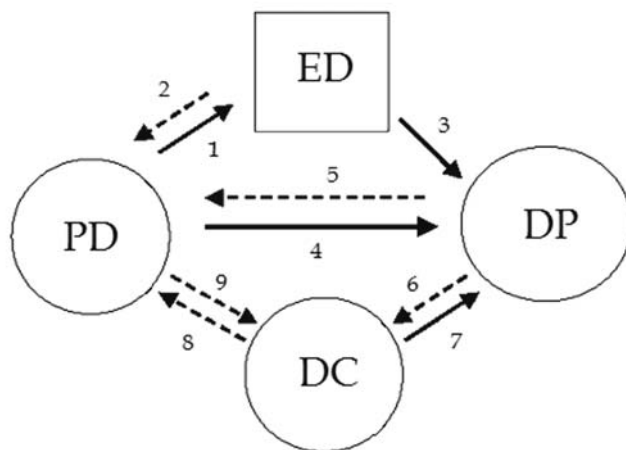
After all that was said or written by each of the teachers during their participation in this project had been transcribed or copied, the process of analysis occurred in distinct phases:

1. First, all the data collected for each teacher, were categorised according to the framework defined above to characterise their knowledge on models and modelling. This meant that their knowledge expressed in each of the data sources was assigned to the nine aspects of knowledge which constitute this framework. For each of the five teachers, thus nine subsets of data were compiled.
2. Next, within each subset for each individual teacher, the data were connected with one of the four domains of the IMTPG.
3. Next, to characterise each teacher's personal development with respect to the nine aspects of knowledge, the relationships between the four domains were determined.
4. Finally, for each teacher, the relationships established between the four domains in relation to each of the nine aspects were represented in a summarised picture of the IMTPG. Thus, we were able to build 45 (five times nine) pictorial representations of the IMTPG.

## 4 FINDINGS

The 45 pictorial representations of the IMTPG which were produced in the last phase of the analysis of the data (see above) constitute the basis for a discussion of the development of the nine knowledge aspects during this project. In addition, the teachers' comments on the whole learning process – expressed during the last two interviews and in their research reports, support this discussion. As the development of each of the nine aspects did not occur independently of each other, we will not discuss these aspects

separately. Instead, the presentation and discussion of the findings in this section is organised according to our research questions. During this presentation, we refer to each of the relationships within the IMTPG using R<sub>n</sub>, where “n” refers to a particular relationship as indicated in Figure 9-2.



*Figure 9-2.* The relationships of the interconnected model of teacher professional growth.

#### **4.1 The Influence of the ‘External Domain’ on the Teachers’ Initial Personal Domain and their Domain of Practice**

Our first research question aimed at investigating the direct influence of the ‘external domain’ on the teachers’ initial content knowledge, curricular knowledge, and PCK of models and modelling, on the one hand, and on the design of their teaching activities, on the other hand. Such an influence can be characterised and discussed from the analyses of R<sub>2</sub> and R<sub>3</sub>, that is, the relationships that were established from the external domain to the personal domain and the domain of practice, respectively.

Taken together, such relationships appear in 37 of the 45 pictorial representations of the IMTPG. It appeared that these relationships were absent for more than one teacher in the representations of only two knowledge aspects: ideas about curricular models (aspect 2.1) and the purpose of the use of teaching models (aspect 3.1). For all the other knowledge aspects, there is clear evidence that the external domain contributed, in different degrees, to the development of teachers’ knowledge and their practice. The aspect of teachers’ knowledge for which such a

contribution was most intense was *PCK about the production of teaching models* (aspect 3.2): four of the teachers presented both R2 and R3 and the other teacher presented R2. In order to illustrate how the external domain contributed to the development of teachers' knowledge, we present and comment on some data related to this aspect.

In our meetings, all the most common types of teaching models were discussed. These types included two-dimensional models (e.g., drawings), three-dimensional models (concrete models), virtual models (computer simulations), and analogical models (expressed in written forms or pictures). Two important issues that we discussed were (i) the amount and level of detail in a teaching model which is needed to make it useful for a specific group of pupils, and (ii) the importance of colours to represent specific details of the modelled entity, which may either help or sometimes confuse the pupils' understanding. To discuss these issues, we conducted an activity in which the teachers had to analyse individually several two-dimensional teaching models presented by textbooks (i.e., for the distillation process), focusing on potential advantages and disadvantages of these teaching models. Next, teachers' individual ideas were compared and discussed. During this discussion, the first author of this paper, who was conducting the meeting, attempted to connect specific ideas, put forward by the teachers, with more general notions about the use of teaching models. For instance, when one of the teachers commented that he liked the use of colours in a specific teaching model, the first author broadened the discussion by pointing at the purpose of colours in teaching models and asking what pupils could understand or misunderstand from these colours. During this discussion, examples of models presented by textbooks in which colours misrepresent reality (e.g., where water is represented by the colour blue) were used. The teachers were invited to describe situations in which they had noticed that the use of teaching models had confused pupils, or where pupils demonstrated specific misconceptions associated with teaching models.

It appeared that the issues raised during our meetings, and the questions which were discussed, were often surprising for the participating teachers. As they declared during the following interviews, they had never thought about such issues. Consequently, this activity clearly changed all the teachers' knowledge of issues that should be taken into account in producing a two-dimensional teaching model. Moreover, it also made clear to the teachers the importance of discussing the scope, limitations, and details of pictorial representations with their pupils in order to both investigate how they understand a given teaching model and avoid the emergence of misconceptions from it. The influence of this activity on the teachers' knowledge and practice was evidenced by the fact that, during interviews 2 and 3, all the teachers made comments on what they had learnt from this

activity. For instance, they would describe how they had changed their teaching practice by incorporating points that were discussed, or how they planned to deal, or had dealt, with the responses from their pupils during their experiments in practice. Two illustrative quotations that constitute such evidences are:

“I had never realised that there were so many models in the book, and how pupils would look at these. So the examples you used, for example, the one with the water, you said ‘Well, it is blue’ so pupils think ‘Oh, that is water’, but it is not. Those kind of things make me much more alert when I am teaching. And I used a couple of models during my lessons and explicitly told them ‘This is a model, so what does it mean ‘a model’? Not everything is true but some things are’. It just made me enthusiastic to try it in my lessons.” (T2 – Interview 2).

“The more relevant aspects that we discussed were, I think, some of the aspects of which kind of models you use and which confusion it could give to the children, that they would think the model is the actual thing and not really a model, for example, the colours of atoms. I had never thought of that.” (T3 – Interview 3).

#### **4.2 Changes in Teachers' Knowledge on Models and Modelling in the Course of the Project**

The analysis of the 45 representations of the IMTPG showed that identical representations were made in only two cases: (i) T1 and T5 did not make explicit any knowledge about curricular models (aspect 2.1), thus generating a blank representation; and (ii) T4 and T5 expressed the same relationships (R4 and R8) for their PCK on the purposes of the use of teaching models (aspect 3.1). All the other representations were different from each other, thus making it evident that the development of each teacher's knowledge occurred in a distinct manner. Moreover, 32 of the representations (71%) presented three or more relationships. This result should not come as a surprise to those who believe that teacher learning is a complex process.

In our data, the complexity of the teachers' learning processes was made evident not only by the number of relationships in each of the 45 representations of the IMTPG, but also by the way they were established. In order to discuss how complex their learning processes were, we will discuss below, as an example, the findings concerning one aspect of their PCK: ‘production of teaching models’ (aspect 3.2).



As previously commented, all the teachers recognised during the interviews that the activities they were involved in during the course – the external domain – exerted a great influence on the development of their knowledge about the production of teaching models. However, by analysing the case of each teacher, it became clear that the way their knowledge changed was also influenced by other factors. One illustrative example is the case of T3, represented in Figure 9-3 and discussed next.

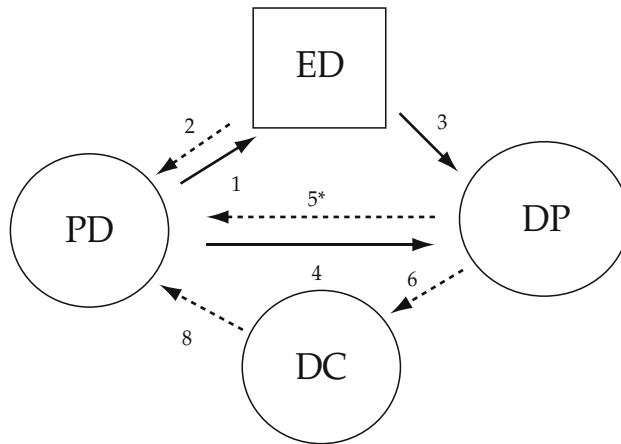


Figure 9-3. Representation of the IMTPG concerning with the production of teaching models for T3 (\* = incoherent relationship).

T3 was the only teacher who initially admitted the possibility of simultaneously using two teaching models that were produced to emphasise different aspects of reality (R1). Being influenced by his initial ideas, to which many other aspects were added during our discussions (R2), he decided to focus his research project on pupils' analysis of several teaching models for a given phenomenon (a nuclear chain reaction). Therefore, he had to use the knowledge he developed during our meetings to produce the four teaching models for a nuclear chain reaction that he presented to his pupils (R4). During the activity in which they analysed the teaching models for the distillation process, he recognised as criteria that should be used in producing a teaching model: representation of relevant aspects of the entity, use of analogies that are familiar to pupils, consideration of the intellectual level of pupils, use of colours to help pupils understand relevant aspects, and avoidance of animism (R3). However, in producing the teaching models (or choosing them from those available in textbooks in some cases), he did not consider the last two criteria: there were no colours in his teaching models and, in some of them, there were animistic aspects (that were not discussed

with the pupils). In planning and commenting on his research project, he emphasised the importance of discussing both the modes of representation and the limitations of the teaching models with his pupils. As a matter of fact, these were the foci of the discussions that occurred in his classroom and, reflecting on his experience, he was convinced that these foci were essential for pupils' understanding that models are limited partial representations (R6). By thinking about the outcomes of his research project – in terms of the level of pupils' understanding – he considered the possibility of promoting a similar activity for another topic. In such an activity, he would also take into account other aspects he had become aware of during the discussion with his pupils (e.g., the importance of providing pupils with enough time to analyse and discuss the teaching models) (R8).

This brief description shows that the development of T3's knowledge of the production of teaching models was also influenced by what happened in the domain of practice and the way he reflected on the outcomes of his practice (domain of consequence). This example was also of interest in our project because it was one of the very few in which we observed the establishment of an incoherent relationship (i.e., R5\*). This was inferred from what the teacher said during the last interview, when his research project was discussed. In commenting on the four teaching models, it emerged that he did not view all of these as teaching models (he considered one of the models to be "more scientific"). Moreover, he did not recognise one of these models (in which a chain reaction was represented by the dropping of millions of domino bricks by tipping over just one brick at first) as an analogical one. It was only when he was questioned about the purpose of a teaching model and the criteria that he had previously defined as important in producing a teaching model that he was able to realise these inconsistencies. Therefore, the fact that the interviewer mediated a part of the reflection on his experience also influenced the development of his knowledge of this subject.

This case can also be seen as an example showing that the development of teachers' knowledge normally does not occur as a linear process. Sometimes, as occurred with T3, teachers may even make right decisions (e.g., during the production of teaching models) based on inconsistent or implicit views. However, such views can be changed during the process of teaching, or by reflection on the teaching process. This situation is similar to situations where pupils, even when they are faced with inconsistencies in their ideas, continue to use these for a particular case (Hashweh, 1986).

## **5 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The main aim of our project was to contribute to both the development of science teachers' knowledge on models and modelling, and the understanding of this process. From our belief in the central role of models and modelling in science teaching, we advocate that the development of teachers' knowledge in this area is of crucial importance for the improvement of science education.

The analysis of the data showed that the use of the IMTPG was very helpful in characterising teachers' knowledge and analysing their development, that is, as an analytical tool (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002, p. 957). This was because the IMTPG made it possible to determine, for instance, which elements of the 'external domain' had clear influences on teachers' knowledge, and how the conduction and analysis of teachers' research projects influenced their knowledge. In reflecting about their teaching experience, all the teachers expressed a more comprehensive knowledge about the aspects they had focused on in their research projects. Most of them were also able to realise how the activities in which they were involved during our meetings (i.e., 'external domain') had contributed to change their initial ideas.

Although the project was conducted with a small sample of teachers, the amount and detailed level of the data that were collected, allow us to suggest future initiatives aimed at promoting the development of teachers' knowledge on models and modelling. In particular, the strong influence of the external domain on the teachers' personal domain and the domain of practice should be taken into account in attempts to promote the development of teachers' knowledge. On the basis of the present study, it may be concluded that it has been particularly important to design an external domain which was clearly and coherently related to teachers' teaching practices, and which simultaneously challenged them to use ideas that were distinct from those that they were used to. In addition, it was crucial that the external domain encouraged teachers to think about both their previous teaching experiences, and about those which occurred during the development of their research projects. Finally, it was important that teachers and researchers could interact not only during the meetings but during the whole process (by e-mail or personally), discussing all the teachers' doubts and valuing their own ideas and experiences. Such a multiple strategy approach contributed to the development of the teachers' knowledge in this project. As this finding is in accordance with claims made in other studies (e.g., Birman, Desimone, Porter & Garet, 2000; De Jong & Van Driel, 2001; Gess-Newsome, 1999), such an approach could form the

basis of initiatives that aim at teachers' development in other domains as well.

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## Chapter 10

### IT'S ABOUT TIME

*Issues of time in knowledge construction for preservice and practising teachers in school context*

Margaret R. Olson

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

Learning, as a process of knowledge construction and reconstruction, takes place *over* and *in* time. Yet how time influences individuals' knowledge construction and reconstruction within school contexts tends to be glossed over or ignored. This conceptual inquiry explores how experiences *over* and *in* time in school contexts can contribute to teacher knowledge construction and reconstruction.

#### 2 KNOWLEDGE CONSTRUCTION, TIME AND NARRATIVE

The conceptual framework for this exploration is grounded in Dewey's (1938) notion that knowledge is constructed and reconstructed through the individually continuous and socially interactive nature of experience, that the "formal quality of experience through time is inherently narrative" (Crites, 1971, p.291), and that "narrative ... is meaningful to the extent that it portrays the features of temporal experience" (Ricoeur, 1984, p.3). The conception of time used in this exploration is that of the threefold present conceived by Augustine and described by Ricoeur (1984) and Crites (1971). Augustine, cited in Ricoeur (p.11), succinctly described this threefold present in the following way: "The present of past things is the memory; the present of present things is direct perception; and the present of future things is expectation." When it is understood that past memories and future intentions shape and are shaped by present perceptions, temporal continuity

and knowledge construction and reconstruction *over* time make sense. That is, knowledge is not only constructed, but is continuously reconstructed as we move through time. At the same time, what happens *in* time provides the situations from which meaning is constructed and reconstructed.

Dewey links knowledge construction and reconstruction and temporal experience in the following way:

“The two principles of continuity and interaction are not separate from each other. They intercept and unite. They are, so to speak, the longitudinal and lateral aspects of experience. Different situations succeed one another. But because of the principle of continuity something is carried over from the earlier to the later ones. As an individual passes from one situation to another, his world, his environment, expands or contracts. He does not find himself living in another world but in a different part or aspect of one and the same world. What he has learned in the way of knowledge and skill in one situation becomes an instrument of understanding and dealing effectively with the situations which follow. The process goes on as long as life and learning continues” (Dewey, 1938, p.44).

Dewey’s conception of learning through experience *over* and *in* time is closely linked to those who believe that narrative is a primary ways we construct and reconstruct meaning from experience (e.g., Bruner, 1986; Coles, 1989; Connelly & Clandinin, 1995, 1999; Crites, 1971; Gudmundsdottir, 1995; Jalongo & Isenberg, 1995; Polkinghorne, 1988; Randall, 1995; Ricoeur, 1984). Polkinghorne (1988) gives a sense of how the threefold present links to narrative and to Dewey’s focus on continuity and interaction. The products of narrative schemes are ubiquitous in our lives: they fill our cultural and social environment. We create narrative descriptions for ourselves and for others about our own past actions, and we develop storied accounts that give sense to the behavior of others. We also use the narrative scheme to inform our decisions by constructing imaginative “what if” scenarios (p.14).

That knowledge is not only constructed, but also reconstructed is pointed out by Ritchie and Wilson (2000) who remind us: “[R]ather than being “real,” fixed, and empirically established, the meaning of experience *and* of theory must be continually open to revision and dialogue as the participants, the contexts, and the perspectives change, and narratives are revised and retold” (pp.19-20). This conceptual exploration echoes this form of reconstruction as I braid together voices from the literature, my own voice, and examples from Zach and Pat, two preservice teachers who at different times and in different places took part in research studies with me. Zach was in a secondary education program on the Canadian prairies and Pat was in an

elementary education program in the Canadian Maritimes. Their names are pseudonyms.

While continuity and interaction are integrally intertwined in experience, I separate them in order to examine some of their complexities. I begin with issues of time in the continuity of experience, then focus on issues of time in interaction in school contexts. Finally, I imagine future directions in relation to time for life long learning in school contexts.

### **3 ISSUES OF TIME IN CONTINUITY OF EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE CONSTRUCTION**

Dewey's (1938) description of continuity of experience provides an entry point for exploring preservice teachers' knowledge construction and reconstruction over time. "The principle of continuity of experience means that every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after" (p.35). I begin by briefly looking at ways continuity of experience may affect teacher knowledge construction through personal and institutional history.

#### **3.1 Continuity through Personal and Institutional History**

Preservice teachers have unique visions of who they hope to become as teachers based on how they have constructed knowledge through their life experiences. As Ritchie and Wilson (2000) point out: "The images of teacher and teaching that students construct are their interpretations of the significance of those memories, reconstructed and reinterpreted through the lens of their own personal histories, their personalities, and culturally inscribed desires" (p.37). These visions in turn shape what each preservice teacher pays attention to in their preparation program and how they make sense of what they are presented.

For example, Zach's deep valuing of and interest in history and culture partially acquired on an extended visit to Quebec led him to want to become a social studies and French teacher. He also believed the world was rule-governed and it was important that people follow rules so everyone would get along. Pat, mother of a young son, saw herself becoming a teacher of young children. She had completed an early childhood development program, worked for several years in a day care, completed many art



courses, and saw the world holistically, describing concepts as “three-dimensional” which came to life when “lifted off the page.”

Preservice teachers also enter their preparation programs with a wealth of knowledge of how schools work constructed during their experience in schools as students. Lortie (1975) calls this an “apprenticeship of observation” and, more recently, Ritchie and Wilson (2000) refer to it as an “accidental apprenticeship.” Although this narrative knowledge of schools is mostly unexamined, it forms the lens through which preservice teachers make sense of professional knowledge presented to them (Craig & Olson, 2002). As MacIntyre (1984) points out:

“What I am, therefore, is in key part what I inherit, a specific past that is present to some degree in my present. I find myself part of a history and ..., whether I like it or not, whether I recognize it or not, one of the bearers of a tradition ... [P]ractices always have histories and that at any given moment what a practice is depends on a mode of understanding it which has been transmitted often through many generations” (p.201).

Personal and institutional histories greatly shape individuals’ knowledge construction about teaching. For example, Zach’s valuing of life and schools as rule governed fit in smoothly with what he believed he found happening in schools. Pat’s holistic approach bumped up against many things she found happening in her practicum, providing her an opportunity to imagine things differently. For example, while traditional understandings of lesson planning were part of the knowledge she had constructed about what teachers do, she describes her reconstructed understanding of planning lessons in the following way:

“I think initially when I was thinking about writing a lesson, I was thinking about the 45-minute block. Write a lesson that would fit. Start at zero and end at 45 minutes or start at zero and end at one hour or whatever. But a lesson can be a complete thought, a complete process that goes full circle and shows learning or whatever, but it can be spread over a couple of days or whatever. It’s a different time frame, like a different set of time.”

### **3.2 The Plot thickens**

Dewey (1938) states that as “life-space and life-durations are expanded, the environment, the world of experience, constantly grows larger and, so to speak, thicker” (p.74). Zach found this occurring during his second

practicum. He said, "It's all the same picture, but I'm seeing different things. It's like watching a black and white TV and then suddenly seeing colour. You see a lot more." Randall (1995) puts this expansion in narrative terms: "Each event 'means' something in terms not of itself, that is, but of its place within a developing narrative context. As the story 'unfolds' into its future, then, fresh events possess increased meaning potential over those preceding them. As we say, the plot 'thickens'" (p.138). When Zach was presented the class timetable during his first practicum, it was meaningless information. When he began a second practicum he explained, "But now it's less confusing. Back then I didn't realize it could be confusing." Zach's reconstructed narrative knowledge enabled him to imagine how this new schedule would influence his teaching. "I was suddenly looking at 'How often do I get these kids? How much time am I going to have with them?'" The timetable was based on a six-day rotation cycle, something he was familiar with from his previous practicum. He was now able to think about the consequences of this cycle for his teaching:

"I noticed in the Health class, I'm only going to see them twice in a six-day period for Health. That's not a lot of time. I mean how do you cover all this material with only two days, two periods every six days? 45-minute periods, you know. Whereas in Social Studies, I'll see them, I believe it's five out of the six days. I can do something with that."

Zach's and Pat's teacher knowledge was narratively constructed and reconstructed as they moved experientially through their practica similar to the way Randall (1995) explains narrative understanding of a text.

"In reviewing events that were new to us when we first read them, and whose place and purpose eluded us then, we find that they have turned out to possess an increasing necessity. We know now what we could not know at the time" (p.123).

### **3.3 Fracturing Continuity**

Although continuity of experience is a vital component of knowledge construction and reconstruction, individual continuity is fractured in several ways. McEwan (1995) reminds us that "human practises take place in time and over time. They have histories. And so, if we wish to understand something as an act of teaching, we need to know how it arose and how it has evolved" (p.172). Thus, the need to know the narrative history of a classroom in progress is a crucial part of understanding what is occurring in

that classroom. This is often ignored when preservice teachers are placed in practica settings in classrooms for parts of the school year. They often enter, as Randall (1995) points out, “thrust into the midst ... suspended in time between a beginning we cannot recall and an end we cannot envision” (p.125).

Preservice teachers are not only thrust into the midst, they are often expected to quickly play a leading role in a classroom narrative they cannot yet possibly understand. As Zach put it: “you don’t know what they’ve done. Walking in becomes a real problem. Like part of the exam I put together. [My co-operating teacher] had a few things she wanted put on there and I never taught that to the kids and I was really struggling with how to put it together.”

I have often been struck by the similarities of walking into an unfamiliar, ongoing classroom narrative and watching a TV soap opera for the first time. Nothing makes sense at first. As Polkinghorne (1988) points out, “The difficulty stems ... from a person’s inability to integrate the event into a plot whereby it becomes understandable in the context of what has happened” (p.21). And yet it is still more complex. I have often been troubled by those who describe a story as having a beginning, a middle, and an end. Lives, and classrooms, do not seem to work that neatly. Czarniawska’s (1997) term “serial” helps make sense of what seems to be occurring. She says:

“A serial starts out as a story, but it does not reach a conclusion; it is a chain of interconnected stories. Each episode is a skilful mix of problems that are solved and problems that arise. And even if the actors continually push the message that things will get better, the spectator discovers that there is a certain balance between what gets better and what gets worse: the serial has matured” (p.107).

It is this multi-plotted setting in which preservice teachers are often expected to “take control,” to begin to author at least part if not all of the classroom story. This complexity may help to partially explain why the shifting authorship from co-operating teacher to preservice teacher can be such a difficult transition. Sharing classroom authorship is seldom perceived as what “real teachers” do and can again be explained in Polkinghorne’s (1988) terms that “practices always have histories” (p.201). Sharing a classroom with another teacher has not been part of many personal or institutional stories of teaching and therefore has not yet become a part of teacher knowledge in general.

While individual continuity of experience *over* time is a crucial dimension in teacher knowledge construction and reconstruction, individual’s experiences take place in social contexts. In this case, the

context is in a school with others. I now focus on how contextual interactions *within* time can influence teacher knowledge construction.

## 4 ISSUES OF TIME IN CONTEXTUAL INTERACTIONS IN SCHOOLS

Situational interactions occurring within time also shape preservice teachers' knowledge construction. As Randall (1995) tells us, "[I]n so far as I am a character within any institution, great or small, then its story will inevitably stimulate a particular version of my own" (p.198). In this section I touch on four issues in terms of time and knowledge construction and reconstruction: temporal borders, lack of time, contextual complexity, and attention and selection.

While practica provide preservice teachers with teaching experience in school contexts, this experience is very different from that of practising teachers (Olson, 2000). A huge influence on preservice teachers' knowledge construction is their placement in someone else's classroom. MacIntyre (1984) tells us: "We are always under certain constraints. We enter upon a stage which we did not design and we find ourselves part of an action that was not of our making. Each of us being a main character in his own drama plays subordinate parts in the dramas of others, and each drama constrains the others" (p.213). Preservice teachers are acutely aware of difficulties and ethical issues involved (Taylor, 1991) in revising the script within the often short time they spend in someone else's classroom. As Zach pointed out, "It's her classroom. So I can't mess up. I'm only here a short time. She's good enough to have me and she has to take over when I leave."

### 4.1 Temporal Borders

How school days were divided by "temporal borders" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999) into subjects or classes had a profound influence on preservice teachers' knowledge construction. For example, Pat found herself in a grade 2 classroom with a co-operating teacher who divided the school day into what Pat referred to as "chunks" based on different subject areas. These time chunks did not fit with Pat's understanding of working with young children. Pat lamented, "I just couldn't get into her clock. I was always looking up to see that I only had 30 seconds left of this time block or that she was getting ready to do the next chunk and I wasn't where I wanted to be." Rather than dividing teaching time into subject blocks, Pat had imagined a more holistic, thematic approach.

“I would have appreciated having the morning to do it and to be able to read more books about spiders and for them to be able to do their own research about spiders and be able to make a spider book and illustrate it with an insect compared to a spider and things like that. There were so many ways that I could have expanded it.”

Rather than succumbing to temporal time chunks as “the way things are” (Ritchie & Wilson, 2000, p.13), Pat hoped to construct her own classroom in a more temporally flexible way:

“I felt very constricted time-wise and that’s the reality of living in a school. I mean, there are external time clocks, there’s the bell that rings and there’s lunch. There’s the music teacher that comes at a certain time and stuff. I’m hoping that if I ever had a class of my own that I would be able to use the other times more fluidly than right now.”

## 4.2 Lack of Time

However temporal borders were shaped, whether they complemented or collided with preservice teachers’ constructions of teaching, one thing was common to preservice and co-operating teachers: there was never enough time. As Zach commented, “I watch my time, and I’m trying to keep up and there’s so many things that I want to do and I just can’t.” While “the primary dimension of an activity is time” (Polkinghorne, 1984, p.4), lack of time was often lamented but seldom acknowledged as a primary dimension of acting out teaching practice. Solutions often seemed to be to do more or to rush activities at the expense of learning. Not only was there not enough time for Zach to cover the prescribed curriculum with the whole class, but “each one has their own individual speed.” The teacher knowledge Zach had constructed thus far led him to see his role as that of “imparting knowledge to students.” This story of teaching led Zach to construct this time issue in the following way:

“You can’t have 30 different lectures in that class, because each student is actually progressing at a different pace. But it’s not physically possible for me to lecture 30 different lectures to 30 different students because it takes 30 minutes to do a lecture, to teach a new concept.”

This was a continual source of tension for Zach as he tried to move fast enough to challenge the “better” students yet slow enough to not lose the “slower” ones. At this point in time, he came to the following as the best

solution. “Now, this is what is expected, according to the curriculum, so I introduce that. If they all know that, then I introduce the next one and I keep going until they get to a rate where I’m starting to lose too many of them. But I have to go for the norm.” Because Zach had more than one section of each class, he was also concerned about keeping the classes at the same point in the curriculum. He described being “a lot further ahead” with one class so “somehow I’m going to slow them down a little bit when I see them on Thursday.”

The hectic schedule within the school day also left little or no time to talk with other teachers, thus perpetuating teacher isolation (Graham, 2000). As Pat commented:

“The day is so crunched together and short in the school that you just arrive and you’re rushing around getting yourself ready. And you’re in your class all day long. My lunch hours, it was just a matter of throwing some six year olds into a snow suit and then running down to the art room. And running an art club until the bell rang. Then trying to clean up from that. And so my recess and lunch hours, I don’t think I was ever in the staff room because I was so busy trying to get things done. And then after school everybody in that school disperses quite quickly, so there wasn’t a lot of chance to talk.”

### **4.3 Complex Context**

Schools are not only fast paced places, but complex ones as well. These “storied landscapes” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995) are made up of “a plethora of stories in fact, both stories within us and stories we are, in turn, within” (Randall, 1995, p.185).

Thus, preservice teachers find themselves not only thrust in the middle in terms of temporal continuity, but also thrust into the middle of multiple stories occurring simultaneously. I am reminded of Czarniawska’s (1997) reference to “a chain of interconnected stories” (p.107). While serials speak to the complexity of continuity, their interconnected nature adds another dimension. These different stories may involve different individuals or, as MacIntyre (1984) alludes to, “in any given social situation it is frequently the case that many different transactions are taking place at one and the same time between members of the same group” (p.98). This adds to the development of plot complications within one or across multiple stories. A condensed example from Pat gives a sense of the complexity.

Pat knew John, principal of her practicum school, and previous principal of her son’s school as someone who “gets a lot of things

done in a short period of time because he's not afraid to ask." Pat discovered a very different story of John being constructed by teachers in her practicum setting. Even though they're very pleasant and cooperative with him when he's there, there's a serious amount of grumbling and a lot of rolling of eyes and that kind of thing [when he is away]. There really seemed to be two levels of truth so then I thought, you really have to watch who you align yourself with. There's real politics happening in the schools. And there was such a tension. This tension led Pat to become cautious and guarded in her responses and questions in her school milieu. Although Pat attempted to steer clear of the wider school story of John, she soon found herself inextricably caught in the middle. The situation innocently arose when John, aware of Pat's strengths in art, asked her if she would be interested in starting an art club for upper elementary students. Pat saw this as "a great opportunity." It would look good on her resume and would give her experience "working with that age group." Pat soon found herself lodged between other teachers' story of John, and her personal desire to run the art club: And all of a sudden I got in the middle of it. And I didn't mean to. Especially this one staff person in particular, cornered me one day on the way to the photocopier. Boy, did she lay into me about how I shouldn't let the principal take advantage of me. So I found that was really very difficult. But, it's just that they haven't experienced him doing that before. Like, he gets things done by asking people. So, there was such a tension.

Bullough and Baughman (1997) tell us that "striving for expertise in teaching is complicated by the nature of education-related problems that are especially messy, overlap, and come in clusters rather than rows" (p.131). Thus, school time as a time of action in a highly complex context raised issues of attention and selection for preservice teachers, shaping what and how much learning occurs.

#### **4.4 Attention and Selection**

Pendlebury (1995) describes a good teacher as someone who is "alert to the salient features of each teaching situation and ready to change his or her course of action to meet special requirements" (p.60). Zach called this "reading the situation." However, Pendlebury problematizes the identification of what may be salient features at the time:

"But the salient features of a situation do not jump to the eye ready labelled for easy identification. It is up to the teacher to pick them out.

This involves what Aristotle calls perception or situational appreciation” (p.60).

Within the fast paced complexity of schools and classrooms, figuring out what to pay attention to and when can be a daunting task. Co-operating teachers, wanting to be helpful, often point out to preservice teachers what they believe are salient features, thus subtly and insidiously perpetuating “a mode of understanding [practice] which has been transmitted often through many generations” (MacIntyre, 1984, p.201). This “cultivation” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1995) can be miseducative as well as educative depending on what and how attention is focussed and how events or individuals are storied or “story-o-typed” (Randall, 1995, p.57). Randall helps me think about links between attention and teacher knowledge construction.

“We can ‘remember’ an event only when we attend to it; only when it catches our attention, when it stands out from our standard routines, and we can make it into some sort of story, primitive though that story may be” (p.224).

In the event filled fast paced complexity of school contexts, most of what occurs takes place at the periphery rather than the center of focus. I return for a moment to Dewey’s (1938) comment that “as an individual passes from one situation to another, his world, his environment, expands or contracts” (p.44). The complex, fast paced nature of school situations often lead preservice teachers (and teachers in general) to try to simplify rather than expand this complexity into a manageable form given the speed and number of decisions that need to be made. As Zach commented, “It’s impossible to constantly be open, because then you won’t *do* anything.” Therefore, attention may indeed become limited and, once an event is storied, the sense of comfort achieved that it “makes sense” may forestall further learning in the form of restorying or reconstructing. In this sense the lessons learned may be both educative and miseducative. Learning does occur; however, the hectic pace of teaching leaves little time for reconstruction of teacher knowledge. Zach’s comment near the end of his final practicum is telling partly because of its typicality. “The first time or the second time you do it and maybe the third time, you may think about it a little bit.” However, once he understood the reasons for doing something, “it’s a waste of your time to think about it because that’s the way it is. You do it. You become institutionalized in that matter. ... But once you’ve accepted it, and you have no problem with it, you don’t think about it any more.”



## 5 TIME FOR LIFELONG LEARNING IN SCHOOL CONTEXTS: FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Gudmundsdottir (1995) described the narrative construction of teacher knowledge in the following way:

“The most important lessons in pedagogical interpretation take place on the job in a cycle of practical application and reflection. Reflection involves thoughtful explanation of past events. Mere moments and happenings have no systematic cognitive connection. They stand behind one another in a temporal sequence and it is only through reflection that they begin to take on the form of a story and acquire meaning” (p.33).

This exploration of preservice teachers’ knowledge construction over and within time brings to light several issues in the possibilities of pedagogical interpretation for practising teachers as well. In this final section I briefly outline three future directions I believe are worth closer exploration in both research and practice. I do not mean to imply that these are not happening anywhere, but their occurrence is rare.

Firstly, most preservice and co-operating teachers perceive lack of time as a huge issue. At present, it seems that time is often thought of as linear and finite, that is, we move along time and there is only so much time. Atwood (1988) imagines time in the following way:

“Time is not a line but a dimension, like the dimensions of space. If you can bend space you can bend time also. ... I begin then to think of time as having a shape, something you could see, like a series of liquid transparencies, one laid on top of another. You don’t look back along time but down through it, like water” (p.3).

Rethinking the meaning of time and what we do with time in schools would be profitable. Pat was playing with different ways to use time in her school day. Zach imagined a 30-minute period as too short. What might happen if he imagined not 30 minutes for all his students, but that each student had 30 minutes? Then, with 25 students, a 30-minute teaching period turns into 750 minutes for learning. Suggestion such as these can help us reimagine our relationships with time.

No matter how much time is available in schools, or how we imagine using it, what is done with that time is also of issue. I am again reminded of Randall (1995) when I think of the hectic pace and crammed curriculum teachers and students continue to endure.

“People who have too many events lead lives that are filled with events yet comparatively empty of experiences. Lacking either the time or the talent to examine their lives, or the opportunity to talk about them with others, they cannot adequately digest those events into experiences” (p.291).

How might learning be different if enough curriculum events were removed for students and teachers to adequately digest the events that remained? What if there were few enough events so there was time to discover or uncover rather than cover the curriculum?

Secondly, teacher learning in schools is usually done in isolation despite our recognition that the process of constructing and reconstructing knowledge is a social activity. Although much focus has recently been placed on the social construction of knowledge, for the most part, teachers (and students) are still expected to teach (and learn) alone. This leads to teachers not having enough time to individually meet all the needs of each individual student. It also leads to teachers teaching large groups of students, usually of the same age, alone in separate classrooms. With time already too full, teachers seldom, if ever, have opportunities for the dialogue that can stimulate knowledge reconstruction with peers in school contexts. As Ritchie and Wilson (2000) remind us:

“This process occurs over time and, we argue, is supported by the dialogue and reflection made possible when teachers compose narrative representations of their ideas and experiences. That process is never finished or fully complete, but is an ongoing process that requires a supportive climate of reflection and dialogue to sustain it” (p.14).

Shifting the focus from individually to socially constructed knowledge could also shift how time is used. How might teachers’ (and students’) time be used if students were actually constructing knowledge together? How might issues of time and construction of knowledge be different if teachers were able to teach (and talk) together?

Lastly, lifelong learning requires not only the construction of teacher knowledge but the reconstruction as well. As McEwan (1995) points out, “in addition to coming to understand teaching as a narrative, we must come to practice it as informed by narrative and so come to see our own pedagogic values and purposes as contingent and revisable” (p. 180). However, the individualized, fast paced complexity of schools and classrooms often leads teachers to value certainty and control in order to make sense, make decisions, and get on with the action packed agenda. As Zach stated: “It’s impossible to constantly be open, because then you won’t *do* anything,” and

in the same conversation, our last before he graduated, he further explained to me “it’s a waste of your time to think about it because that’s the way it is. You do it. You become institutionalized in that matter.” Zach’s words haunt me partly because they shut down the possibility for reconstruction of Zach’s teacher knowledge, partly because this view is so prevalent in schools, and perhaps mostly because they make so much sense given the dominant way in which stories of school, teaching, and learning have been constructed and passed down in recent history. These “stuck” or “frozen” stories (Conle, 1999) or “routine actions” (Altrichter, Posch & Somekh, 1993) continue to remain dominant because, as they become taken-for-granted, they provide no possibility for revision. As Ritchie and Wilson (2000) point out, “because of the powerful sense that institutions and their rituals are just ‘natural,’ ‘the way things are,’ it is difficult to find the gaps and contradictions through which to open a critique of those dominant perspectives” (p.13).

Re-thinking conceptions of time in relation to the social construction and reconstruction of knowledge, could help teachers and preservice teachers interrupt their stories of teacher “cultivation” and find gaps and contradictions that could lead to “awakenings” and “transformations” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1995). This in turn could help to move understandings of teacher knowledge development in more informed directions in teachers’ working and learning environments. It’s about time.

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## PART 3

# PERSPECTIVES ON TEACHERS' PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL LIVES

# Chapter 11

## THE AUTHENTIC TEACHER

Per F. Laursen

### 1 INTRODUCTION

That teachers' personal characteristics are of great importance to the quality of teaching is old educational wisdom. Several classical educational writers, e.g. St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) and J.F. Pestalozzi (1746-1827) stressed the importance of the personality and the moral qualities of teachers (see Castle, 1970, for an excellent overview). Modern philosophers of education like O. F. Bollnow (Bollnow, 1987) and Max van Manen (van Manen, 1991) also viewed education as dependent on the qualities of the personal relationship between teacher and children. Several movies like 'Dead Poets Society' (director Peter Weir, 1989) have portrayed teachers with extraordinary personal qualities.

Also educational research has been interested in teachers as persons. During the last 100 years, empirical research has tried to identify the most important personal characteristics. During the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the aim of the research was to construct instruments for selection of students for teacher training. The background was that the teaching profession was considered attractive so that it was relevant to devise the most valid selection instruments to recruit the most promising students for teacher training. This agenda is no longer relevant in most western countries because teaching is no longer so attractive to young students as it used to be and the profession faces a crisis of recruitment.

During the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, research focused on intelligence as the most important personal characteristic. Later focus shifted to personality traits. Many research projects were undertaken to identify the personality traits of effective teachers in order to use personality tests to recruit the most promising students for teacher training. Today most researchers seem to agree that the relevant personal characteristics concern the knowledge or competence of teachers.

Only a few research projects have been carried through based on a modern theoretical framework of teachers' personal competences. This paper presents the results of an empirical study of Danish teachers. The purpose of the study was to analyse in closer detail what it is that teachers with a high level of personal competence can do and to develop a concept of teachers' personal quality. The purpose of the study was to answer the question: What is this unified whole of teacher competence that can be experienced in classrooms of teachers with outstanding personal qualities?

Firstly, the principal features of the research in the 20<sup>th</sup> century on teacher personality are presented and criticized. Secondly, the main points of the new conceptual framework are introduced stressing the need to analyse how personal competences are developed. Thirdly, the concept of authenticity is proposed as a unifying concept of teachers' personal competences, and fourthly, the results of the empirical study are presented and discussed.

## **2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Research in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

Looking at some important scholars of teachers' personality and competence during the 20<sup>th</sup> century a change of focus from personality to competence is conspicuous. In the beginning of the century, intelligence tests were the preferred instruments in the search of procedures to identify and select teachers. In the first decades of the century many studies compared teachers' intelligence test scores to some measure of teaching effectiveness. Most studies found low, none or even negative (!) correlations (Getzels & Jackson, 1963, p.571).

The next personal characteristic to be considered was personality and a lot of projects were undertaken to determine the personality traits of effective teachers. A bibliography from 1950 contains some 1,000 titles of works concerning teacher personality (Getzels & Jackson, 1963, p.506) and Getzels and Jackson's overview of the research from 1963 is based on more than 800 studies published between 1950 and 1963. Most of this research aimed primarily at identifying instruments for selection of students for teacher education.

Many studies of teacher personality used a standard personality test as the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory to identify the personality traits of effective teachers and to select promising students. Only a few studies actually evaluated the validity of the predictions. The results were disappointing and the conclusion was quite clear: students' future success as

effective teachers cannot be predicted by personality tests. This conclusion has been confirmed also in a more recent overview of the research (Bolton, 1973).

The Teacher Characteristics Study directed by David G. Ryans (1960) was the single most extensive study using a selection approach. The study had a clear purpose: it aimed at the development of instruments and procedures to be used by the selection for teacher training and for employment and promotion (Ryans, 1960, p.11). The study involved more than 6.000 teachers in the USA and it identified what was supposed to be the most relevant patterns of classroom behavior. Three personal dimensions of teacher behavior in classroom were emphasized:

- Friendly versus aloof;
- Systematic versus slipshod;
- Stimulating versus dull.

One result of the study was the development of an inventory (a self-report paper-pencil test) aiming at finding correlates of classroom behavior so that teachers' behavior in relation to the three dimensions could be predicted from the answers to the questions in the inventory. However, like earlier similar attempts, the predictive validity of the instrument was low (Ryans, 1960, p.256).

The Teacher Characteristics Study was an imposing culmination of the selection-oriented research on teachers' personal characteristics but today it can be viewed also as a monument over a basically fruitless research effort: It seems impossible to develop valid selection instruments. However, the Teacher Characteristics Study was valuable in other respects. It identified the basic patterns of classroom behavior of relevance for the personal aspects of teaching.

In the first edition of "Handbook of Research on Teaching" from 1963 Getzels and Jackson's overview of research on teacher personality was one of the longest articles. The authors' conclusion was quite discouraging: despite a prodigious research effort during half a century very little was known about the nature and measurement of teacher personality and about the relation between teacher personality and teaching effectiveness. It can be viewed as a logical consequence of this conclusion that teachers' personal characteristics were hardly mentioned in the "Second Handbook of Research on Teaching" from 1973 (Travers, 1973).

During the 1970's several researchers pointed out that teachers lacked a teaching culture and a special body of knowledge (e.g., Lortie, 1975). Teachers were thought to have experience but not knowledge or expertise (Feiman-Nemser & Floden, 1986, p.512). This view on teachers' lack of knowledge implied a negative evaluation of the role of teachers' personal characteristics. Lortie considered it a result of lack of technical knowledge



that teachers developed practices consistent with their personality and experience.

About 1980 a new understanding of teachers' knowledge started to influence the research. Freema Elbaz' 1983 work, "Teacher Thinking: a study of practical knowledge" was a pioneer-work (Elbaz, 1983). Elbaz introduced a much more positive view on teachers' knowledge. The practical nature of this knowledge does not make it less valuable, just different from scientific knowledge. Teachers' knowledge is shaped and used in practical situations and the role and purpose of teachers' knowledge is to make them able to make wise practical decisions. She considered teachers' practical knowledge to consist of five domains of which 'knowledge of self' was one.

Research on teacher knowledge and competence has been very extensive since the middle of the 1980s and only a few points of relevance to the personal aspects of this knowledge shall be mentioned:

- The notion of teachers' knowledge has been highly influenced by Schön's concept of the reflective practitioner (Schön, 1983). As a consequence, teachers' knowledge is viewed as a result of personal reflection and not as an application of general scientific principles.
- Whereas governmental policy in many countries have launched a technical and bureaucratic model of professional development stressing effectiveness and accountability, the research on teachers' knowledge points to complex models of teacher competence including intuitive, personal and emotional aspects (Trumbull, 2001; Wood, 2002) as well as craftsmanship (Kennedy, 2002) or artisanship (Talbert & McLaughlin, 2002).
- Not only the emotional but also the cognitive aspects of teachers' knowledge as the pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1987) are personal. This knowledge is related to context, sometimes tacit and always based on the reflection on the individual's experience (Hulshof & Verloop, 2002).

It can be concluded from this sketch of the development of the research during the 20<sup>th</sup> century that teachers' personal characteristics *are* important. The most relevant aspect seems to be teachers' knowledge or competence but so far the researchers have not reached an agreement about how personal qualities can be conceptualised as knowledge or competence.

## **2.2 A Modern Conceptual Framework: Development of Situated Personal Competences**

During the last two or three decades, researchers have proposed several concepts designating teachers' personal competence or knowledge. Among the proposals were: 'Knowledge of self' (Elbaz, 1983), 'personal practical

knowledge' (Brutzman, 1991; Connelly & Clandinin, 1988), and 'personal competences' (Cogan, 1975). These proposals have got much in common as they focus on knowledge and competence.

When the relevant personal characteristics are viewed as competences and not as personality traits it follows that students cannot be selected for teacher training on personal characteristics. Even if it were psychologically possible to design a personality test to select the best students for teacher education it would not be realistic to use it. The recruitment crisis of the teaching profession has made it necessary to try to *develop* the competences of all teachers (Hargreaves, 1994, 2000). To the classical research on teacher characteristics it was a complicating factor that teacher behavior was a function not only of the individual teacher but also of the situation (Ryans, 1960, p.16) and that qualities needed in one situation were not necessarily identical with qualities needed in another situation. Ryans and contemporary researchers tried to overcome this problem by an additional refinement of their instruments but adhered to the intention to identify general correlates of effective teaching behavior.

Today it is obvious that it is a more fruitful consequence to view teachers' qualities as fundamentally *situated* (Lave, 1988). As teachers' competences are developed during their whole career they are inevitably marked by the circumstances of these experiences. Research on teachers' personal competences must therefore include the circumstances of the development and practise of these qualities.

To view teachers' personal qualities as situated personal competences that can be developed through training and experience is a progress towards conceptual clarity. Still we lack a concept to designate the teachers who have reached an expert-level concerning personal competence.

### **2.3 The Concept of Authenticity**

The personal quality of a teacher in the classroom is experienced as a unified whole by students and not as several 'sub-competences' or aspects and therefore it is useful to have a single concept to denote this quality. The only appropriate candidate seems to be the concept of authenticity that was introduced in relation to teachers by Clark E. Moustakas (1966) and Stephen D. Brookfield (1990). They both used the concept about the teachers' relations to their students. To both of them an authentic teacher is a teacher who views students as fellow human beings, not as 'material' for the teaching process. The authentic teacher respects the attitudes and intentions of students and she does not try to manipulate the students but to convince them by giving reasons for her proposals. The authentic teacher does not distance herself from the students by hiding herself behind a detached and

impersonal teacher role but views herself as well as the students as human beings with intentions, feelings and interests.

Although the teacher's relations to students are very important, they are not the only aspect of what we are referring to when we speak of a teacher with excellent personal qualities. As early as the 1960s, the pioneering work of D.G. Ryans identified 'being stimulating' as one of three important personal dimensions of teaching. Ryans suggested that the teacher's relation to the content of her teaching is of equal importance as the teacher's relationship to the students. St. Brookfield, too, viewed the teachers' relation to the content as an important aspect of teaching, but he used the concept of credibility to describe this aspect of teachers' competences. Thus, according to Brookfield, the two fundamental dimensions of a teacher's qualities are authenticity and credibility. However, it seems difficult to distinguish between authenticity and credibility and I therefore propose to use the concept of authenticity to denote a high level of teachers' personal competences in general.

The concept of authenticity was used by several philosophers, for example M. Heidegger (Heidegger, 2001). He made a distinction between a conventional, false, and inauthentic surface level and a true and authentic depth level ('Eigenlichkeit') of being. This existentialist version of the concept is difficult to use for empirical purposes because the 'depth level' by definition cannot be observed. Instead, the present study is inspired by Charles Taylor and his concept of ethics of authenticity (Taylor, 1991). Taylor stressed that authenticity involves:

- A.i creation and construction as well as discovery;
- A.ii originality and frequently;
- A.iii opposition to the rules of society;
- B.i openness to horizons of significance;
- B.ii self-definition in dialogue (Taylor, 1991, p.66).

According to Taylor, authenticity is the freedom to decide for oneself rather than being shaped by external influences (A.i – A.iii). But authenticity also means acting in accordance with ethical values and cultural norms of significance in dialogue with others (B.i and B.ii). Authenticity does not equal freedom to pursue personal predilections. Unless some options are more significant than others, the very idea of choice becomes trivial: "Authenticity is not the enemy of demands that emanate from beyond the self; it supposes such demands" (Taylor, 1991, p.41).

### **3 THE EMPIRICAL STUDY: METHODS AND MATERIAL**

#### **3.1 Data Collection**

The empirical study was based on observations in the classroom and semi-structured interviews with 30 Danish teachers in primary and lower secondary schools. The teachers were selected by reputation of having a high level of personal-professional competences. People who in their job dealt with many teachers (consultants, school principals, and teachers in teacher training colleges) were asked to supply names of teachers with this reputation. To obtain the participation of 30 teachers, 32 were asked to join the study. The teachers had from one to 34 years of experience with a mean of 17 years; 23 were females.

The selected teachers were observed teaching during one school day and interviewed for about one hour about their views on teaching and their professional development. Purpose of the observations was to describe the competences the teachers practised in the classroom especially in their way of relating to the two basic aspects of teaching: students and content. The observer was non-participating and the method of observation was inspired by the ethnographic approach to classroom observation trying to answer the research question: What is the competence behind the reputation that these teachers had acquired?

The purpose of the interviews was to analyse the teachers' intentions and personal-professional development. The interviews were semi-structured and they were taped and transcribed. Observations and interviews took place in 2001 and 2002.

It is of course crucial for the validity of this study that the 30 teachers really had excellent personal-professional competences. It is not possible to obtain any objective measure of these rather elusive qualities and therefore selection by reputation seems to be the only possibility although not much is known about the validity of reputation – or of other measures of teacher competence (Medley, 1990, p.1348; Millman & Darling-Hammond, 1990, p.182 & 271). In order to enhance the validity the methods were triangulated (Cohen & Manion, 1994) by using both observations and interviews. The analyses of the teachers' conceptions were tested with them during the interview (communicative validity; Kvale, 1996).

#### **3.2 Data Analysis**

The analysis focused on competences, intentions, views on teaching, and aspects of professional development that were common to all the 30 teachers

(except in some respects one or two). This focus is a consequence of the intention to analyse the authentic teacher in general and it does of course not imply that authentic teachers are alike in other respects.

The observation notes and the transcribed interviews were reread several times in search of competences shared by all the teachers. I focused especially on competences related to Taylor's five aspects of authenticity. The analysis resulted in seven categories of competences that all (or almost all) the 30 teachers seemed to master. Authentic teachers have personal intentions concerning their teaching, and when teaching they embody their intentions, their intentions are realistic, they relate to students as fellow human beings, they work in a context fruitful to their intentions, they cooperate intensely with colleagues, and finally they take care of their own personal-professional development.

Three of these competences (personal intentions, embodying the intentions, and having realistic intentions) are related to Taylor's first two aspects (A.i and A.ii). Three other competences (working in a fruitful context, cooperating with colleagues, and taking care of personal-professional development) are close to Taylor's fifth aspect (B.ii). Finally, one of the competences (treating students as fellow human beings) is related to Taylor's fourth aspect (B.i). Several of the 30 teachers broke conventional rules of school behavior (compare Taylor's point A.iii). But not all of them did and therefore unconventional action is not included as one of the authentic teachers' competences.

## **4 RESULTS OF THE EMPIRICAL STUDY: SEVEN COMPETENCES OF AUTHENTIC TEACHERS**

### **4.1 Authentic Teachers have Personal Intentions concerning their Teaching**

All the teachers in the study fundamentally experienced it as a very important and meaningful job to be a teacher. Both in classroom and when interviewed the respondents gave reasons which they personally could answer for concerning their teaching. The interviewed teachers gave their own reasons why the content of their teaching was valuable and everyone of them stated personal views about the purpose of their teaching. These views were not necessarily especially original: most of them stressed the importance of teaching the students knowledge of subject matter and of facilitating their general personal and social development. The important quality was that the intentions were the teachers' own; they were not just the headmasters' intention or the aims of the official curriculum. As one

interviewee said: “I feel that every day requires that I intend something. I am not here just to get my salary. I am here because I intend something and I constantly take up that challenge.” The teachers felt it to be important for them to have good subject matter knowledge and to feel enthusiastic about it. Several of them stressed that a teacher cannot inspire students unless she is inspired herself.

Authenticity is not just to have any personal intention. The intention must be justifiable in relation to general horizons of significance (Taylor, 1991, p.35). Taylor stressed that authenticity cannot be identified as having any personal peculiarity (as for instance green hair). We only view a person and her/his behavior as authentic if her/his qualities can be valued as significant in relation to general cultural values. In this study all the interviewed teachers were able to justify their personal way of teaching in relation to general educational principles. The teachers viewed the students’ personal and social development as important as learning about subject matter: “I am not the woman of the disciplines. I prefer a holistic school.”

## **4.2 Authentic Teachers embody their Intentions**

In his analysis of social and cultural leaders who have influenced the thinking of many people, Howard Gardner (Gardner, 1995) showed that a decisive quality was that the leaders had a central story or message and that they embodied their message. They practised what they preached and so do authentic teachers. At the beginning of the empirical study it was not a part of the observation guide to focus on the energy and enthusiasm of the teachers. But during the observations I spontaneously noted about every teacher that they were energetic, enthusiastic, in a positive mood, or created a positive and work-oriented atmosphere in the classroom or the like. All the teachers showed a high level of energy and were positive and optimistic concerning the students’ learning. They thereby embodied the fundamental message to students: teaching and learning are important and worthwhile activities. Several of the teachers could be said also to embody the message that teaching and learning are not only important but also fun.

All the observed teachers somehow demonstrated their interest in the content of their teaching and their intention to learn more about it. Several of them selected subject matter that had a kind of personal meaning to them, which they demonstrated while teaching. As a teacher said to her class introducing a literary analysis of the text of a rock band: “We start by working on something I experience as interesting and that has a message to you.”

### **4.3 Authentic Teachers' have Realistic Intentions**

All the respondents reported that they at least sometimes had a feeling of satisfaction in their work because they had been able to realize some of their intentions. The majority of them had experienced that if they worked with a certain class for some years they were able to observe that the students' learning of subject matter and especially of social competences had developed in the direction they wanted. "The best experience is feeling that you open new doors to the kids so that they get new possibilities."

In his classical work on teachers, Lortie (1975) stressed that one of the problematic aspects of teaching was that the results are not visible. But this study indicates that at least highly competent teachers who are able to work with the same class for some years do experience results of their teaching.

Why is it an aspect of authenticity to have intentions that are at least to some degree realistic? Imagine a teacher who for several years felt no relation between what she intended and what she accomplished without trying to do anything about it. She clearly could not consider her teaching or her intentions to be important. If she did she would either modify her intentions or try to enhance her competences to realise her intentions.

### **4.4 Authentic Teachers relate to Students as fellow Human Beings**

As mentioned earlier, both Moustakas and Brookfield considered the relations to students to be the central aspect of authentic teaching. This study confirms that the authentic teachers respected the students and treated them as free and reasonable persons although they do not have the same amount of knowledge or experience as the teacher. For instance, a teacher of mathematics stressed that although mathematics was very important to him and was his great interest he respected students who had no interest in the subject and he offered his help to make them pass the exams: "I feel it important to signal solidarity with the students and their experience of math."

### **4.5 Authentic Teachers work in Contexts fruitful to their Intentions**

A further aspect of authentic teaching is that the teacher has endeavoured to work in a context that is fruitful to her intentions. This can be done by developing the conditions at a certain school in a direction favourable to one's intentions or by getting a job at another school. You do not practise

what you preach if you passively accept circumstances that are unfavourable to your message.

With one exception all the interviewed teachers felt that their schools were conducive to the realisation of their intentions as teachers and they considered this experience to be very important: “It means a lot. If you don’t thrive in your daily surroundings you don’t grow, you don’t flourish, you don’t get ideas, you don’t experience joy of working, and you don’t feel like doing things with the kids.”

The only interviewee who did not feel being in fruitful surroundings was a young teacher who had her first job on a school where she experienced that her colleagues did not share her interest in educational matters.

#### **4.6 Authentic Teachers cooperate intensely with Colleagues**

Without exception the respondents reported that their relations to and cooperation with their colleagues were of great significance to them. Some of their schools had formed teams but also at schools without formal teams the respondents viewed cooperation with colleagues as very important: “What cooperation with colleagues gives me is unbelievable. Now we work together in a team for each class. Having good colleagues to talk to is as good as gold.”

The most frequently mentioned reason for this importance was that the respondents viewed colleagues as resource persons from whom they could learn to become better teachers. It is known also from other studies (Eraut, 1994, p.34) that interaction with colleagues is important for learning and professional development. Another reason mentioned was that collegial cooperation is necessary for the development of the school as an institution.

#### **4.7 Authentic Teachers are able to take Care of their Personal-Professional Development**

A high level of personal competence is a result of development and no one but the teacher herself is responsible for her personal development. Therefore an important aspect of personal competence is the ability to take care of one’s own personal and professional development. As the last question in the interviews, the respondents were asked to give advices to future teachers about how to take care of their development. The most frequently mentioned answer was that it is important to experience one’s abilities under different conditions and to gain new experiences continuously: “Any young teacher should have the possibility to work for a year or two at a school where they were not going to stay...I think it might



be good to try out one's possibilities. You really have to face that the first five years are time to learn... You have to find your personality as a teacher, your personal way of doing things."

Several respondents stressed the importance of having fun together with colleagues!

## 5 CONCLUSION

From a theoretical perspective, this study demonstrates that the concept of authenticity is appropriate as a designation of teachers' personal competence as a whole. In the literature, Moustakas and Brookfield have used the concept to describe one crucial aspect of this competence, namely the quality of the teacher's relationship with the students. While Moustakas neglected the role of the teacher as a representative of the content of teaching, Brookfield termed this aspect of teachers' personal competence 'credibility'. However, a teacher relates to students as a teacher *of* something, thus the teacher's relations to students cannot be viewed without taking into consideration the quality of the teacher as a representative of the content of teaching. Therefore, it seems appropriate to use a single concept to encompass the teacher's competence to relate to students as a convincing teacher of a certain content.

Charles Taylor's analysis of the concept of authenticity stressed that the word is used about persons who create something following an intention that is their own, while at the same time acting in accordance with general ethical principles. A teacher worth the name would both intend to build good relations with students and to introduce them to the content of teaching. The personal and professional competence to do so is authenticity in teaching. The present empirical study shows that authentic teachers have developed a personal and realistic intention, are able to embody this intention and to engage in fruitful cooperation with students and colleagues.

From a practical perspective, the results of the study can serve as an inspiration in teacher education and professional development. In the interviews, the teachers were asked to give their personal recommendations concerning teacher education and professional development to improve their personal competences. Most of them stressed that, in the first instance, it is important that teachers really want to teach. Next to a personal desire or intention, experience is another important factor – which should not be limited to doing the same thing year after year; it is essential to seek new challenges, for instance, by moving to another school. Inspiration, too, is important and all the teachers interviewed relied on colleagues and some also on theoretical developments and new trends in the professional debate on teaching for inspiration.

So far it has proved difficult to find a systematic way to develop the personal aspect of teachers' professional competence as part of teacher education. Teacher educators have been reluctant to work directly with this aspect for fear of coming too close to students' inner feelings and personality. I hope that this study will make it easier for teacher educators to further students' personal-professional development. The study demonstrates that authenticity is neither a matter of feelings nor personality. It is a matter of competence.

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## Chapter 12

# THE IMPACT OF PROGRAM ADOPTION ON TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL LIVES

Jane Ashdown and Barbara Hummel-Rossi

### 1 INTRODUCTION

In the context of school reform and current education legislation in the United States, teachers are involved in instructional change designed to address the need for higher student achievement. Such change involves school systems in adopting and implementing curricula or programs that simultaneously require teachers to participate in professional development activities. The focus of teacher participation in such professional development is appropriately on enhancing teachers' knowledge base and teaching skills in relation to student achievement. Program participation, however, has the potential to impact teachers in many directions, both positively and negatively, and to affect their professional lives and continued career development.

Teacher knowledge and skill is only one element required for successful instructional reform. The adoption and implementation of particular curricula or programs, without consideration of the impact on the teacher's development, reflects an ad hoc approach to teacher development, instead of one nested in a comprehensive human resource policy. The implication for teacher development of coupling program adoption with professional development is that teachers are required to participate in this professional development in the interests of successful program implementation. As Little (1993) notes, professional development in the service of program implementation potentially masks issues concerning whether or not the professional development meets the teachers' own perceived learning needs. Teachers' opportunities for growth and development become bound to the conceptions of teaching and professional development held by the school system implementing curriculum changes (Little, 1989). These tensions

between teachers' own professional development needs and their school systems' instructional needs provide a justification for examining the broad impact of program adoption on teachers' professional lives.

The study reported herein is grounded in a perspective that recognizes teachers as the human and social capital critical to school improvement. Within this perspective, teachers' professional development is an investment from the vantage of the school system and the individual teacher (Stern, Gerritz & Little, 1989). This investment has targeted outcomes, such as changes in teachers' knowledge, implementation of a particular curriculum, and improvements in student achievement. However, broader outcomes of importance to teachers might include psychological and motivational effects on teachers' professional commitment and career prospect enhancement. Our study investigated the full range of outcomes impacting teachers' development resulting from their participation in two different professional development programs.

In the following section, we review research findings pertinent to the targeted and broad outcomes of professional development effecting teachers' professional lives. We first examine the targeted outcomes related to changes in teachers' classroom practice. Given our investment perspective on teacher development, we next consider research focused on psychological and motivational aspects of teachers' professional lives. This research is not well integrated into the teacher professional development literature; however, we regard it as informative about teacher development in the context of instructional change. In particular, we focus on the broad outcomes of professional development related to changes in teachers' beliefs about their capacity to positively effect student achievement, changes in teachers' professional commitment, and changes in career opportunities. Finally, we address research findings concerning the costs and outcomes of professional development in relation to teacher development. This last topic of investigation reflects an area of research that has potential to integrate investing in teacher development with a range of student and teacher outcomes.

Considering first professional development as it impacts teachers' classroom practice, Wilson and Berne (1999) summarized contemporary beliefs about the characteristics of effective professional development in relation to teacher learning opportunities. From this summary, they developed a set of criteria for identifying exemplary programs. These criteria reflected attention to research, how teachers learn, subject matter knowledge, student differences, cultural diversity, and pedagogy. The authors applied these criteria to several outstanding programs and identified strengths and weaknesses of each. Wilson and Berne concluded that curriculum reform depended on teachers having the opportunity both to develop the requisite subject matter knowledge on which the reforms were based and to be

instrumental in implementing those reforms. In addition, they noted that research into teacher professional development, particularly when linking teacher learning to teacher behavior to student achievement, was something that few research programs addressed and that should be at the forefront of future research.

Mindful of the need to identify the characteristics of high quality professional development that are related to better teaching, Desimone, Porter, Garet, Yoon, and Birman (2002) investigated the effects of professional development on teachers' instruction. The premise underlying the focus of their investigation was that changes in teachers' classroom practice would lead to gains in student achievement. Drawing on their previous survey of over one thousand math and science teachers (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman & Yoon, 2001), these researchers found that a focus on content knowledge, opportunities for active learning, and coherence with other learning opportunities had significant positive effects on teachers' self-reported perceptions of changes in their classroom instruction. Their most recent work (Desimone et al., 2002) drew on a smaller sample of teachers from that same pool (N=207) and examined the impact of professional development on teachers' classroom practice over a three-year period from 1996 to 1999. The findings indicated that the collective participation of teachers from the same school, opportunities for active learning, and linkages to other professional development were all characteristics that were effective in leading to sustained changes in teachers' classroom practice. These authors concluded that their research results implied that changes in teaching practice would occur only if teachers had the opportunity to participate in high-quality professional development exhibiting these characteristics. However, they noted that many school districts must choose between either serving large numbers of teachers with less focused professional development, or providing higher quality professional development to a smaller number of teachers.

Considering next the broader impact of professional development on teachers' professional lives, we briefly examine the concept of teacher efficacy, that is the beliefs teachers hold about their capacity to impact student achievement. In a thorough review of the teacher efficacy literature, Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, and Hoy (1998) traced competing theories underlying this concept and argued for the meaning of teacher efficacy to include teachers' beliefs about their own teaching competence in accomplishing certain teaching tasks. In addition, the authors called for further refinement of the measurement of teacher efficacy incorporating the use of interview and observational data. Despite some methodological and measurement problems, the authors cited robust findings from research on teacher efficacy that demonstrated, for example, that teacher efficacy was positively related to student achievement and attitudes towards school, as

well as to teachers' openness to new ideas, willingness to experiment with new teaching methods, and willingness to work with students experiencing learning difficulties. Tschannen-Moran et al. proposed a new, integrated model of teacher efficacy building on two important research strands: Rotter's (1966) work on teachers' perceptions concerning the extent to which they have control over the effects of their teaching on students, and Bandura's (1977, 1997) work on teachers' perceptions of their own competence in teaching. This new integrated model has incorporated teachers' perceptions of their personal teaching competence as well as teachers' analysis of the teaching task. It is based on the assumption that teachers make judgments about their personal efficacy by drawing on their analysis of the particular teaching task in which they are engaged.

Another dimension of the potential impact of professional development on teachers' professional lives is teacher commitment. Firestone and Pennell (1993) examined the research on teacher commitment in the context of teachers' working conditions, including the impact of various incentive schemes (e.g., merit pay awards, career ladders) on teachers' sense of commitment. The authors viewed a mix of commitment to schools, the profession, and students as necessary for teachers to have the motivation to engage in instructional change. Firestone and Pennell defined commitment as a voluntary state in which intrinsic motivation toward the goals and values of an institution (a school) inspire efforts beyond minimal expectations. In the context of implementing new teaching methods, teachers may encounter new and more demanding work requirements. The discomfort of learning these new approaches might be mitigated by a sense of commitment to teaching. Further, if these new approaches add meaning to teachers' work and are optimally challenging, that is neither too simple nor too complex, then teachers are likely to experience greater intrinsic motivation and commitment. These authors also examined research on the role of external rewards in relation to teacher commitment. This research demonstrated that issues of fairness and competition in the implementation of career ladder and merit pay incentive schemes were significant concerns of teachers, making these strategies limited in their impact on teacher commitment. The authors concluded that teacher commitment in the context of school improvement efforts was most effectively addressed through work conditions, such as increased opportunities for participation in decision-making, collaboration with colleagues to create more learning opportunities, and increased feedback to teachers about their work.

Teacher career development research also has addressed the role of incentives, such as merit pay, from a policy perspective of teacher supply and retention (Smylie & Smart, 1990). In addition, researchers have examined state and school district policies with regard to the recruitment of qualified teachers (Darling-Hammond, Berry, Haselkorn & Fideler, 1999)

and the survival rate of particular groups of teachers, as in the special education teachers studied by Singer (1992). Another strand of teacher career development research is the life-cycle approach. Huberman's (1989) survey research of teachers analyzed positive and negative phases in teachers' careers revealing different concerns and different professional needs across an individual teacher's career. For example, Huberman found that once teachers' careers had stabilized (four to six years into teaching), some teachers moved into a phase of *experimentation*, trying out new methods and new materials, while others took stock of their situation and considered a career change. This phase, *experimentation* versus *stocktaking*, was found to occur 7 to 18 years into teaching. Men were particularly vulnerable to *stocktaking*, if they had not been promoted. In a later review of his work, Huberman (1995) cautioned that career phases were a simplification of teacher career paths. In reality, they might be experienced more like a staircase, as teachers took on new roles that might involve returning to the experience of being a *survivor* (one to three years into teaching) on the lowest stair. Similar to the findings in the teacher efficacy and commitment literatures, Huberman also reported on factors predictive of later professional satisfaction. Teachers who sought a shift in roles, engaged positively with specific groups of students, and/or experienced significant results in the classroom were more likely to report later career satisfaction. This career development research has addressed a prevailing concern for policy issues related to the retention of qualified teachers within the profession, whether through examining vulnerable phases in teachers' career paths or the design of inducements to retain teachers in the profession.

Relatively little research attention has been paid to the relation between the costs associated with professional development and the implications for teacher development. The research reported above suggests that there are some obvious trade-offs, both positive and negative, when professional development is considered from the perspective of an investment. From a school system's perspective, an investment in professional development might produce greater teacher satisfaction resulting in overall improved school efficacy and, thus, impact positively on teacher retention. However, the opposite could occur if professional development produces teacher dissatisfaction. For example, schools might assign teachers to teach out of their subject area due to recruiting difficulties in certain disciplines. Despite professional development for these reassigned teachers, reduced career commitment and attrition from the profession might result if these teachers regard themselves as lacking competence. Viewing an investment in professional development from the individual teacher's perspective, programs can produce expanded teacher pedagogical and subject matter knowledge leading to greater teacher efficacy, professional satisfaction, and commitment. On the other hand, these programs can negatively impact a



teacher if they, for example, include expectations that the teacher volunteer time to attend the program or lead to teaching curricula that restrict the teacher's professional autonomy in instructional decision-making (e.g., scripted lessons).

The relation between the costs and the outcomes of professional development is important in light of Desimone et al.'s (2002) conclusion that school districts may be forced to choose between providing high quality professional development for a few teachers or providing less focused professional development for a larger number of teachers. Stern et al. (1989) proposed a framework for accounting for the investment in teacher professional development from the perspective of both taxpayers and program participants. Within this framework, these authors presented the narrowest conceptualization of this investment, simply accounting for the financial outlay by taxpayers to support the costs of materials and teacher stipends. A more encompassing conceptualization of this investment would include all taxpayer outlays, as well as the monetary and non-compensated time outlays by participants who are also taxpayers. Our own research (Hummel-Rossi & Ashdown, 2002, 2003) investigated economic evaluations of education programs and used teacher focus groups and interviews to ascertain the full range of the costs and the rewards of professional development. The focus group and interview data revealed that through participation in professional development, teachers experienced a range of effects, both positive and negative, with implications for schools as organizations and for the development of individual teachers. These effects were not necessarily accounted for in relation to the obvious costs and outcomes associated with professional development.

The research on the targeted and broad outcomes of teacher professional development and career development suggests that these function as parallel strands of inquiry, rather than as an integrated knowledge base informing our understanding of teacher development. For example, Wilson and Berne's (1999) analysis of the professional development research did not conclude with any recommendations about reward systems for teacher participation in professional development, although their review pointed to how hard new learning can be for teachers and how long it might take for teachers to implement new practices in their classrooms. Reward systems for teachers tend to be addressed in the teacher career development literature, and here too there appears to be a lack of integration of this strand of the research with how professional development opportunities might impact teacher career opportunities. Darling-Hammond et al. (1999) bemoaned the lack of well-developed human resource policies and approaches in education as compared to other industries. The lack of integration of professional development costs with the research on teacher professional development, teacher efficacy, teacher commitment and teacher career development

reflects the absence of a coherent human resource policy in education. Examining briefly some research outside of education, we found that topics of efficacy, career stages and skill development were addressed within an integrated framework. For example, researchers in other occupational areas (professional, managerial, and vocational) have demonstrated how career commitment, skill development, and ambition relate to employee stability or employee intent to change jobs within a profession (Aryee, Chay & Chew, 1994; Desrochers & Dahir, 2000).

The investigation reported herein examined the professional development associated with two curricula initiatives, Project-STIR (Science Teachers in Industry and Research) and Reading Recovery (Clay, 1993). Our objectives were to examine the impact of these professional development experiences on participating teachers, and to evaluate the policy implications for teacher development from a human resource perspective.

## **2 METHOD**

### **2.1 Professional Development Program Selection**

The professional development programs in this investigation targeted two different teacher populations. One program, Project-STIR, was linked to the implementation of new approaches to teaching high school science; the other program, Reading Recovery, was linked to the implementation of an early literacy intervention. Project-STIR focused on providing secondary science teachers with seminars and workshops on current topics in science. There was a strong emphasis on helping teachers develop new laboratory curricula using technology. Teachers volunteered to participate and completed the yearlong program either for a stipend or for graduate credit. The program was offered through a partnership of private philanthropy and a higher education institution. The program was held after school, on weekends, and during a two-week summer institute. Eighteen teachers participated in the 2000-2001 program.

The teachers in the Reading Recovery program had completed a volunteer, yearlong, after school program in 2000-2001 to become Reading Recovery teachers. The teachers tutored literacy at-risk first graders in a daily, thirty-minute lesson. Once a week teachers attended an after-school, graduate class held at a local professional development site. As part of this weekly class, teachers observed each other teaching a child, gave each other feedback on their teaching, reviewed student records, and learned specific approaches to target their instruction to individual children's literacy learning needs.

In selecting these programs, we also considered the extent to which each program's professional development met criteria for *high-quality* professional development as defined in the literature reviewed earlier (Desimone, et al., 2002). Both programs met some, but not all the criteria found in the research. For example, both programs included a strong focus on subject matter knowledge, that is, science and technology, and children's early literacy development. Both programs included an emphasis on active learning for the participants; for the science teachers this included participating in laboratory work, and for the reading teachers this involved taking turns providing demonstration lessons. Each reading teacher participated in a class with teachers from his or her own school district; the teacher was sometimes the only program participant from his or her own school. Similarly, the science teachers were not from the same schools, but were drawn from schools across the city where they worked.

## 2.2 Participants

Eighteen teachers were interviewed for this study, nine from each program. All the reading teachers were certified elementary teachers. The science teachers were all high school teachers; seven were certified in science and two were completing science certification requirements. At the time of the interviews, all the teachers were teaching in New York City public schools except for two teachers, one from each program group, who were teaching in public suburban schools.

Case	Ethnicity	Gender	Teaching Years	Age
1	Black	Female	6	31-40
2	Hispanic	Female	7	21-30
3	Black	Female	7	31-40
4	White	Female	9	51-60
5	White	Female	11	31-40
6	Black	Female	13	31-40
7	White	Male	14	41-50
8	White	Female	20	41-50
9	White	Female	30	51-60

Table 12-1. Demographic characteristics of reading teachers.

Case	Ethnicity	Gender	Teaching Years	Age
10	White	Male	3	41-50
11	Hispanic	Male	5	41-50
12	Asian	Female	5	31-40
13	White	Female	5	41-50
14	Asian	Female	6	31-40
15	White	Male	11	61-70
16	Asian	Female	17	41-50
17	Black	Female	18	41-50
18	Black	Female	22	51-60

Table 12-2. Demographic characteristics of science teachers.

Tables 12-1 and 12-2 present the demographic characteristics of each group. It should be noted that the reading teachers had a typical elementary school teacher profile, i.e. predominantly female, with number of years teaching and age closely aligned. The reading teachers were less diverse than the science teachers. The science teachers presented a different profile, particularly when their ages and years of teaching were compared. It appears that about half the science teachers may have entered teaching as a second career. For example, case number 10 had only three years teaching experience, but was between 41 and 51 years old.

### 2.3 Interview Instrument

A structured interview was developed to assess the positive and negative impact on a teacher of participating in specialized professional development. The interview contains 39 primarily open-ended questions or probes, is administered individually, and takes about 30 minutes. Content validity is supported by focus group and interview data collected in an earlier study (Hummel-Rossi & Ashdown, 2003) and by an examination of the relevant literature as described above. The interview targets the impact of the program on the teachers' professional lives. Teachers also are asked to rank as extensive, moderate or limited, the value to them of key program features. All questions probe for both positive and negative responses. Demographic

questions are included as well as questions designed to clarify the costs to the teachers of participation. All the interviews were conducted by telephone by these authors between February and March of 2002.

### 3 RESULTS

The data were analyzed for patterns of responses; clusters of responses emerged around five domains of teacher development that were supported by our literature review: teacher efficacy, teacher commitment, teacher career development, teacher professional development, and teacher costs associated with program participation. Where interview questions asked respondents to rank or rate their experiences, it was possible to quantify responses. Results were as follows.

#### 3.1 Teacher Professional Development

Teachers were asked about the outcomes of their professional development experience in relation to gains in content knowledge and in skills for incorporating new knowledge into instruction. Fifteen of the 18 teachers ranked the value of new content knowledge and new knowledge about teaching skills as *extensive*, as distinct from *moderate* or *limited*. Project-STIR teachers reported that they had learned more about geology, DNA, the use of the graphing calculator, and how to work across disciplinary areas. The Reading Recovery teachers reported that they had learned more about how to teach reading, to record students' reading behaviors, and to use this information for instructional purposes. Two science teachers and one reading teacher described gains in both content knowledge and teaching skill as *moderate*, but still cited particular areas, such as the use of technology, as additional knowledge gained.

In the interview teachers were asked about opportunities for interaction with program participants and other professionals, a feature of high-quality professional development programs (Desimone et al., 2002). Although neither program was exclusively school-based, all nine science teachers and seven reading teachers reported that they had many opportunities to interact with program colleagues, which they regarded positively. One science teacher observed that it was valuable to interact with colleagues who were from different environments and another science teacher recounted exchanging lesson plans with colleagues in the program. Two other science teachers reported they maintained e-mail contact with program participants. The reading teachers cited the value of conferring with program colleagues and of interacting with other professionals on a school literacy team.

However, two reading teachers stated that there was not enough interaction with program colleagues; one teacher attributed this to being the only program participant from her school.

### 3.2 Teacher Efficacy

Beliefs concerning teaching competence and its effect on students are important features of teacher efficacy. Teachers reported on the degree of satisfaction with their delivery of instruction and on the extent to which participation in each professional development program aided achievement of their teaching goals, particularly in relation to their students. As shown in Table 12-3, most teachers from each program group indicated that they were now *more satisfied* with their teaching as a result of participation in each program. Two science teachers and three reading teachers indicated that their satisfaction level with their teaching was *about the same* as it was prior to program participation. Of note is that among this group of five teachers, three of them (one science teacher and two reading teachers) had been teaching for more than twenty years and were 51 to 60 years of age.

When asked for further information concerning their satisfaction with teaching, all teachers reported positively on the results of their work with students. The science teachers recounted increased effectiveness of their labs, an increase in student motivation as a result of using hands-on teaching activities, and positive responses from students to using laptop computers in the classroom. The reading teachers similarly cited examples of positive effects of their work with students, including observations about being more focused, attending more closely to students' strengths rather than weaknesses, and always trying to *do better* in teaching students.

Satisfaction Level	Reading Recovery Teachers	Science Teachers	Total
Less	0	0	0
Same	3	2	5
More	6	7	13
<b>Total</b>	9	9	18

Table 12-3. Current satisfaction with delivery of instruction.

### 3.3 Teacher Commitment

The research into teacher commitment (Firestone & Pennell, 1993) has indicated that commitment can be an important motivation to aid teachers through the demands of implementing new approaches to instruction. When the science and reading teachers were asked about the influence of program participation on their degree of commitment to the teaching profession, eight teachers from each group responded positively that participation had helped maintain their level of commitment to the teaching profession or had led to an increase in commitment to teaching. For example, one science teacher commented that she felt better about going to work each day, and another saw herself as more committed and enjoying teaching more. One reading teacher reported that she was more committed to both the school district and her school, and another stated that the program had professionally rejuvenated her. More experienced teachers indicated that the program helped maintain their commitment to teaching. Only two teachers, one from each program, indicated that the program had had no influence on their degree of commitment to their school or to the teaching profession.

Teacher commitment is described in the literature as a voluntary state where effort beyond minimum expectations is expended (Firestone & Pennell, 1993). Teachers were asked about their current workload in relation to teaching science or teaching reading, as compared to their workload prior to participating in each professional development program. The response pattern for the science teachers was different from that of the reading teachers (Table 12-4).

<b>Work Effort</b>	<b>Reading Recovery Teachers</b>	<b>Science Teachers</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Less</b>	2	0	2
<b>Same</b>	3	2	5
<b>More</b>	4	7	11
<b>Total</b>	9	9	18

Table 12-4. In school effort expended incorporating new material.

Seven of the nine science teachers reported that the teaching that incorporated the new science approaches required *more effort* rather than the *same* or *less effort*, and two teachers reported exerting the *same effort*. The teachers recounted doing more work both in and out of the classroom in preparing and implementing their new labs. On the other hand, only four of

the reading teachers reported exerting *more effort*; three teachers saw their workload as requiring about the *same effort*; and two teachers expended *less effort*. Some explanations for greater work effort were increased paperwork and the demands of the training year. For the teachers who experienced reduced effort, one teacher attributed this to tutoring children individually, whereas formerly she had taught a class of 28 first graders; the other teacher stated that her increased skill as a reading teacher now made her teaching seem less demanding. For both professional development programs, those teachers who reported their workload as requiring *more effort* said that their satisfaction level with their teaching was greater than prior to their program involvement.

### 3.4 Teacher Career Development

Demographic information revealed that the teachers who participated in both professional development programs were at different career stages, according to the life-cycle research discussed previously (Huberman, 1989). Six reading teachers had between 7 and 14 years of teaching experience; according to Huberman this would place them either in the *experimentation* or *stocktaking* phase. Given their voluntary participation in the program, it would be reasonable to assume that these teachers were in the *experimentation* phase of their careers as they tried out new methods and approaches to teaching reading. In reviewing Table 12-1, note that four of these six teachers were between 21 and 40 years of age, but two teachers' chronological ages did not correspond with their teaching experience (cases four and seven).

The science teachers were more diverse with regard to career phases. In examining Table 12-2 note that one teacher (Case 10) was at the *survival and discovery* phase (one to three years) of his career, and four teachers were at the *stabilization* phase (four to six years) of their careers (Cases 11,12,13,14) (Huberman, 1989). Of these five teachers, two were between 31 and 40 years of age and three teachers were between 41 and 50 years of age. Three science teachers (Cases 15, 16, 17) could be considered at the *experimentation* phase (7 to 18 years) of their careers, but one of these teachers was 61-70 years of age, an age associated with the *disengagement* phase (Huberman, 1989). This discrepancy between age and teaching experience supports Huberman's (1995) critique of a linear conceptualization of career phases and the need to account for different entry points into teaching.

In relation to career incentives, only one of the reading teachers reported a salary increase. This teacher had moved to a higher paying position in another school district, a career advantage the teacher attributed to her background in Reading Recovery. None of the other reading teachers had



gained salary increases, although one teacher gained financially by offering private tutoring in reading during the summer vacation. Of the nine science teachers, only one teacher had gained a salary increase by completing the workshop series for graduate credit.

### **3.5 Costs of Professional Development**

The costs of providing the workshops and summer institutes for Project-STIR were supported by a private foundation grant. Each teacher's school provided \$500 to spend on science equipment. In addition, teachers could opt to receive either a stipend or graduate credit for their participation in the program. For teachers participating in Reading Recovery, the sponsoring school districts paid a training and materials fee that included tuition for graduate credit, children's books, and professional books. In the accounting framework proposed by Stern et al. (1989), these are direct costs supported by taxpayers. Note that the private foundation grant is a cost to taxpayers as it originated as a tax deduction.

The interviews confirmed that while none of the teachers had paid direct costs, there were other costs associated with each program. Teachers had invested their own time, and in some cases, money. The science teachers were involved in science labs and workshops after school and participated in a two-week intensive summer institute. For all but one of these teachers this commitment required additional travel costs and for two teachers additional childcare costs. Two teachers reported that despite the purchase of new science equipment, they spent their own money on materials for conducting laboratory experiments. During the Reading Recovery training year, teachers met weekly for an after school class. Three of the nine teachers incurred additional childcare costs and another three teachers had additional travel costs. These participant costs represent a personal investment in professional development that frequently is an unrecognized cost in program adoption.

## **4 CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION**

Our first research objective was to examine the impact of these professional development experiences on the 18 participating teachers. The interview data support that the targeted goals associated with each of the professional development programs were accomplished. Teachers across both programs reported that they had implemented new science curricula or had become more proficient at teaching literacy at-risk students. Eighty-three percent reported increased content knowledge and teaching skills. Further analysis of the interview data revealed that each program achieved

broad goals in addition to the targeted goals. Teachers reported a greater sense of efficacy as teachers (72%) and a stronger sense of commitment to teaching (89%). Most of the science teachers (78%) and some of the reading teachers (44%) reported that as a consequence of program participation, their work required greater effort. This was not viewed negatively by the teachers despite the fact that only 2 of the 18 teachers reported a monetary gain as a result of program participation. These outcomes were achieved through an investment by school systems and taxpayers and involved costs associated with stipends, training, and materials. These outcomes also were achieved through an investment by participants, including costs for travel, childcare, materials and uncompensated time.

Analysis of the demographic information showed that there was not a linear relation between chronological age and years of teaching, particularly among the science teachers. Consequently, chronological age did not always predict teaching career phase. The teachers participating in these two programs spanned almost the entire range of Huberman's career phases (1989, 1995). A stereotypic view of voluntary participation in a professional development program that required investment of time and effort with no monetary reward would be the teacher in the *experimentation* phase with 7 to 18 years of experience. However, two-thirds of the science teachers and one-third of the reading teachers were not in this phase. Further, four science teachers and one reading teacher were either second career or late entry teachers who were mature in age (41 years or older), but relatively new to teaching (3 to 11 years).

Our second research objective was to evaluate the policy implications for teacher development from a human resource perspective that regards teachers as the human and social capital critical to effect improvements in student achievement. To consider teacher development from this perspective, the broader goals of professional development programs need to be articulated and addressed in program evaluation. We discovered that participation in these programs not only enabled teachers to become more skilled, but also strengthened important psychological and motivational aspects of their teaching. These are significant outcomes that need to be considered from an investment perspective because they could leverage greater teacher commitment and effort to improve student achievement. Researchers (Firestone & Pennell, 1993; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998) have noted the relation between teacher psychological variables and improved student achievement.

An additional policy implication arises from the lack of a linear relation between chronological age and teaching experience observed in our data. Clearly the mature, new entrant to teaching has different professional development needs and expectations than the young, new entry teacher. The voluntary nature of participation in these two professional development

programs, coupled with their high-quality characteristics, may have been well-suited to meeting the different professional learning needs of teachers at different points along their career paths. However, the research literature (Desimone et al., 2002) consistently reports on the continued provision of low-intensity, one size fits all, professional development associated with district-wide implementation of a particular curriculum that likely is less suited to such variability in teachers' development.

The practical application of these findings is simple: High quality professional development programs produce high quality results. Quality programs have the potential to meet teachers' learning needs at different phases of their careers and to have broad psychological impact on the teacher. This impact not only needs to be included in program development goals, but also integrated into program evaluation.

Finally, we would argue that our findings suggest that a concept of professional development that rests simply on imparting knowledge in order to implement a curriculum leads to minimal teacher development. Rather, professional development should be viewed more comprehensively as investment in a key resource of the school system, the teacher. We have shown that programs with quality characteristics potentially can impact teachers' knowledge, commitment, motivation, and teacher efficacy. These outcomes have strong potential to improve teacher retention and effectiveness in the classroom and to meet the demand for improved student achievement.

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## Chapter 13

# COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHERS BASED ON IN-DEPTH PORTRAITS OF TEACHER GROWTH

David R. Goodwin

## 1 INTRODUCTION

We must now acknowledge that much effort at school improvement has gone amiss, largely due to the failure to recognize, honor, and build upon the growth and wisdom of teachers. Teacher professional development is weighted too heavily in favor of the short workshop model presenting intervention strategies to alleviate perceived deficits and is notably disconnected from the teacher as a person. Actual teacher growth processes are largely assumed, not understood. Here, teacher growth is directly considered in terms of comprehensive inner growth involving the whole person. Personal and professional growth is understood as a deeper unity unfolding in the teacher's life.

In my doctoral research (Goodwin, 1999), four individual teacher portraits were developed to express the essence (or unity) of the teacher growth story. Each portrait was constructed to stand on its own as a valid human document (Witz, in press). The growth portraits acknowledged (a) a deeper meaningful and unified foundation (Rubin, 1985, p.36) and (b) the profound significance of understanding teachers' ways of being, "habits of the heart," and the "inner self" (Neufeld & Grimmett, 1994, p.211). The portraiture was based on a collaborative, co-investigative in-depth interview methodology involving recognition, empathy, and identification (Witz, Goodwin, Hart & Thomas, 2001). The research work aimed to deepen the discourse on the meaning of the self-transcendence/-realization of teachers (Goodlad, 1997); clarify the linkages between curriculum/subject matter, teaching, and student learning in relation to teacher growth; enhance the status of teachers in society (Schoenfeld, 1999) by showing actual depth and

complexity of teachers and teaching; and bear directly on teacher education through greater insight into the nature of teacher growth.

The first part of the chapter presents a brief argument for looking at teacher growth comprehensively as a phenomenon in its own right. Next is a short summary of the qualitative methodology used to get at the deeper essence of comprehensive growth and the development of individual portraits. Snapshots of two teacher growth portraits are then presented. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the meaning of the portraits and implications for teacher development.

## **2 DEVELOPMENT OF THE IDEA OF COMPREHENSIVE TEACHER GROWTH**

With the movement of teacher professional development to the center of discussions on school improvement (Bruce & Easley, 2000; Fullan, 1995), many have now taken the position that high quality classroom teaching depends on teachers engaging in some form of reflective practice (Hillocks, 1999; Schön, 1987) in the context of taking their own life-long learning seriously (Day, 1999). Teachers becoming more reflective about their work is in sympathy with adopting an inquiry-based self-initiated educational action research stance to facilitate increases in awareness (Elliott, 1991; Lieberman & Miller, 1991; Zeichner, 2001). Feldman and Atkin (1995) argue for the integration of the experience and wisdom of teachers with action research to direct and sustain school improvement processes.

There exists a general consensus on the significance of the life of the teacher in gaining deeper understandings of teaching (Ball & Goodson, 1985; Goodson, 1992; Hargreaves & Goodson, 1996; Smith, Klein, Prunty & Dwyer, 1986, 1992). Others present arguments for the significance of “*the subjective world*” (Fullan, 1991, p.131), the teacher’s self (Greene, 1991; Tickle, 1999), teacher self-actualization (Tickle, 2003), deeper personal and professional meaning (Cohn & Kottkamp, 1993; Connelly & Clandinin, 1995), the teacher as a person (Goodson, 1992), and life fulfillment (Witz, 2000) as central to understanding teachers and teaching. There are, however, few in-depth detailed studies which look at individual teacher growth as a phenomenon in its own right. Zeroing in on the central growth processes at work in a teacher’s life, taking into account the deeper subjective, inner experience, is especially crucial to understanding the central core of teachers’ work – nurturing the “*self-formation*” of the child (Westbury, 2000, p.31).

Teacher personal and professional growth is beautifully developed into a comprehensive understanding by both Kau (1981) and Louden (1991). Kau

worked with Emily, an elementary teacher, over a two year period in a mathematics in-service teacher education project. During that time he chronicled Emily's change from reliance on traditional direct teaching of mathematics to a more inquiry-based approach. Both Kau and Emily came to realize that her long term change was more than just trying out new strategies and curriculum ideas. Changes in Emily's teaching took on a stability and depth that could only be understood as both personal and professional growth underlain by the same dynamic: a positive expansion of self where Emily became more self-directed and self-sustaining with "a serious commitment to a sacred search for becoming" (Kau, p.155). Like Kau, Louden (1991) studied an individual teacher over a one year period. He described Johanna's teacher change process as involving her life as a whole and as inseparable from her professional practice: "[t]he changes she did make were deeply connected to her biography, her repertoire and her hopes and dreams for education" (Louden, p.197). Louden came to view teacher development as involving comprehensive personal continuities of self and meaning in the totally integrated human being.

Smith, Kleine, Prunty, and Dwyer (1986) conducted follow-up life history interviews with fifteen innovative teachers and administrators who had worked together on themes such as educational career choices, motivation, beliefs, value systems, and personality. The aim was to get at the nature of educational reform. Their 'grounded theory analysis' across cases supported the generalization that individual actions in support of school innovation were uniquely related to individual transformational growth in line with basic beliefs and philosophies held since youth. Smith et al. realized that innovative educational work had to be understood as individually unique life-course phenomena tied to core values and beliefs integrated into personality.

A number of additional studies show a deeper core or essence operating in teachers over many years. Pobre (1996) studied how mathematics teachers viewed their own teaching, how the teachers worked in the classroom, and how they related to mathematics in relation to their life as a whole. Pobre's case studies describe core motivations of teachers as being "in harmony with" their personalities (p.194). Similarly, McCollum (1995) portrayed the core beliefs of six teachers who were working with multiculturalism and culturally diverse students as "integrated throughout their personal and professional lives" (McCollum, p.iii) and totally integrated into their teaching practice. Conway (2000) and Thomas (1998) also capture core subjectively-based and enduring core values integrated into teachers lives and teaching practice.

Witz (1978) explored "Why is there so little fundamental change in our schools?" (p.2) using microanalysis of videotaped teaching segments with an experienced elementary school classroom teacher. In one part of the analysis

he and the research team focused on a ten second segment of classroom activity where the teacher was leading a group of her fifth graders in a reading circle activity: the teacher called on a child to read a sentence, then she called on another to supply the missing word, and so on. The microanalysis documented the teacher's way of handling her students in every detail including head position, length and object of gaze, body posture, tone of voice, rhythm of movement, etc. The larger framework dominating Witz's analysis was to understand teaching using conceptualizations of behavior and consciousness built up from nuances, as holistic expressions of inner structuring. It became clear to Witz and the research team however that the effort to model teacher consciousness and teacher professional development was humbled by the incredibly deep integrations of the person in the slightest nuance of teacher behavior. Witz concluded that fundamental change in education required substantially new understandings of the unity and depth of the person.

To summarize, the argument is that some form of reflective action research work is crucial to teacher development long term and is inseparable from the life of the teacher. The personal and professional is unified by central core values or philosophies subjectively felt by individual teachers. Teaching is beneficially understood in the larger life context taking the lives of teachers seriously from an inner perspective. Holistic teacher growth is conceived as a unity interwoven into the deep-seated inner fabric and life of the person (Connelly & Clandinin, 1995; Goodwin, 1999; Rubin, 1985).

### **3 COMPREHENSIVE TEACHER GROWTH AND THE ESSENCE OF THE STORY OF GROWTH**

In this section is discussed the multiple in-depth interview and analytical methodology used in the development of teacher growth portraits. My aim was to uncover the nature of the phenomenon of growth as a unity and an actuality in the experience and consciousness of individual teachers. The analytical approach to the interview data used "microanalysis of and identification with prosodic and other dynamic features of discourse, and empathy with and compassion for the object of study" (Witz et al., 2001, p.195). I wrote the portraits to the standards expressed in Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997), "one of authenticity, capturing the essence and resonance of the [participant's] experience" (p.12).

Using an open interview approach, I explored teacher inner growth against the total meaning that had been developing in the four participant teachers lives from childhood on up. All were involved in action research. The method of reconstruction in retrospective consciousness (see Kau, 1981;



Witz, 1985; Witz et al., 2001) was used in the interview process which also aimed to develop a genuine trusting collaborative research relationship – to be like a friend in co-contemplation of growth. Attention was not only given to information on the changing circumstances growing up and in teaching, but also to the subjective experiences, feelings, and related mental imagery in the participants, without the use of jargon. In addition, there was (a) deliberate attention given to basic impressions, intuitive awareness of individual inner coherence, and holism, (b) identification of major themes in relation to the individual experiential time lines, and (c) repeated listening to the audio-tapes to support sympathetic and empathetic identification with the subjective experience, feeling state, and life of the teacher. Preparation for each interview included work on (a) to (c) in order to carefully and collaboratively explore inner growth.

The analysis, which took into account microanalysis of nuances in discourse, brought into relief deep continuity, unity, and inner coherence in the person proportionally understood in light of their spirituality, formative experiences, core values, beliefs, motivations, and approaches to learning. All these strands and aspects of the interview analysis were further studied to formulate a deeper unity at work in the person which became the “essence of the story of growth” for each participant (Witz et al., 2001).

## **4 THE ESSENCE OF THE STORY OF GROWTH**

In the following, the basic story of growth for two teachers is briefly summarized. The actual portraits are detailed, literary, forty plus pages, with extensive verbatim quotes and transcript notation to indicate pauses, prosodic flow, emphasis, etc. The portraits were structured to begin with an introductory background about the individual teacher, indicating central themes and growth aspects in the teacher’s life from childhood on up. The essence of the story was then stated and unfolded in detail while maintaining connections to teaching and the person as a whole throughout.

### **4.1 Beverly**

Bev is a master elementary school teacher with over twenty-five years of experience who moved completely away from traditional direct teaching to facilitation of learning and educational action research. Teaching wasn’t something she thought much about growing up, but one day in high school one of her teachers suggested that she had the “stuff” for teaching. The teacher told Beverly: “Well, you are good at art. You’re good at music. You’re good at getting along with people. Why don’t you become a

teacher!” Bev thought, “That’s a good idea!” So, Bev went on to college and began her teaching in 1968. Over her career, Bev has taught elementary, middle, and high school, earned a Master’s plus thirty-two hours in Reading and Adult Education. At the time of the interviews, she was teaching elementary students who were struggling with reading in a pull-out program while also working with teachers in a local agency for adult mentally handicapped and behaviorally disordered. She was also working with her colleagues to foster hands-on and action research approaches to improve classroom teaching and learning. To that end, she had been offering workshops at teacher conferences and was active in a local action research collaborative.

Beverly is a person who struggled for many years with her own learning and upbringing, her marriage, her teaching, and her own self-understanding. Then, amazingly, she found her focus and it spread throughout her life. Now, she respects her students as persons and nurtures the knowledge they bring with them to the learning situation. Beverly said: “I have gone from confusion to a teacher of substance.” Telling that story in authentic detail became the organizing theme for the portrait.

The essence of Beverly’s growth story is that she is a teacher who has found herself. In the process of becoming, she reached into her very core where she pulled together fragmented and disconnected beliefs, philosophies, subject matter learning, and aspects of her personality into a single uniform inner order. She continues to grow with ever deepening and more encompassing integrations of her knowledge and experience that is in tune with her spiritual center.

Bev now knows what she wants and knows her capacities and abilities to achieve greater fulfillment in her life. She is fully aware of her higher motivation to love and to facilitate others to self-actualize. Her growth over a period of forty years or so – in the beginning, characterized by disorder, confusion, and wrestling with authority – has been followed by a reworking and reconstruction of herself into a person who is comfortable with herself and who is continuing to grow.

When she was young, Bev remembers feeling a thrill of understanding for the Bible stories she heard and read, but the other parts of her life, as she grew up, seemed jumbled. Her inner being became tensioned and controlled, hiding the “fragile hot-house flower” within. While she longed to be able to make sense of things, her world was guided by the authority of her father and by “practical necessity”. What else might motivate people was a mystery and source of conflict. She covered herself with “bravado.” In school, she was perplexed and frustrated by the demands her teachers made upon her. As she grew older, she began to realize that she didn’t have a foundation for learning and also had no idea what to do about it. She said: “I was all surface and practical. ... It was like random chaos. ... I didn’t know where

everything was organized. ... I couldn't figure out the whys." Even through college, her school learning left her feeling isolated and lost. Still, she persisted, graduated, and passed her National Teachers Exam.

During her early years of teaching, she worked very hard and led with her heart. She became overwhelmed by school duties, student demands, oppressive school rules, paperwork, and innovations (e.g., "open classrooms") she was expected to implement but which she didn't understand. She became "totally, totally" exasperated yet felt compelled to control her students so they got their work done. She "gave up, gave in, and became an angry tyrant." Bev is an optimistic person who lights up when she smiles; she likes people. Back then, however, her students didn't think so. She continued to wrestle with her basic beliefs about caring, love, authority, and the educational system.

Bev knew there was a better way of teaching. She saw how her husband used his "natural" ability to talk with people and get to the heart of the problem. It was what drew her to him in the beginning and she yearned to develop this capacity in herself. Images of Socrates, Plato, and children learning at the feet of Jesus fueled her yearning to become a teacher who taught with compassion and love. She wanted a deeper relationship with her husband and peace in the classroom. She just didn't know how to go about it.

One evening, while attending a university course as part of her Master's in Reading program, she heard her professor say, "if you can't teach a child by talking to them, you've got to teach a child by showing them, and that's ok." When she heard this, a door in her cracked open and she felt it necessary to look inside. Bev gave herself "permission" to try something new, thinking "maybe for my own learning I need to be shown ... I challenged myself to start doing it that way." She began to think about her own learning in a more sympathetic way and "hooked onto" a method that over time enabled her to realign herself, becoming more and more in harmony with self-understanding. She began taking things more piecemeal, outlining, asking questions, linking new and old learning, mapping her thoughts – she opened the door to reworking herself from the inside out.

Bev has re-integrated herself, tuned herself to her own unique constructive processes, brought about an inner openness and order accompanied by greater feelings of self-worth. The thrill of self-understanding she again experienced as she began really learning the course content in her graduate reading program opened the door to deeper levels in herself. Her deepening self-awareness was in concert with a new inner awareness that she was realizing the potential within.

Now, her depth of feeling and self-understanding is infused into her family and social life, and her classroom teaching. She understands more completely the self-learning in her students and how that connects to their

subject matter learning. She is able to give them what she has learned because she has been through it herself. Her life as an educator, her values of love and freedom, and the meaning of her life is clearer, fuller, more comprehensive, and more satisfying. She had been told how to teach, but she discovered in herself how people learn.

## 4.2 John

John was a K-8 certified teacher with 13 years experience at the time of the interviews. He had just completed a Masters in Educational Administration and was beginning his first year as an assistant principle in an elementary school.

John grew up in a suburban community near Dayton, Ohio. During the summer just before he was to enter the ninth grade, while working as an assistant to the swimming teacher at the local pool, he realized he wanted to be a teacher. It was a profound experience and it changed him from becoming a “jerk” to becoming an “above average student” in high school who paid attention to his teachers and the struggle they faced trying to teach. After receiving his teaching degree, he taught in private and public schools.

There was a point at which John said that his growth had “skyrocketed” when he became more aware of how children learn. John had always championed his students, cheerleading them to success. In this passage, John talks a little about his expanding awareness in relation to becoming involved in action research.

*John:* I’ve always kinda been a champion for kids. That’s always been there, you know, pulling for kids, doing whatever you can for kids ... as far as teaching, you know, I just always, you are there for the kids, and more, ah, that attitude’s always been there. Ahm, a, a, it’s a different, I guess it’s a different compassion. It, it went from compassion for the kids, to compassion for their learning. (*D:* Um-huh.) Before, I cared about them, (*D:* As people?) Yea, and, and now I was more concerned with their learning, and ah, my responsibility for their learning.

*Dave:* But you didn’t really, you know, give up anything?

*John:* Oh no! It’s just kind of a shift in focus maybe, ahm, you know, before, just like, “Gosh, you’re a great kid, you’re really nice, you’re a neat person,” and then [it] became, “How do you learn? (stated in a more focused tone)” (short laugh) You know, how can I help you learn, and ah, just that belief that all kids can learn and you need to tap into that somehow, some way. And that’s, that’s what’s challenging. That’s what’s neat as the teacher.

The “skyrocketing” that was taking form centered around John’s increased awareness of his students as individual unique learners with natural strengths. John was focusing more deeply on the inner workings of the individual student, and how together, the teacher and the student, can both connect with each other and experience greater success with classroom learning. Reflection on his own practice became part of an expanded sense of his own growth with greater clarity and intensity. John knows that all children have strengths and unfulfilled potential. The nature of his expanding as a teacher became the focus of the portrait.

In his early teens, John realized he wanted to be a teacher. Over the years, his life has become more aligned to the intensification of his compassion and of his capacity for caring, along with the growth of a more penetrating and clarifying reflective consciousness. Incorporated into John’s awakening inner intelligence is a deeper meaning of the importance of his work in the life-learning of others in relation to his spreading awareness of unity and harmony in his life. The inner clarification brought about by the distillation process inherent in John’s expanding/spreading awareness has enabled a brighter and stronger emanation of a deeper core, or essence, of good feeling that is simultaneously fulfilling. The good feeling/fulfillment as a single unity in John has infused his growing vision of the human being and his work as an educator. There have been increases in his capacity to connect with the students he is working with, and to collaborate with them on bringing to awareness “strengths” which “can affect their whole life.” His potentiality for caring and compassion has been amplified and intensified to such an extent that now he can “really help kids” by empowering them to become more independent, self-knowledgeable, and self-confident learners. In this way, the essence of the story of growth is his coming into sustained self-distillation of inner development/intelligence toward higher realms of Self.

We can see *this* essence in three incidents in John’s life that are so deep, transformative, and rich that they allow us to see fundamental aspects of who John is. *First* is the day John realized he wanted to be a teacher. He was working as an assistant to the swimming teacher, helping with swimming lessons, the summer before he entered the ninth grade. As John observed the swimming teacher working with the five and six year old boys and girls in the pool, he suddenly understood. The teacher was removing the children’s fears of learning how to swim. John became a teacher in his heart that day and he has never wavered. He came to be more in touch with a deep feeling of goodness/fulfillment and compassion with this realization. As a result, he became more goal-directed, his development more purposive. The inmost levels of feeling which were inspired to grow and to come into awareness in the swimming pool that day were nourished and amplified over the next seventeen years.

*Second* is the experience John had with one of his eighth grade students, Jacob (a pseudonym), using interview and evaluation methods he learned in an intensive summer in-service training program focused on applying Piaget, Vygotsky, and Feuerstein in the classroom. Jacob was an eighth grade struggling student. In a one-on-one interview setting, Jacob showed John his remarkable powers of visualization in art. John recognized how Jacob could use his visualizations to help with his school learning and Jacob's school performance completely turned around. That experience promoted additional growth in John of an inner intelligence/awareness which further clarified, simultaneously fused with and was enabled by, his natural compassion and caring. His view of the child was enlarged as was his educational vision. John grasped the real meaning of empowerment in educational relationships.

*Third*, during our third interview, John talked about the significance of the work he is doing now and how it "can change their [his students] whole life." John's further growth, occurring right then during the interview, encompassed a new experience of a larger and fuller awareness of wholeness – a true harmonious expression of meaningfulness and empowerment as a fact in his life.

These were pivotal, transformative experiences from which we can see that essence of natural expansion of inner clarity, depth, and capability. The essence of John's comprehensive growth is the distillation and inner clarification of compassion, a form of self-sustaining self-actualization that motivates and shapes his life decisions, his work in the classroom, and his development as a teacher long term.

## 5 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Both Beverly and John recognized themselves in their portraits. The integrity of the individual was preserved in the portraits with all the nuances right. The essence of the story of growth represented actual inner conditions valid at the time of the interviews. The portraits show (a) comprehensive growth over a long time period, (b) a central principle or essence at work in each teacher's life, and (c) overall pervasive inner continuity of the individual in the midst of growth. Fundamental change needs to be understood in light of (a), (b), and (c) and in terms of continuity experienced in the act of self-recognition. The portraits become lenses through which school improvement and teacher professional development can be brought into sharper focus.

The realization in the portraiture of individual ways of being of unlimited breadth and depth suggests each portrait presents a unique paradigm of growth, and there is no reason to believe that the possibilities have been exhausted. Each is qualitatively different, with different meanings and

different processes of change. As such, each portrait draws a separate approach to the understanding of teacher growth.

The portraits show that in the lives of teachers universal themes are being realized. Embedded in each portrait are non-stereotypical ways of discussing love, caring, reformulation of self, ways of being, self-distillation, and creation which point toward higher moral/ethical aspects like compassion, spiritual love, and truth. The portraits enable an actual/authentic level of discourse about the unfoldment of meaning as a unity in the teacher. In this way, each portrait is a unit of analysis in education. In addition, the growth stories included here suggest two categories of meaning and fulfillment: fulfillment as a continuing unfolding inner state present when young; and fulfillment coming about in relation to the growth of self-knowledge.

Looking across portraits suggests that teacher growth is simultaneously a sensitivity to and enlargement of unified inner awareness (the essence of the story) which has deep continuity back into childhood and subsequently works itself out with, or becomes realized in, the world over the long term. The research into teacher growth focused on teachers who were working with teacher-research approaches where growth is basically presupposed. Taken together, the deeper growth stories indicate that teacher-research, as an approach to teacher development and classroom improvement, was actually a tool to serve an already existing growth purpose of many years duration. The introduction of action research (or any other strategy) was not the initial stimulus for further development.

The deeper comprehensive perspective suggests educational programs should become directly responsive to the teacher's central story and life as a whole. These portraits strongly suggest a positive stance in school and classroom improvement where the inner growth and wisdom of teachers sustains development of tolerance, trust, collaboration, and a deeper inner understanding of self in teachers and in teaching.

Understanding comprehensively makes more viable and meaningful approaches to teacher development which encourage self-initiated and self-directed teacher/action research, our long term best hope for fundamental educational change. The aim is to awaken the "central core" of the teacher to new possibilities (McCollum, 1995) by (a) sustained collaborative work with individual teachers on specific topics accompanied by small group discussion sessions (over one to three years), (b) facilitating continuing education throughout professional careers through a fuller understanding of adult growth, learning, and fundamental change, and (c) continued development of teachers becoming mentors for each other in an actualizing manner.

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## Chapter 14

# RECONSTRUCTING TEACHER IDENTITY THROUGH EFFICACY FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Elizabeth Labone, Jude Butcher and Michael Bailey

### 1 INTRODUCTION

Teacher educators need to be aware of the moral obligation of education to engage in social reconstruction (Gage, 1989). The role of schools in our society is much broader than that of developing competent citizens. Schools should develop and implement structures and practices that focus on the reconstruction of education and society to foster social justice and to redress imbalances in power in society. The effective development of such structures and practices requires teachers who consider social reconstruction as central to their role. Teachers need to broaden their focus beyond the classroom concerns of instruction and management and to develop skills that enable them to change the life chances of the students they teach (Cochran-Smith, 2001). Hence, reconstructing teacher identity is a key factor in developing schools that foster social reconstruction.

Teachers play a critical role as instruments of social reconstruction, yet the increasing social and cultural differences between teachers and students are of concern in that they may hinder the ability of teachers to implement this critical role (Cockrell, Placier, Cockrell & Middleton, 1999; Kugelmass, 2000). This mismatch impacts on teachers' attitudes to students whose home contexts are outside the teacher's own experience, including attitudes related to living and teaching within diverse communities and expectations of students' learning (Gomez, 1994). Teacher education programs need to explicitly address the development of teachers that can willingly and effectively engage with diverse communities to effect such change. To achieve this, teacher education programs need to not only focus on knowledge and skills of pedagogy and content, but also need to enable

preservice teachers to critique and challenge common practices and engage in critical inquiry so that they are more able to address issues of equity and diversity (Cochran-Smith, 2001). Teaching for equity and diversity implies respecting and reaching all children: rich and poor, and children of different genders, races, ethnic backgrounds, and disabling conditions (Dunkin, 1996). Hence, teacher education programs should focus on issues of social justice and diversity, thereby placing equity “front and center” (Nieto, 2000). Such foci can be achieved through developing explicit programs within preservice education courses that promote and foster effective community engagement.

This chapter presents a rationale for the central focus of community engagement within teacher education, proposes efficacy as a key focus in facilitating such engagement in teachers, includes a case study of a program designed to facilitate this central focus and suggests principles that support effective community engagement.

## **2 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AS A CENTRAL FOCUS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

The widening social and cultural gap between teachers and students necessitates that teachers become learners of their students’ realities. While universities nationally and internationally have begun to be more proactive in engaging with their communities, at present universities are not producing teachers with knowledge of equity, diversity and global interconnectedness (Merryfield, 2000). Teachers need to learn *about* their students, and create spaces in which they can learn *with* their students (Nieto, 2000). The integration of community engagement as a core focus of teacher education programs provides preservice teachers with experiences that help them gain a deep and extensive knowledge of the contexts of their students’ lives (Dunkin, 1996). Community engagement can help preservice teachers understand the tensions between school and community values and the range of contexts within which their students live. This engagement also highlights the importance of understanding students and their families to provide opportunities that address issues of equity and justice (Duesterberg, 1998).

In developing such awareness, teacher education programs need to provide experiences that create socially committed professionals. Such professionalism is not something that comes naturally but has to be deeply reflected upon, negotiated, lived and practised (Sachs, 2001). If teacher education programs are to nurture the development of socially committed and responsible teachers, they need to provide a challenging set of

experiences for student teachers, not only in classrooms, but in the broader and more challenging community contexts. Preservice teacher education must provide opportunities for teachers to engage with a diverse range of communities and foster genuine critique of such field experiences, as field experience without reflection or critique may have little effect on attitudes (Cockrell et al., 1999). Such engagement should foster the development of teachers who are engaged citizens: tolerant, compassionate, socially trusting and responsible.

### **3 THE ROLE OF EFFICACY FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

While such community engagement contributes to broadening teacher identity, teacher education programs must also nurture individual capabilities to engage effectively in such situations. Effective engagement is dependent upon an individual's perceptions of his/her capability or efficacy to actively engage in challenging or confronting contexts. To date there has been little research focus on the types of skills needed to facilitate effective community engagement. Theoretical explanations for community engagement, grounded in social cognitive theory, maintain that self-efficacy beliefs (e.g., a feeling of personal competence) are key factors in motivating and sustaining action. While research investigating the role of efficacy in community engagement is limited, these studies have focused on efficacy resulting from engagement (Hostetter, 1999; Primavera, 1999; Schmidt, 2000), rather than investigating self-efficacy beliefs as an antecedent to engagement. Yet models of community action suggest that intrapersonal empowerment (or efficacy) precedes participatory capability (Rich, Edelstein, Hallman & Wandersman, 1995).

Studies that have investigated self-efficacy as an antecedent to community engagement suggest that efficacy beliefs are a key factor in predisposing a person to seek and maintain active community engagement (Bandura, 1997; Steinberger, 1981). Such efficacy is fostered through affirming interactions during the community engagement (Butcher, Howard, Labone & Breeze, 2001; Niemi, Hepburn & Chapman, 2000) and these positive perceptions of efficacy are associated with intentions to maintain participation (Butcher et al., 2001). A better understanding of such intrapersonal factors is crucial in building efficacy that may motivate and sustain community engagement. Hence, to foster socially committed professionals, teacher education programs must develop structures and processes that build and nurture efficacy for community engagement.

The preceding discussion suggests that community engagement within teacher education programs has two key functions: firstly, it should provide experiences that broaden preservice teachers' identity, and secondly, such programs should build preservice teachers' efficacy for community engagement. Australian Catholic University (2002) has implemented a range of community-related activities involving staff and students that aim to address both of these key functions. Community engagement within the teacher education program has become a central focus for learning, fieldwork and research. This chapter now briefly outlines a program within the teacher education program that exemplifies the community engagement based on genuine partnership.

#### **4 THE COMMUNITY OUTREACH: SOCIAL ANALYSIS AND ACTION PROGRAM**

Effective community engagement involves a genuine partnership between communities and the university (Benson, Harkavy & Puckett, 2000). The Community Outreach Social Analysis and Action Program (COP), a core unit within the teacher education program, reflects this genuine partnership. Both the community and the university work in partnership in designing and maintaining COP. Furthermore, COP is coordinated by a person working within an external community agency and is supported by an Advisory Committee comprising key community agencies, educational agencies, internal university units and the student representative council. Members of the committee are active in offering policy advice and recommending strategic directions.

COP is based around both learning and fieldwork activities. If teachers are to develop their identity as socially committed professionals, the first step should focus on increasing student teachers' awareness of the social contexts in which their students live. Thus, through a series of lectures and tutorials students are introduced to a broad range of social issues and are taught to critique the structures and policies that maintain inequities and perpetuate injustice. Following this, the need for students to move outside their own life experiences to help create a new professional identity is met through an 80 hour placement in an approved community agency. During this placement, students maintain a learning journal in which they note not only their experiences but the relevance of these experiences to them as intending teachers and informed citizens. As a requirement of the subject students must attend the placement to the satisfaction of the agency and the university's liaison officer, and complete a learning journal which has the following components:

- A reflection upon the lectures and their connection to the selected placement;
- A daily record of experiences and reflections;
- An analysis of community service learning at the completion of the placement.

The journals support the integration of the learning and fieldwork components and facilitate the student teachers in developing a socially responsible professional identity.

In addition to the central role of this program in the construction of teacher identity, the program has provided a timely nexus for the University's research and learning agendas. Central to this research and learning agenda is development of knowledge about the nature of efficacy for community engagement and factors that will enhance and support this type of efficacy. This research into efficacy for community engagement has had two key purposes: first, to identify the nature of efficacy beliefs that support community engagement and secondly, to develop a measure of efficacy for community engagement in order to monitor and support preservice teachers' development of such efficacy. Each of these processes is discussed in turn.

## **5 IDENTIFYING AND DEFINING EFFICACY FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

To determine the nature of efficacy beliefs that contribute to community engagement exploratory analysis was conducted using student learning journals. Text analysis of 80 journals yielded 45 different constructs. To validate the researchers' interpretation of these constructs, students were invited to participate in focus groups to ensure that the understandings and meanings of statements written in the journals were accurate representations of their intentions. The most notable change resulting from the focus groups was the differentiation in statements expressing satisfaction from the students' engagement with the clients. This differentiation indicated two distinct types of satisfaction: Satisfaction from feeling as if they were helping, and satisfaction from building a relationship with the clients.

Principal components analysis and correspondence analysis of the constructs yielded from the students' journals and focus groups were used to cluster related constructs. Constructs with fewer than 3 entries were excluded from the analysis. The principal components analysis suggested two possible solutions: a five-component and a ten-component solution. The five-component solution was selected as the more theoretically sound set and

included 25 of the original 45 constructs. The five components or dimensions from the principal components analysis were then named.

These dimensions were:

- efficacy for personal/professional relationships;
- efficacy for personal coping skills;
- efficacy for empathy;
- efficacy for participation;
- efficacy for personal/professional beliefs/awareness.

## 6 QUESTIONNAIRE DEVELOPMENT

A draft questionnaire was developed using the categories statements identified as contributing to the five dimensions. The questionnaire was constructed using representative statements selected directly from the students' journals. Questions were worded to reflect efficacy beliefs, for example: 'When working as a volunteer how sure are you that you can ...' Items were scored on a ten point continuous scale. One item was deleted from the relationships dimension as it was considered to be theoretically inconsistent.

Two consecutive analyses were used in developing the final measure. The first draft of the questionnaire was piloted with 67 teacher education students engaged in COP. Principal components analysis of student responses suggested some structural changes in the original five dimensions.

The analysis indicated that respondents did not differentiate between efficacy for personal coping skills and efficacy for participation. Likewise empathy and awareness were bundled together. However, the personal relationships domain was differentiated into three: efficacy for relationships with other workers, efficacy for relationships with clients and efficacy for valuing clients. These dimensions were defined as follows:

- *Efficacy for relationships with people the service supports*: this dimension is concerned with a person's perceived capability to establish relationships with the people that the service supports.
- *Efficacy for relationships with the other workers/volunteers*: this dimension is concerned with a person's perceived capability to establish relationships with other volunteers and staff working within the community.
- *Efficacy for valuing the people the service supports*: this dimension refers to the ability to move beyond a helping model to a mutually beneficial partnership with the other person.

Coping skills and participation were combined into one dimension called work competence. Efficacy for personal beliefs/awareness remained unchanged but was renamed 'social awareness' and the two dimensions related to professional efficacy were combined and named 'empathetic action.' Specifically these dimensions were:

- *Efficacy for social awareness*: this dimension is concerned with a person's perception of his/her understanding of social issues and the role of community and government support for the success of social support services. This dimension also includes a measure of a teacher's awareness of the various life contexts of his/her students.
- *Efficacy for empathetic action*: this dimension is concerned with a person's perceived capability to empathise with the varying life situations of the people and to respond appropriately to these situations, both generally and within the school and classroom context.
- *Efficacy for work competence*: this dimension is concerned with a person's perception of his/her competence as a volunteer and his/her capability to participate effectively in voluntary work.

Based on this first analysis the questionnaire was restructured into the six different dimensions and two additional items were added. The revised questionnaire was piloted with 180 teacher education students engaged in COP. As a more refined version of the questionnaire was used with the larger and later sample, it was inadvisable to attempt confirmatory factor analysis. However, the exploratory factor analysis produced a structure very similar to that of the smaller and earlier sample. The only change suggested by the later analysis was that the dimension for valuing the clients was perceived to be part of work competence. With this exception all other questions loaded on the same factors as in the earlier pilot. Hence the final result yielded the following five factors:

- efficacy for relationships with the people the service supports;
- efficacy for relationships with the other workers/volunteers;
- efficacy for social awareness;
- efficacy for empathetic action;
- efficacy for work competence.

Table 14-1 lists the number of items used to measure each of the five dimensions as well as two examples of items from each dimension.

These dimensions suggest that effective student engagement involves positive perceptions of capability in regard to relationships, awareness of social issues and empathetic awareness and response. The research findings also indicate that community engagement is facilitated when a person feels competent about her/his ability to participate effectively and to respond empathetically to those with whom she/he engages. Identification of a broad



set of efficacy dimensions within this area of student engagement indicates that a range of types of efficacy is necessary for teachers to successfully engage in teaching practices that support and promote marginalized students.

DIMENSION	NO. OF ITEMS	EXAMPLE
Efficacy for relationships with the people the service supports	3	While working as a volunteer in your organisation how sure are you that you can: <i>Establish a rapport with the people the service supports</i> <i>Be accepted by the people the service supports</i>
Efficacy for relationships with the other workers/volunteers	4	While working as a volunteer in your organisation how sure are you that you can: <i>Value the other volunteers/staff you work with</i> <i>Build good working relationships with the other volunteers/staff you work with</i>
Efficacy for social awareness	3	How sure are you that you can believe: <i>A little support from the community can make an enormous difference</i> <i>Changes in government policy are needed to create a more just society</i>
Efficacy for empathetic action	9	When working as a teacher in a school how sure are you that you can: <i>See what the world looks like from their different perspectives</i> <i>Be aware of your students' home situations</i>
Efficacy for work competence	9	While working as a volunteer in your organisation how sure are you that you can: <i>Handle experiences that are outside your comfort zone</i> <i>Participate successfully in volunteer work</i>

Table 14-1. Dimensions of efficacy for community engagement including number of items per dimension and two example items for each dimension.

## 7 DISCUSSION

If education is to promote and support social reconstruction, traditional conceptions of teacher identity that focus largely on pedagogical and content knowledge must be challenged. This chapter has discussed three key issues in this challenge. First, teacher identity should be broadened to include a central focus on social justice and diversity; second, teacher education programs have a responsibility to promote the broadening of teacher identity through explicit programs that foster community engagement; and thirdly, efficacy for community engagement is a key factor in facilitating effective community engagement.

The key focus of this research was to identify and define efficacy for community engagement. Identification of five dimensions of this efficacy

suggests that the skills required for teachers to initiate and maintain effective community engagement are both broad and complex. Not only must teachers feel efficacious about their level of social awareness and empathetic action towards others in contexts that are outside their own experience, but they also must feel competent about responding effectively to students and families within these contexts and about building positive relationships with those involved in these challenging contexts. Merryfield (2000) has argued that universities are not presently producing teachers with knowledge of equity and diversity. The complexity of efficacy identified in this research would suggest that, unless these issues are explicitly addressed, universities will continue to produce teachers who are neither committed to, nor engaged in, social reconstruction.

Teacher education programs have a key role in challenging and extending current practices to produce teachers committed to social reconstruction. The five dimensions of efficacy for community engagement identified in this research suggest that teacher education programs that seek to produce such graduates should include three key factors:

- raising social awareness;
- building empathy;
- providing opportunities for successful engagement.

These three foci are consistent with current thinking about the reconstructionist role of education. Cochran-Smith (2001) suggested that broadening the focus of teaching to include skills that allow teachers to critique and challenge practices, may increase the life chances of the students they teach. Identification of the dimension *efficacy for social awareness* suggests that preservice teachers recognise the importance of being socially aware when programs provide explicit attention to the development of such awareness. The importance of the empathetic attitudes in preservice teachers has also been identified. Dunkin (1996) suggested that community engagement within preservice education develops a deep and extensive experience of students' contexts. The identification of *efficacy for empathetic action* suggests that community engagement experiences such as those provided in COP enriches preservice teachers' experience and broadens teacher identity. Finally, the need for experiences that build perceptions of competence for community engagement through affirming interactions have been clearly identified (Butcher et.al., 2001). The three dimensions of efficacy concerned with work competence and effective relationships support the need for direct experiences of community engagement such as those provided during COP.

## **8 IMPLICATIONS**

This research offers key insights for facilitating community engagement in teacher education programs in today's diverse society. At a personal level a certain level of efficacy in the above five dimensions may provide some explanation for different levels of interest or willingness to engage within the community. Those who feel more efficacious are more likely to seek community engagement opportunities. Once engaged within the community, positive experiences that support and enhance efficacy are likely to contribute to continuing commitment to participation. In regard to teaching, preservice teachers who feel efficacious may be more likely to engage with their school and local community. If teachers are to be agents of social reconstruction then further emphasis should be given to the development of their capacity for community engagement.

This discussion of efficacy for community engagement has shown that community engagement experiences are integral to reconstructing teacher identity. Key principles that can guide institutions in shaping programs that foster the development of socially committed teachers are:

- Teacher education programs should implement structures and policies which emphasise the importance of community engagement in extending preservice teachers' beyond their regular experiences.
- Programs should foster the development of efficacy for community engagement.
- Community engagement should be based upon genuine partnership.
- Community engagement should be embedded within all aspects of a university's function, including both the learning and research agenda (Butcher et. al., 2001).

## **9 CONCLUSION**

Universities and teacher education programs in particular are being challenged to place community engagement and service learning at the centre of their reform agendas. Such reform, if is to be effective, is to be based upon genuine partnerships with communities and community organisations so that communities, student teachers and the universities change and benefit from the joint initiatives. This vision of mutual benefit is based upon individual and institutional commitment to engaged citizenship. This chapter reports that teacher education programs should focus on initiatives that explicitly address the construction of socially responsible teachers and that such programs should support effective community engagement through the development of positive perceptions of efficacy for

community engagement. Future research needs to address the long term impact of community engagement initiatives on teacher identity and participation.

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## Chapter 15

# THE DICHOTOMY BETWEEN LARGE-SCALE REFORM RHETORIC AND THE PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOL-BASED PRACTITIONERS

Lynne M. Hannay, Connie Bray and Carol Telford

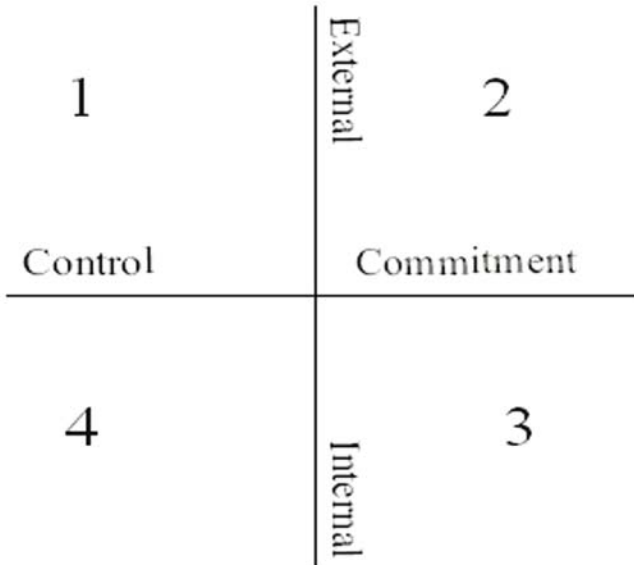
### 1 INTRODUCTION

The current wave of educational reform is closely associated with increased accountability and external control over high-stakes student testing. Often, within political rhetoric, increases in student scores on external tests become the measurement for school improvement. Yet, such rhetoric and reliance on external test results can run contrary to the conceptions of school improvement held by school staffs. School level practitioners may understand school improvement to include collegiality, professional learning communities, processes of change, and school culture.

Currently, we are investigating the school district's role in facilitating school improvement through studying the actions of two Ontario school districts. The differences in perceptions of school improvement listed above became very apparent when we asked over 100 participants two questions: 1. what were their personal definitions of school improvement and 2. what were their perceptions of the school improvement definition held by their school district. In both school districts, the practitioners reported that their school district was primarily interested in increasing student test scores while the participants were personally more interested in improving school culture, student attitudes and relationships. This dichotomy influences the perspectives of teachers and school administrators and thus can shape their responses to school reform. After exploring the issues conceptually, this chapter examines these different perceptions in our research data and then considers what these perceptual discrepancies might mean for the related political rhetoric and implementation of large-scale reform.

## 2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Our research focuses on the role of the school district in facilitating system-wide school improvement. School districts can find themselves engaged in a precarious balancing act: operating between external effectiveness on the one hand and internal, student-centred, community-oriented concerns on the other (Stoll & Fink, 1996). Rowan (1990) equates an organizational predisposition to control or commitment to the continual internal-external struggle. Management by control may be viewed by the organization as necessary to propel innovation. Yet management by commitment, the “buy in” by the organizational membership, is also essential for ongoing organizational growth. Rowan’s continuum of control/commitment provides a means for understanding the tension inherent in the educational reform experienced by schools and school districts.



*Figure 15-1.* Paradigmatic tensions in large-scale organizational change.

In Figure 15-1, Hannay, Seller, Ross, and Smeltzer Erb (2002) conceptualize the prevailing dynamic tension in educational change. They suggest that Quadrants 1 and 3 may best reflect dominant tensions currently affecting school districts in their change efforts. Quadrant 1 identifies an “external/control” orientation and can be used to reflect current global reform initiatives that focus on “top-down”, industrial-commercial style

management strategies. Reforms located in Quadrant 1 tend to emphasize productivity and efficiency. The concerns incorporated in this Quadrant tend to be associated with the school effectiveness literature. In contrast, Quadrant 3 emphasizes “internal/commitment” orientation and is more consistent with the school improvement literature concerns such as contextual influences, teacher empowerment/leadership, change theory, school culture, and professional learning. Quadrant 4 suggests that the schools control the reform agenda which is reminiscent of the ill-fated American curricular reforms perpetrated in the 1960/70’s. In Quadrant 2 external forces are influencing the reform agenda but the process being enacted through building commitment and capacity.

Research and political action over the several decades, on both sides of the Atlantic, have tended to orient themselves toward one of two basic paradigms: school effectiveness or school improvement. Often in educational practice these terms are used inter-changeably by both politicians and educators but they have different assumptions and advocate different practices. Both the school effectiveness and school improvement movements can trace their origins to the 1960’s and early ‘70s, when two reports (Coleman, 1966; Jencks, Smith, Acland, Bane, Cohen, Gintis, Heyns & Michelson, 1972) concluded that schools made no difference to student achievement. These reports argued that achievement variance among students was primarily the result of external, non-school factors such as student ability or socio-economic background. Ultimately, this concern resulted first in the development of the school effectiveness and then the school improvement paradigm.

Although definitions and conceptions of both school effectiveness and school improvement vary (e.g., Stoll & Fink, 1996; Teddlie & Reynolds, 2000), some basic distinctions can be made. Bollen (1996) suggests that the two research traditions can be distinguished by their differing central questions: school effectiveness (SE) research seeks to know *what* effective schools look like while school improvement research seeks to know *how* schools improve. School effectiveness approaches tend to assume some level of external/control (Quadrant 1) while school improvement tends to favour internal/commitment (Quadrant 3).

In the conceptual framework, SE research and its application to schools falls into the category of an external/control approach to school change. Studies identified lists of “effective schools characteristics” though these factors vary (e.g., Edmonds, 1979; Mortimore, Sammons, Stoll, Lewis & Ecob, 1988; Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, Ouston & Smith, 1979). Zigarelli (1996) synthesized selected major studies since 1979 to reduce the list to a common five: quality teachers, principal leadership, culture of academic achievement, positive relations with school administration, and high parental involvement. This research maintained that those characteristics, when



employed in lower performing schools, showed that schools could affect student achievement. The SE research established a strong research community and gained considerable support from national political interests.

Similar to the school effectiveness research, school improvement (SI) research assumes that deliberate actions can be taken to improve schools and enhance student learning. However, the SI focus on individual schools may curtail wide-scale implementation. SI research is more concerned with school contexts, school-based interests, and school-level stakeholders with an orientation towards processes rather than products. SI is less concerned with public accountability than with internal understanding and is embedded in change theory (Stoll & Fink, 1996). Issues of teacher empowerment (Frost, Durrant, Head & Holden, 2000), interrelationships of factors, context-specific data collection, professional development and practical knowledge (Bollen, 1996) are the central interests of SI research. Stoll and Fink (1996) define school improvement as a series of concurrent and recurring processes, including enhancing pupil outcomes, focussing on teaching and learning, building change capacity, defining school goals, working to develop cultural norms, and self-monitoring process.

The complex interactions of processes, ongoing change, and range of definitions require that school effectiveness or improvement terms be used carefully. By distinguishing SE and SI in terms of purposes (Creemers & Reezigt, 1997; Bollen, 1996) and orientation, we can circumvent political and methodological arguments. Such complex political, social and economic environments as schools and school districts (e.g., Rosenholtz, 1989) make an “either-or” choice of SE or SI approaches to reform neither possible (Gerwitz, 1998) nor desirable. Yet without understanding these deep conceptual differences, individuals can become caught unknowingly in paradigmatic conflict.

When applied to a school district and/or to schools, the very different assumptions that are represented by Q1 and Q3 would impact on the change process. Control/external mandated reform-based change processes could clash with school and school district’s internal/commitment to facilitate processes as capacity-building (Corcoran & Goertz, 1995), shared leadership (Hannay & Ross, 2001), and teacher research (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). School districts must respond to mandated policy and other external demands as well as internal human institutional needs.

This chapter examines the dichotomy reported between the Quadrant 1 large-scale reform reliance on external high-stakes testing to define effective schools and the school-based Quadrant 3 perspective that focuses on processes and interactions to improve schools. In Ontario, and perhaps in other political venues, sometimes the political rhetoric results in teachers and school administrators being publically ‘blamed’ when their students fail to meet the targets established in the political arena. Yet the tensions are not

just political; they are mired in the paradigmatic tensions about what individuals perceive are the important tasks for schools. This tension was clearly apparent in the 2002 data collection in both of the participating school districts.

### **3 METHOD**

While this study is longitudinal, in this chapter we are reporting only on the initial responses to the different perceptions of school improvement. We believe these different perceptions are important because they influence individual responses to large-scale reform.

#### **3.1 Sample**

Two Ontario school districts participated in this study, Thames Valley (TVDSB) and Kawartha Pine Ridge (KPR) District School Boards. One school district included 102 schools while the second school district consisted of 189 schools. Our sample had to be representative of the large geographical size of both school districts. In each school district, superintendents were invited to select two secondary and four elementary schools that represented the contextual realities of their Family of Schools<sup>1</sup>. Based on geographical proximity, we selected one secondary and two elementary schools per Family of Schools.

The selection of individuals to interview in each school was based upon role. In all cases, we interviewed the principals of the selected school. In addition, we asked the principal to identify two teachers who were actively engaged in the school improvement initiative in their school. In total, 24 schools were selected and 72 individual interviews conducted.

In order to broaden the scope of our data, we conducted focus groups of individuals working in different roles and from different schools. Hence, our focus group sample included individuals from finance, program services, information technology, human resources, director's services as well as teachers and school administrators. We conducted four focus groups in KPR and two in TVDSB. Approximately 50 individuals participated in the six focus groups.

Through the sampling techniques employed in both the individual interviews and the focus groups, we sought to include individuals

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<sup>1</sup> A Family of Schools contained secondary and elementary schools within geographical proximity with a Superintendent attached to the grouping and with administrative responsibilities for these schools.

representing the divergent geographical areas of their school district, roles and responsibilities. Hence, the sample has achieved the maximum of sample variation advocated by Lincoln & Guba (1985).

### **3.2 Data Collection Techniques**

The primary data collection technique was a one-hour interview with 72 individuals. The interview schedules were open-ended with ample opportunity for the participants to shape their responses. We structured the interviews to seek information on the actions of the school district and the consequent impact of those actions on the respective individuals and their schools.

A second data source involved the six focus groups. These 1½ hour focus groups involved sessions with individuals working in different roles and from different schools. The interview questions were broader than those employed in the individual interviews but also designed to better understand the actions of the school district from another perspective.

Both the individual interviews and the focus groups were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim. The interview transcripts were coded to identify the school district, the school, individual participants, and their roles (e.g., school administrator, teacher) for research purposes and to maintain anonymity of the participants. Our purpose in coding these data was to be able to determine if a role generally impacted on perspective. These data contributed to thick description (Geertz, 1973).

### **3.3 Data Analysis**

The qualitative data analysis was inductive and ongoing. Printed transcripts were analysed by researchers to identify common patterns. Once patterns were determined, we used the qualitative analysis software NUD\*IST to collate the data. Data displays were created, and then refined and cross-checked, resulting in a final data display. For each school district a research report was prepared, based on the data, and presented at a public meeting to senior administrators and trustees. For this chapter, we analyzed the research reports for evidence of the differing definitions of the school improvement process.

### **3.4 Credibility**

Credibility techniques were embedded in the research design. The long-term involvement of the researchers in the sites ensured persistent

observation. At all stages of the process, researchers worked collaboratively to check and cross-check emerging patterns. Interviews provided data from several schools in both school districts. The emerging analysis was shared with the participants and reported, thus incorporating member checks into the research methodology.

## 4 FINDINGS

As noted in the introduction, we began the 2002 interviews with two questions intended to ease participants into the interview process. We asked both teachers and school administrators first about their personal definition of school improvement and, second, their perceptions of the school districts' definition of school improvement. We were surprised at the dichotomy existing between how school-based practitioners defined school improvement and how they perceived that their school districts defined school improvement. One principal boldly described the dichotomy in his or her school district:

“There’s that dichotomy, that tension of school improvement is improvement of scores which is the Ministry’s way of thinking – to the grass roots where is an improvement of culture.” [SInt02NP]<sup>2</sup>

Generally, the school practitioners reported they defined school improvement as including school culture within a broad definition of learning. Yet they also told us they perceived that the school district defined school improvement more in terms of increasing test scores, as measured through the scores on externally mandated provincial government assessments. In many ways, these data are representative of the tensions between a school effectiveness (Q1) and school improvement (Q3) perspective as represented in Figure 15-1 described earlier in this chapter.

### 4.1 Perceptions of the School District

The use of external testing is a fairly recent phenomena in Ontario. For the last seven years, the province administered performance-based assessments to all Grade 3, 6 and 9 students. In both of the studied school

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<sup>2</sup> Individual interviews are coded to indicate the school district (S or E), year the data were collected (2002), the school of the interviewee (letter), and the role of the participant (either a P for principal or a T with a number to indicate a teacher).

districts, participants reported the school district would define school improvement as increased student achievement on this test; thus, their school district was representative of Quadrant 1. Both teachers and principals in one school district adamantly reported that their school district considered school improvement to be improved test scores. For instance:

“They [school district] would want better scores on the standardized testing ... improvement criteria would be, “We want these scores higher next time we write the test.” [EInt02BT1].

“I do think that school improvement is being measured in a quantitative or a percentage basis, improvement year over year.” [EInt02MP].

A principal from the other school district described how the provincial testing was associated with school improvement and accountability:

“Sometimes when you think of accountability you think of what’s in the press because that dominates the accountability piece. You know [test scores] have slipped. Then the board responds to it because the political agenda says they have to. We’ve got to get these schools up two or three percent for next year.” [SInt02BP].

Yet, in both school districts, the participants reported that they believed their school district cared about more than just test scores. A teacher talked about the evident slippage into Quadrant 2 concerns with the school districts interest in collaborative working relationships:

“I like to think that school improvement to our board means working with teachers, collaborating with teachers to focus on what kids need and what needs to be done to, well, obviously to improve schools.” [EInt02IT1].

The following principal comment displays the complexity involved in classifying or determine the school districts’ definition of school improvement:

“I think for some schools, school improvement is a number. It’s a test score. If the scores improve, schools have improved. I think for some people it is tied closely to that number. But I also think for some of them, it’s tied to culture and that if school improvement is based on the culture of the school and then if you create that culture then the improvement in the numbers, in the behaviour, in the discipline, in

student learning and in teacher learning will come out of that culture if that is truly the culture in the school. That's the way we do things around here." [SInt02NP].

Another comment also displayed the inherent tension between attributes associated with school effectiveness (large-scale external testing) and school improvement (building capacity). This principal suggested that the school district defined school improvement as:

"Everything from provincial assessments to report cards to any kind of other standardized testing that a particular school or district may choose to use. We hear a lot about building capacity. For me those are the two key elements, improving student achievement and building capacity within a school." [EInt02F].

Overwhelming, teachers and school administrators said that their school district would define school improvement in terms of the Quadrant 1 effectiveness criteria of test scores and with some movement toward Quadrant 2 attributes such as capacity building, further along the commitment criteria. In contrast, again overwhelmingly, teachers and administrators suggested they would define school improvement in terms of the attributes in Quadrant 3.

## **4.2 School Level Conceptions**

The participating teachers and school administrators reported that they considered school improvement as involving: school culture through team work, collaboration and congeniality; a focus on the whole child and student attitudes towards learning; continual learning for both students and teachers; and an informed application of the appropriate change processes. A strong theme evident in the data was the reported connection between school culture and school improvement. Both teachers and principals reported that they identified school improvement with attitudes and school culture more than test scores. A school administrator commented that:

"I think school improvement is way more than just [test] results. School improvement is school climate. The whole culture of the school, how people work together and cooperate." [EInt02GP].

A teacher explained:

"Not only the sort of data driven kinds of things that we need to do so that we can improve and find ways in places that maybe we're not as

strong and we need to move towards. But I also look at a school that's demonstrating school improvement by the climate of the school, the culture of the school." [SInt02YT1].

Another teacher concurred and suggested:

"I think the school's working when it's a great place to be, to teach, and to attend. I think one of the greatest challenges to establish our good climate is the rate of change." [SInt02TT1].

Participants maintained that school culture was a strong attribute of school improvement and equally they voiced a strong concern about the interaction and working patterns of teachers. In particular, participants emphasized such working interactions needed to foster congeniality, collaboration, and teamwork. For instance, a teacher and a principal both stressed the importance of collaborative teamwork:

"I think a big thing right now is having your whole school working together as a team to get some results with that." [EInt02FT2].

"School improvement, to me, has a lot to do with culture, teamwork." [SInt02TP].

Another teacher perceived school improvement as the philosophy incorporating collaborative working relationships:

"I suppose I would think of it as a collaborative approach with the whole school. I would define it as a collaborative working towards a common philosophy." [EInt02BT1].

Given the above interest in school culture and interaction patterns, it is not surprising that participants argued that attitudes were an integral component of school improvement. For instance, a teacher reported:

"I would define school improvement as attitude. Your teacher's attitude, the student's attitude, the staff's attitude, and of course, the parents' attitude. I feel if they're all contented, that's a sign that your school is showing improvement. I don't think it's just scores." [SInt02BT2].

A principal commented that:

"I think obvious changes in students' attitudes towards learning, happier students, students who want to be at school, staying in school.

Students that celebrate their successes and their contributions, not just academic marks and grades, but achievement to mean a whole bunch of things.” [SInt02BP].

Another principal simply stated:

“School improvement to me also is how students feel, the emotional level or their level of happiness within the school.” [EInt02MP].

However, another principal suggested that attitudes might not be used to measure school improvement because they were difficult to quantify. S/he reflected:

“If I were measuring school improvement again attitudes, parent involvement, community involvement, not just scores. That’s trouble because scores are so raw and it’s easier to look at. It’s hard to sort out attitudes and involvement. How do you measure that and that’s what it’s about – measurement, so we go to the easiest and scores are the easiest to identify learning improvement.” [SInt02JP].

Perhaps attitudes were important to teachers and principals because they were focussed on the whole child, and not just the academic side measured through test results. A teacher suggests that student attitudes were critical for students to achieve success:

“I think primarily school improvement comes in attitude. If we change the attitude and the approach so they’re much more positive, I think then we become productive. I also believe that a change in the attitude and the approach as being positive, will breed success and success breeds further success. I think we have to address the needs of the individual kids and raise them a certain level before we can even approach some of the new curricula.” [SInt02HT2].

Overwhelmingly, both teachers and principals defined school improvement as focussing on the whole child, school culture, and collaboration. A principal talked about the need for this philosophy to encompass all parts of the organization:

“I think school improvement starts from the bottom and works its way up and it also is impacted from the top down as well, because it has a lot to do with the philosophy of the district. It has a lot to do with the philosophy of an individual principal in a school. It’s a whole bunch



of things. It's all about teaching the whole child, not just reading, writing and arithmetic, but the whole child." [Eint02BP].

Concern about the whole child was closely connected to a broader concept of learning. Learning, to some participants, meant recognizing student achievement in a numerical sense but also viewing learning as continuous for both teachers and for students. As a teacher explained:

"I guess looking at it from a teacher perspective I not only look at it as school improvement but I look at it as learning, I look at it as continuous learning. The students are always learning and I feel that the teachers always need to be learning." [SIn02JT2].

Lastly, participants reported that school improvement that focussed on collaborative working relationships went beyond just a set of steps to improve schools, to more of a philosophical process deeply embedded into school practice. The data collected in both school districts suggested that teachers and principals perceived the school improvement involved a deliberate actions as noted by a teacher:

"Certainly school improvement goals and the idea of trying to get better. Setting a goal and then being held accountable for that goal is a great idea. It's good." [SInt02PT1].

Another teacher went further and suggested that the process had to be research-based. This teacher provided a thoughtful comment on school improvement process:

"I guess school improvement is something you base upon ... data you already collected from your particular school that indicates there's a problem area. Whatever you define the parameters to be a problem, you have the strategies to deal with those problems and you come up with a plan to improve learning behaviour. Whatever you choose as the areas that you want to improve. But there has to be some solid research behind it as opposed to, oh, here's an idea." [EInt02KT2].

Another teacher from a different school district also reflected on their school improvement process:

"Our school goals have to do with team work and we want to improve our literacy scores. In order to do that, we have to show how we're doing that through data analysis. We have to prove that we're actually

doing these things and have them in writing. So that's accountability there." [SInt02ST2].

Indeed the 2002 data, especially from school administrators, suggest that participants perceived that school improvement was a deliberate and reflective change process. For example, a principal stated:

"For me, school improvement means that we're going to try to get to reflective practice ... to suggest alternatives." [EInt02HP].

A principal connected reflective practice to school improvement. Further s/he hinted this might mean teachers were assuming more of a decision-making role:

"We have been working to try to have them [teachers] become reflective practitioners. To think about what it is they do, to see if it's effective, to somehow have a measure as to whether they are really supporting their kids, what is the best practice. That trip to the apple orchard, is that really the best thing for kids? How does that really blend into student achievement? The idea of professional learning communities or professional learners, I think is different than what we practised in the past." [SInt02VP].

The evidence documents that Quadrant 3 (internal/commitment) was representative of most teachers and principals interviewed.

## **5 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION**

The real world is not and can never be as clear or decisive as Figure 15-1. The world is not as black or white and indeed has numerous shades of these colours as well as a vast universe of other colours. Conceptual diagrams such as Figure 15-1, especially when supported with evidence, are useful if they assist individuals in considering their practice and beliefs.

In many ways, Quadrant 1 (external/control) incorporates the international focus on standards and increased accountability as well as concerns for "deeper learning" in a curriculum. When this becomes incorporated into the political rhetoric, it can result in the perceptions that increasing scores is the most important aspect of schooling. Yet, at least in two studied Ontario Canada school districts, this is not the primary way that teachers and principals defined school success. The interviewed practitioners agreed that student achievement was important but they maintained that student achievement is far broader than reflected in high-stakes testing.

Seemingly this dichotomy is impacting on large-scale reform. Internationally, nationally, provincially, and locally, politicians are voicing the rhetoric of new ‘official orthodoxy’ of educational reform (Hargreaves, Earl, Moore & Manning, 2001). This rhetoric is associated with large-scale reform that typically targets increasing standardized test scores, creates comparison between schools, and heightens the intensity of the curriculum. As such, frequently the political rhetoric espouses elements of the external/control Quadrant 1 in Figure 15-1. Often this translates to punishing or rewarding schools and/or school districts depending on whether or not they meet the political criteria of Quadrant 1.

Framing school improvement with the rhetoric of Quadrant 1, might well exclude or even repel school-based practitioners who are more disposed to Quadrant 3 school improvement attributes such as teaching to the whole child, improving student and teacher attitudes, understanding school culture and/or facilitating professional learning communities. These practitioners are the same individuals required to implement the political rhetoric into educational practice. Michael Fullan (1981) reminded us several decades ago that it’s the individuals who change, not school buildings. The same argument remains cogent in terms of large-scale reform and the dichotomy examined in this paper: individuals reform, not schools or legislative buildings.

Clearly some sort of balance needs to be created and sustained. Recently, Fullan (2003, p.71) argued that large-scale reform must balance “teacher passion, purpose, and capacity” with “student engagement and learning”. It is unlikely that teachers’ passion can be fostered in a political environment that ‘blames’ teachers for low student achievement and remains mired in Quadrant 1 (external/control). Indeed, Sykes (1999, p.154) suggests that it is the “securing teachers’ hearts and minds around organizational and curricular changes has been the Achilles heel of much educational reform.” Another conceptual balance to consider is Fullan’s (1981) concept of pressure and support. Pressure for improved student achievement on high-stakes testing can be raised *only if* the support is equally raised. In 1982, Little emphasized the importance of support being raised to match increased expectations and she said:

“As demands escalate, too so do teachers’ requirements for ‘support’ in the form of clear, public, and visible sanctions for participation. It is in these terms that teachers distinguish ‘threatening’ from nonthreatening occasions for improvement” (Little, 1982, p.334).

In a similar argument, Hannay, Bray and Telford (2003) report that senior administrators of a school district provided a firewall for district staff. The documented firewall permitted positive elements to enter the system

while publically providing support for staff and deflecting the negative political comments when warranted. Pressure alone is unable to facilitate sustained and substantive school improvement.

Seemingly, if the moral purpose of education is to improve student learning (Fullan, 2003), then school improvement must encompass the need to improve student test scores which reflect the external/control needs of Quadrant 1 *balanced with* the increased capacity attributes contained in Quadrant 3 (internal/commitment). All of this must be accomplished in a way that excites and involves practitioners in improving student learning and shaping schools as collaborative work places. Without such a balance, although problematic to achieve, educators might well disengage or leave the profession. Perhaps, if large-scale educational reform is to engender teacher passion and improved student achievement, then new approaches, such as those represented in Quadrant 2 (external/commitment), need to be explored. Quite possibly, Quadrant 2 holds the greatest potential for sustained educational change because it recognizes the external role of the appropriate level of government in establishing the education policy. Yet Quadrant 2 recognizes that policy alone is unable to facilitate the changes to practice needed to improve student learning. Real and deep educational change must have the commitment and the passion of those who teach in the classroom or administer in a school if such reforms have the slightest possibility of being implemented, let alone sustained.

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## PART 4

# TEACHERS' WORKPLACE AS CONTEXT FOR LEARNING

## Chapter 16

# LEARNING FROM 'INTERPRETED' WORK CONTEXTS

*Planned educational change and teacher development*

Vijaya Sherry Chand and Geeta Amin-Choudhury

### 1 INTRODUCTION

Towards the end of 1998, a new integrated Language-Environmental Science textbook, a teachers' handbook, and training in activity-based teaching, significantly changed the educational context of grade one teachers of about 308 pilot schools in Gujarat, a province in India. These elements were then extended to all 34386 schools in the province in 1999-2000. The 1998 reform, the fifth initiative since the province was created in 1960, was based on a 'progressivist', child-centred, activity-based teaching model of primary education.<sup>1</sup> It was motivated by a federal government initiative to make the curriculum at the initial stages of primary education more "child-centred and burdenless." It marked a change from the previous initiative (introduced in 1994) that was based on 'mastery learning' and specified a list of 'minimum levels of learning' to be attained. The first three initiatives (1973, 1980 and 1987) had limited themselves primarily to the development of new textbooks. The pedagogical culture, left largely untouched by the earlier reforms, can best be described as 'traditional' (Kumar, 1990, 1991).<sup>2</sup> The three elements of the 1998 reform, therefore, demanded of teachers an expanded understanding of the workplace (to include the immediate local environment), and the creation of a new 'progressivist' pedagogical environment inside the classroom. How these macro-level expectations have worked out at the micro-level where teachers actually operate, provides the

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<sup>1</sup> The historical development of these five reform initiatives is described in Chand & Amin-Choudhury (forthcoming).

<sup>2</sup> We acknowledge the dangers of polarising 'progressive' and 'traditional', as noted by Alexander (2001).

rationale for this study. The specific questions that we seek to address are the following: What mechanisms and strategies have teachers used to create their own 'interpreted' versions of a child-centred work context? What strategies have they used to develop a new pedagogical environment which is in consonance with a workplace context built around activity-based and 'burdenless' learning, and interaction with the local environment? The first question is concerned more with teachers' responses to the expected ideological shift towards a child-centred educational approach. The second deals specifically with the application of characteristic 'child-centred' tools to the development of early language skills; in this chapter we take up the case of developing listening skills. Following from these two questions, a third question addressed relates to what teachers have done to share their emerging practices, ideas and problems connected with child-centred contexts. We then conclude with a discussion on what can be learned from the 'interpreted' work contexts of teachers in order to strengthen current teacher development mechanisms, taking the normative position that helping teachers learn from their own practice is important.

## **2 METHODOLOGY**

Our methodological focus is grounded in the 'educational', "fuzzy generalization" or "theory seeking" case study approach recommended by Bassey (2000). This conception is close to Stenhouse's (1988) recommendation that an 'educational case study' should be concerned with understanding educational action, so as to "enrich the thinking and discourse of educators", by the development of a theory or the "refinement of prudence", through systematic and reflective documentation of happenings and evidence. A multiple-case study design was used to study the emerging practices of 16 teachers over a period of three months in late 1999, as part of an assessment of the initial impact of the new reform. The teachers were drawn from among those teaching in the 308 pilot schools. The size of grade one in these schools varied from 10 children to more than 70. The schools were sorted into groups (class size intervals of ten), and proportionate samples drawn at random from the groups, to obtain a total of 16 classes taught by 16 teachers. The schools were all located in the most backward regions of the province. Surveys carried out prior to the introduction of the reform (e.g., Chand & Kalro, 1998; Government of Gujarat, 1996) showed that most of the children who attended the pilot schools belonged to the socially and economically marginalized sections of society. This study confines itself to the State schools (which are in the public domain, do not charge fees and are entirely funded by the State). All the teachers (seven men and nine women) had been in the profession for more than ten years,



and were familiar with the 'minimum levels of learning' methodology which had been introduced in 1994. The same teachers were again interviewed and observed from September 2001 to January 2002.

The initial case studies were developed using a set of guiding questions that focused on the teachers' understanding of their work contexts and the strategies they used to shape their pedagogical environment. The follow-up case studies used the interview as a tool to understand the teachers' articulation of their 'interpreted' versions of a child-centred work context. The focus here was on changes over time. Observation notes were used as an independent source of data to confirm or clarify teachers' articulations. Observation notes and teacher diaries were used as primary sources of data to identify teachers' strategies in developing a new pedagogical environment. Interviews were used in this case only for triangulation purposes. The data were then translated from Gujarati into English for analysis.<sup>3</sup> The first step in analysis was coding. With respect to 'interpreted' versions of a child-centred context, two broad themes – platforms facilitating the creation of such a context and strategies used to create this context, each with its own categories – emerged. Since the focus was on understanding features common to the case study teachers, only those categories within each theme that were common to at least 14 of the 16 teachers were retained.<sup>4</sup> These were then used, in subsequent rounds of analysis, to identify data items that further illustrated the themes.<sup>5</sup> A similar procedure was adopted for the second question: what strategies have been used to create a new pedagogical environment? The broad themes that had emerged in answer to the first question – the use of enrichment strategies, and a shift away from a 'textbook orientation' – were used to organise the strategies used by teachers to develop listening skills and the problems that arose in making the pedagogical context match the developing understanding of a child-centred work context. The same cut-off of 14 out of 16 teachers was used. The categories (in the form of 'analytical result statements') were then used to frame the results reported below.

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<sup>3</sup> Since both authors are bilingual, this process may be assumed to be robust. Re-translation back into Gujarati was not attempted. The data collection process (carried out in Gujarati) involved constant checking of what was recorded with the teachers.

<sup>4</sup> This may seem to be a very stringent cut-off which conceals much of the uniqueness of individual cases. The attempt here is to highlight what is common to most or all of the teachers who participated in the current study.

<sup>5</sup> At this stage, a check was also made for data items that could challenge the category (within a particular teacher's case).

### 3 'INTERPRETED' IDEOLOGICAL CONTEXTS

The teachers in this study have based the creation of their own child-centred ideological contexts on two platforms. The first is their experience with the earlier 1994 reform based on the 'Minimum Levels of Learning' (MLL) approach. The second is the influence of a child-centred approach pioneered by a local educationist, G. Badheka (1885-1939) in the 1920's and 1930's. The MLL approach was grounded in a 'mastery learning' philosophy (Gentile & Lalley, 2003). The practice of this approach at the very early stages of the primary schooling cycle had resulted in growing dissatisfaction, primarily from perceived 'work intensification' (Apple, 1986), and a realization that the approach may not be best suited to the very young. The detailed assessments, testing and "form-filling" were perceived to have quickly become mechanical exercises (Chand & Shukla, 1997). Thus, the teachers saw in the reform an opportunity to move away from the particular version of mastery learning that was being practised. However, the 1998 reform provided some continuity with the earlier practice by retaining the 'competencies-as-objectives' framework. This opportunity to create an amalgam of a competencies-based framework of objectives which had its roots in mastery learning and a teaching methodology that could evolve into a 'progressivist' approach, is clearly perceived as the base which has enabled teachers to create their own versions of child-centred educational contexts.

The second factor that has facilitated the movement towards child-centred contexts is the rediscovery of the work of Badheka, who adapted the Montessori approach to the Indian context. Though his work was taught during pre-service training, it was not practised. The 1998 reform gave teachers a chance to study his experiments and discover for themselves indigenous versions of child-centred ideological contexts. Badheka had used story telling very successfully as an educational tool. He had also compiled and used folk stories, local songs, proverbs and indigenous games. He wrote or compiled nearly 140 books and booklets on pedagogical and school matters, and 35 books on general education. The principles which formed the basis of his practice were: the child is capable of independence (*swatantra*), the child should be respected (*sanmanyogya*), a child is self-activated and motivated (*swayam pravruttilshil*), and a child likes to learn (*shikshanpriya*). The teachers were exposed to his work during the initial training undertaken as part of the reform, but they also had an opportunity to read his key works.<sup>6</sup> These two factors, the continuity provided by the

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<sup>6</sup> The influences of Badheka's thoughts on the current reform are discussed in detail in Chand & Amin-Choudhury (forthcoming), but this emphasis on story telling, songs, drama and his adaptation of the Montessori principles (like normalisation, physical representation of language by colour coding vowels and consonants, associating sensory perceptions with specific names) appealed greatly to the teachers in this study.

retention of the competencies-as-objectives framework, and the indigenous influence of a rediscovered progressivist educational thinker, contributed to the creation of child-centred educational contexts at the workplace. Though this led to 'work intensification' of a different kind – as the teachers note, 'learning activities' and 'doing activities', changing one's style of teaching, and accepting more responsibility for creating one's own classroom contexts, in that order – the resulting context is perceived to be more relevant for the education of six and seven year olds.

What are the strategies that the teachers have actually developed and used? The analysis suggests three sets of complementary strategies: the use of the teachers' handbook along with the textbook to redefine a teacher's professional identity; the adoption of an "enrichment" approach; and the retention of certain older educational practices that permitted incorporation into the new ideological context.

The first strategic direction, common to all these teachers, is a shift from a "textbook orientation" that has been identified as characteristic of the pedagogical culture in the Indian context (Kumar, 1989), towards a broader repertoire of personal and professional skills. Teachers themselves often have to use the textbook – a "perfect container" of the syllabus – as *the* key element of their pedagogical practice. However, the introduction of the handbook, which teachers can read for guidance, has facilitated the teachers' interpretation of the pedagogical elements mentioned in the handbook as characteristic of child-centred educational contexts. In the rural contexts in which these teachers work, such books are often the only available source of structured guidance. As the teachers themselves acknowledge, prior to the current reform, the textbook had helped them define the specific work to be done and had thus been the major teaching tool. Given the earlier model of content-driven curricula, the textbook typically contained "topics to be taught which we taught by providing drills, recitations, procedural demonstration or explanations." The textbook was also the major source of learning for the teacher herself. The general tendency was to "stick to the procedural demonstrations and drills as printed in the textbook."

The teachers, through their reading of the handbook, have interpreted the following features to be characteristic of their "child-centred educational ideology": (a) childrens' learning has to be encouraged by providing them opportunities to use concrete objects; (b) children have to be exposed to a variety of 'activities' inside the classroom, and (c) teachers have to identify various out-of-school sites for learning. A second set of features of the context that teachers interpret as principles supportive of their child-centred work contexts comprises the following: (a) children should not be asked to read any printed matter in the subject of Environmental Science; rather, the process of developing Language skills should also lead to learning the content of Environmental Science; (b) as far as developing early language

skills is concerned, speaking and listening skills should be emphasized, since these lead to a more “free and open” environment. This also provides a balance to “the traditional focus on reading and writing which works against the development of oral skills.”

The use of the handbook to develop their own version of child-centred contexts has led the teachers towards a second strategic direction, the use of ‘enrichment’ strategies (Woods, 1995). While the 1998 reform retained a strong focus on texts and the handbook, the latter has indicated to teachers how they can integrate their “personal” and “professional” identities (Nias, 1989). Given the evolving interpretation of a child-centred ideology as providing children more opportunities to learn, the elements of the teachers’ enrichment strategies have been the following: (a) use of childrens’ prior experiences to generate words which can then be used as a basis for instruction in reading and writing; (b) development of various activities, either on the basis of the handbook’s guidance or through a process of experimentation; (c) ‘profiling’ children in order to identify those likely to experience difficulties or those who could be called upon to “show” talent and creativity; and (d) identifying out-of-classroom sites (including the local community) as a source of material and objects with which children can learn. Though the teacher training undertaken at the beginning of the reform had indicated some of these elements, the practice of the teachers in this study indicates that these four elements have been the basis of a range of specific enrichment practices that the teachers have evolved. These include, in descending order of frequency of practice, collecting local songs into booklet form, creating cards and picture sets, identifying out-of-school sites (primarily gardens, fairs, local hospitals, rivers, milk cooperatives, local forests, local government offices and post offices) for educational observations, writing new songs based on the lessons in the textbook, preparing songs in a local dialect to solve the problem of children transiting from a home language to the dominant language taught in school<sup>7</sup>, writing stories in a local dialect, writing childrens’ skits, and adapting local games to develop speaking and listening skills.

The adoption of ‘enrichment’ strategies has led to the development of the professional skills of teachers in two directions: the use of singing, dancing and story telling, and the creation and use of locally appropriate teaching-

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<sup>7</sup> A particularly good example is provided by two teachers who have prepared a wide range of material in ‘Dangi’, a language related to the official language of instruction, but distinct from it. The issue of language of instruction is a particularly vexed one that teachers have to deal with. In India, in addition to Hindi, there are 14 ‘scheduled’ languages, another 41 languages used for educational purposes, and nearly 200 other recognised ‘language varieties’. Also, there are about 1600 ‘mother tongues’, spoken by large groups of people. Gujarati is a scheduled language, and Dangi, which has borrowed from Gujarati and Marathi, could be qualified as a variety.

learning material. Thus, though teachers have been following the textbook sequence of questions-answers based on pictures and activities and exercises given in the textbook, the use of these two additional sets of skills has marked a shift away from the “meek dictator” syndrome that has been associated with the Indian teacher since colonial times (Kumar, 1990).<sup>8</sup> The creation of an identity that has transformed an earlier one based on the centrality of teacher authority, to one that has incorporated a set of “child-oriented” skills and encouraged personal expression of creativity (through the designing of relevant teaching-learning material) is an important feature of the emerging child-centred workplace contexts.

However, the adoption of ‘enrichment’ strategies has been accompanied (in all cases) by examples of the “incorporation” or “appropriation” strategies noted by Woods (1995) and Osborne and Broadfoot (1992), which indicate a broad acceptance of the change but not a giving up of anything the teachers consider very important. Though the same instances of appropriation may not be evident in all teachers (in other words, there is variety in the appropriation examples), what is common is that these ‘appropriation’ examples are combined with the same set of enrichment strategies noted above. For instance, one teacher has developed a method of introducing letters for writing, based on similarity in curve patterns, over a career spanning about 25 years. She has been ‘successful’ since her students have been achieving mastery levels. She has retained her method, but uses aspects of the new approach like songs and stories as a support-scaffolding. Another teacher uses the initial three months of schooling (designed as a “school readiness phase” at the beginning of grade one), to make the children recite the sequence of letters in accordance with the traditional approach, and then switches to the new method. Thus, while enrichment strategies may be the result of ‘learning’ through the handbook and individual reflection, appropriation strategies appear to be at least partly the result of retaining what has worked in that particular teacher’s past experience.

A different kind of ‘appropriation by default’ is evident when teachers have not had an opportunity for guided learning. An example is provided below. A large picture given in the textbook as soon as the teacher opens it has communicated to the teacher that she has to interact with children and “start the lesson” on the basis of this picture. This has led to an emphasis on oral expression and listening, forcing teachers to modify their own practice.

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<sup>8</sup> Kumar (1990) uses this phrase to characterise a teacher, who is meek and ‘powerless’ in society, but a ‘dictator’ in the classroom. This was possible in a discourse of authority and obedience, where the authority of the teacher and the text used by the teacher were unquestionable. The pedagogical norm was for the teacher to question and for the student to answer. This constituted an exercise of power in which the teacher had to ‘examine’ whether the child could reproduce what had been taught, as it was ‘thought’.

Interestingly, this change gets reinforced when teachers note that as soon as they open the textbook, children start recalling their observations of the picture and tend to imagine further. Child-to-child interaction increases, and the teacher has to allow time for this. However, though such a process is by itself not unwelcome, an opportunity for guided learning is lost when teachers fall back on past practice, use the picture as the only learning tool, and fail to accommodate the childrens' free responses to the picture. Though the objective of focusing on oral expression and listening is addressed, the lack of ability to build on the childrens' responses may prove a weakness in the long run.

The uniformly observable shift away from a 'textbook orientation' and the development of a common set of enrichment strategies, may indicate the creation of a fairly standardized 'interpreted' ideological context. But the appropriation strategies provide uniqueness to the contexts which the teachers have created. In other words, the specific features of individual work contexts are determined by the strategies the teachers incorporate from what has worked for them in the past. What is important to note is that the appropriation strategies, in all cases, are seen as complementary to the first two strategies.

#### **4 'INTERPRETED' APPROACHES TO DEVELOPMENT OF EARLY LANGUAGE SKILLS: THE CASE OF LISTENING SKILLS**

How do the strategic directions the teachers have adopted – a shift away from a textbook orientation and 'enrichment' tempered by 'appropriation' – get reflected in a new pedagogical environment that is in consonance with a child-centred ideological approach? What are the problems that teachers have had to face in the process? This section addresses these questions by considering the case of the development of listening skills, an aspect of early language skills that was highlighted in the 1998 reform. (Similar patterns of teacher responses are evident in the development of the closely related skills of speaking, reading and writing, but are not discussed here.)

The most important facilitating factor that teachers have used as a starting point for their new practice is the flexibility that the textbook provides for generating words with the help of the children. For instance, the use of "free pictures" provided in the text and asking children to call out words beginning with the first letter of the name of that picture, to create a more "open environment", is evident in all cases. Each teacher then builds on this in his or her own way to develop skills in identifying the sounds of particular

letters, letter recognition, focusing on the sound of a word, teaching the concept of a syllable<sup>9</sup>, and reading aloud.

The teachers have focused on four major approaches to developing listening skills: enabling children to listen to simple, familiar and known short verses, poems, songs and stories “with understanding”; understanding conversation and dialogue used in familiar situations; understanding simple instructions and requests; and understanding the main idea behind a set of details. What is of interest in the practice of these approaches is the teachers’ emphasis on ‘understanding’ as a key element of listening skills. An assumption that had been accepted by the teachers was that Environmental Science could be taught through the same processes that developed listening and speaking skills, using teacher guided interactions and songs, stories, and short verses. However, the term ‘understanding’, as interpreted by the teachers, has come to refer more to the learning of Environmental Science concepts. This emergent interpretation has led to difficulties in distinguishing between learning Environmental Science and the development of listening skills, while judging the childrens’ learning.

A second issue that teachers have been grappling with is the inter-relatedness of speaking and listening. The guidelines they have used to develop speaking competencies are the following: ability to speak simple sentences correctly by imitating; ability to recite short verses, poems and songs with appropriate facial expressions and acting in groups; ability to answer simple questions; and developing the ability to ask simple questions on their own. The first three, according to the teachers, depend on the development of listening skills. It has been problematic in practice for the teachers to determine the nature of the evidence needed to judge the development of the two skills. However, they have found the two guidelines that deal with question answering/asking abilities easier to relate to Environmental Science learning.

A related issue is the difficulty in seeing the multiple roles played by a particular teaching tool in an integrated fashion. For instance, a short verse plays more than one role. It may lend itself to use as an indicator of speaking skills – the ability to recite short verses becomes an indicator of ‘speaking.’ At the same time, it also initiates the learning of content in Environmental Science – through its own content or through the teacher’s additional inputs. A third role is that of stimulus for generating appropriate learning conditions (by singing action songs), which in turn may lead to further learning of reading and writing. While the first role has been relatively easy to understand and use (judging the development of a language competency), the second role (in the development of Environmental Science

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<sup>9</sup> The Gujarati alphabet system is more accurately described as a ‘syllabary’, since each sign represents a syllable. Each consonant has an inherent ‘a’ sound, except in some cases when it occurs at the end of a word and is not stressed.

competencies) has proved difficult to translate into easily usable indicators for learning assessment. The third role directly touches upon the movement towards “joyful” or “activity-based” teaching. This seems to have been communicated well through the teachers’ handbook, and the teachers have come to rely on this role to reinforce their own child-centred educational contexts.

The use of songs has been relatively unproblematic. The teachers have written their own songs or some have created their own audiotape recordings to make the children listen to songs. The manner in which a song is used follows a fairly standard pattern. The children listen to the song first. Then the teacher explains it, modelling the actions that should accompany specific sections of the song. Finally, the teacher puts some questions to the children. The teacher is then in a position to judge listening skills by assessing how many children exhibit the actions that have been taught, how many are able to repeat the questions posed, and the quality of the answers provided.

All the teachers strongly support the use of stories as tools in their enrichment strategies. The influence of Badheka’s views on the role of stories seems to be evident here. The teachers follow a fairly standard pattern in the use of stories. They use questions to interrupt story telling in order to gauge the children’s listening capacities. They start a story with a picture from the textbook, or wall pictures that they have put up. Then they add short verses, songs, and other details given in the teachers’ handbook. The children have to listen carefully since they know that they will have to answer questions at the end of the story. (A variation developed by six of the 16 teachers is to ask the children who are performing well to tell a story to the rest of the class.) However, the teachers’ own assessment is that their own story telling skills have not developed adequately, primarily as a result of lack of expert support. The teachers have also learned from the handbook that a story has two purposes: while it is being used to develop listening skills, it also has to cover Environmental Science content. In practice, the focus has been more on Environmental Science content. The traditional understanding of stories the teachers continue to hold is that stories have to inculcate certain values in children – every story has to have a moral. This belief that almost all the teachers have brought into the new curriculum seems to have inhibited the development of the understanding of the story as a tool that can be used with appropriate dramatisation and expression and change of voice, without ‘preaching’ a moral. As one teacher puts it: “I find it hard to agree with the idea of not concluding with a moral. How else can the children understand the story?” This comment indicates that one intended purpose of a story – that the children should be able to draw their own lessons from the story the teacher has told them – has not been achieved.



The “listening aids” developed constitute an important third set of tools. They are generally built around the principle of arranging letters to form words. Letter strips, which reveal a letter at a time through a window, are used as triggers for questions on the alphabet. A more conventional tool used regularly is a set of letter cards. Often the teacher reads out the words on the letter strip and the children have to repeat them. The teaching-learning material created by the teachers, and used to develop listening skills, includes games of snakes and ladders, rattles, toys made of beads, cut-outs of various shapes, charts, and samples of grain. About a third of the teachers have developed booklets with action songs and short skits which try to project listening and speaking specifically as a set of interrelated skills.

The reshaping of the ideological context of teachers' workplaces through a range of enrichment strategies, modified by certain practices that have worked for the teachers in the past, has been described above. The application of the components of these strategies – seen as characteristic of child-centred contexts – to the development of listening skills has been described in this section. Though teachers vary in the extent to which they have used the different learning tools, certain common issues have arisen during practice. The extent to which these, and the emerging teacher-interpretations of child-centred practice, have been shared or discussed with colleagues, was assessed towards the end of this study. All the teachers highlight two important trends: (a) individual learning has definitely taken place, but sharing of emerging perspectives and problems with the aim of augmenting professional practice has not happened, (b) current teacher-support mechanisms need to be redesigned. The first trend is a reflection of the absence of teacher platforms that can consolidate learning that takes place at the level of the individual teacher. The second needs some explanation. The current curriculum reform established a new structure called the Cluster Resource Centre (CRC), with each centre covering about 10 schools and headed by a senior teacher called the CRC Co-ordinator. In practice, the CRCs surveyed as part of this study have focused more on supervision and less on teacher development.<sup>10</sup> The emerging individual practices (especially with respect to the development of early literacy) have not been recorded, thus leading to a neglect of one major intention of the new reform – the teacher as ‘curriculum interpreter’.

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<sup>10</sup> The CRCs were studied as part of a survey related to the present study. The details of the survey are not presented here.

## 5 CONCLUSION: TOWARDS A NETWORK SPACE FOR TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

Why is it important to understand the emerging ‘interpreted’ ideological contexts? The current reform expected teachers to derive an expanded understanding of their workplace contexts and a new pedagogical environment, in consonance with a ‘progressivist’ approach to early primary education. But, as Silcock (1999, p.37) notes: “It is not methods, but the values justifying them which create child-centredness.” The results of this study indicate that the teachers have initiated a movement towards child-centred contexts through their strategic use of the handbook to move away from a textbook orientation and by developing a range of enrichment strategies. Four conclusions follow. Firstly, the importance teachers accord to the handbook needs to be built upon by locating the latter in a framework of self-learning. At the moment, mechanisms for collecting feedback on the handbook and on directions for revision are not in place. As one teacher suggests, incorporating ‘tear-away’ pages in a handbook, which can be filled up and posted to an educational agency, offers one way of addressing the concerns of a large number of teachers spread over a large area. Secondly, the enrichment strategies discussed earlier indicate that the teachers have responded to the ‘progressivist’ imperative with experimentation in the new areas advocated by the reform. However, systematic consolidation of these experiments to understand how the teachers have developed specific approaches like profiling children, used out-of-school sites and refined their new activities, is a task that needs to be taken up. Thirdly, the use of appropriation strategies to complement the enrichment strategies indicates that the teachers implicitly make certain value choices when they combine practices from their past with the new methods. How this amalgam functions in the future will indicate the shape that ‘child-centredness’ is likely to take in practice. Understanding this combination of the handbook situated in a ‘self-learning’ framework, the experimentation, and the values that underpin the methods that teachers use in practice, may perhaps help educational planners address critiques of the approach made in other contexts (as in Britain, see Alexander, 1984; Ross, 2000; Sharma, 2003).<sup>11</sup> Finally, in the teachers’ perception, the reform was an amalgam of ‘progressivism’ grafted on to a ‘competencies-as-objectives’ framework, and offered them a chance to build on the work of an almost-forgotten indigenous educator. The role of

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<sup>11</sup> As Bourne (2000, p.613) notes, this model remained “an impossible dream for many schools in the developing world, to whom these educational ideals and teaching methods were exported by teacher trainers from the 1970s onwards.” She also refers to Bernstein’s conception of child-centered education as a “masked pedagogy”, an implicit device for social selection, and cautions that “child-centered pedagogy, wherever it appears, is firmly based in the culture of assumption” (Bourne, 2000, p.618).

such re-interpreted indigenous versions of child-centred education in providing a platform for reform has been crucial. The way these indigenous principles are reflected in the teachers' new practice, will perhaps help in the design of appropriate content for future editions of teachers' handbooks.

This discussion of the translation of a new understanding of the work context into a new pedagogical environment highlights the role that individual experimentation has played in developing certain specific techniques for the growth of listening skills, and the emergence of certain issues that have not been addressed. The experimentation has remained within the "closed individual cycle" of teacher development identified by Huberman (1995); the knowledge that the teachers have acquired remains "embodied" (*ibid.*, 144) – in the individual. In this situation, as the reform progresses, the classroom is likely to become a constraining environment. Hence, the need to move into new forms of professional development that take into account "engagement with colleagues, ideas and material", the contexts of teaching, and the broader social contexts (Feiman-Nemser & Norman, 2000). One way in which this could have been done was through the Cluster Resource Centre (CRC) Co-ordinators, who could have played the role of peers, providing the three kinds of support identified by Swafford (1998): procedural, affective and reflective. In practice, they have been unable to do so.

The need arises, therefore, for the creation of a teacher-network space. Such a space needs to begin with what teachers are reflective about (Zeichner & Tabachnik, 1991, p.83), and focus on "exchanging local knowledge" generated at the individual level so that the "collective open cycle" (Huberman, 1995) can be initiated. Participation of other stakeholders (for instance, textbook writers and academics) in such a cycle (the 'open' dimension) would generate a legitimised professionalism (Goodson, 2000), which can also serve as a link between the teachers whose experiences are built upon and those teachers who are in the early stages of their careers. As Sachs (2000) seems to imply, such professionalism can not only lead to school reform and to a redefinition of the socio-political position of the profession, but also to a redefinition of the relationships among various government and non-government stakeholders in education. The knowledge so generated, as Day (1999) points out, will be built around a neglected aspect of teachers' work – the moral commitment and purposes that most teachers have at the heart of their professionalism. The 1998 reform, in spite of the potential it had to initiate the development of an "open collective cycle", overlooked individual teacher learning at the workplace as an input into collective teacher development. Though teachers were involved in the preparation of the revised textbooks and the handbook, their non-involvement in creating a system for continuing teacher development has been an oversight. The effects of this have not yet been understood. A shift

towards a greater say for teachers in creating a network space for development which would also allow participation of a variety of stakeholders, is the key future direction for reform that the current experience indicates. The urgent task is to bring teacher interpretations of their own work contexts as quickly as possible into such a network space, so that a discussion of the values justifying the methods that have been adopted can truly create a locally relevant conception of child-centredness.

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## Chapter 17

# WHAT DO WE MEAN BY CAREER-LONG PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND HOW CAN WE GET IT?

Ian Mitchell and Judie Mitchell

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Promoting career-long professional growth is an oft-stated goal in education. In this chapter, we explore what such growth can look like, some conditions needed to stimulate and support it and some implications for the design of professional development programs and materials.

The chapter draws on the 20 year long Project for Enhancing Effective Learning (PEEL) (Loughran, Mitchell & Mitchell, 2002). PEEL teachers use collaborative action research to address concerns about students' learning. The founding group set out to research and develop ways of promoting learning that was more purposeful, intellectually active and metacognitive. What was not anticipated was the breadth, depth and permanence of the changes in both the participating teachers and students. Most professional development programs have short time frames. PEEL provides a context to examine professional growth over very long periods of time. The data comes from only one project, however it is a project that has involved thousands of teachers, teaching a wide range of subjects at all year levels in a wide range of schools; PEEL SEEDS, the journal of the project, has published articles from over 180 teachers in over 450 schools. While some features of PEEL are unique to the project, we have found that lessons from it have been relevant to a wide range of other projects that we have been involved with.

## 2 WHAT IS PEEL?

PEEL was founded in 1985 by a group of teachers and academics that shared concerns about the prevalence of passive, unreflective, dependent student learning, even in apparently successful lessons. The project was

unfunded and not a result of any system or institution-level initiative. PEEL teachers agree to meet on a regular basis, in their own time, to share and analyse experiences, ideas and new practices.

The original project was intended to run for two years at one (secondary) school, however both the process of collaborative action-research and the outcomes for students and teachers proved very rewarding for the teachers. Consequently, at the end of the initial two years, the teachers refused to let the project end and a year later it began to spread to other schools in Australia and then in other countries. This spread was driven by teachers in those schools who had similar concerns about learning, as well as the lack of opportunities in a normal school day for collaborative reflection, and who wished to set up PEEL groups of their own. Each group is entirely responsible for its goals and practices. While the initial spread was in secondary schools, there is now a growing network of teachers in primary schools.

PEEL operates as a network of autonomous, school-based groups of teachers who take on a role of interdependent innovators. Coherence is provided by the shared concerns about learning and by structures that allow teachers to learn from and share new wisdom with teachers in other schools as well as a few academic friends. These structures include books, PEEL SEEDS, an annual PEEL conference, PEEL collective meetings, a website ([www.peelweb.org](http://www.peelweb.org)), a range of in-service activities, and a database of (currently) over 1,100 teacher-authored articles sharing ideas about improving student learning.

There are over 70 schools in Australia that have active PEEL groups, and smaller numbers in New Zealand, Canada, Argentina and Denmark. There is a very extensive PEEL network in Sweden (where its acronym is PLAN). PEEL is non-profit making and is self-funding from sales of publications as well as income from conferences and short courses.

PEEL focuses on how students learn; the list of 16 teacher concerns in Table 17-1 summarises the sorts of concerns that are held by teachers who get involved in the project. It provides foci that are more specific than nebulous questions such as ‘How do we get students thinking?’

PEEL had its origins in the research of John Baird (Baird & White, 1982). Baird identified a set of what he called poor learning tendencies that collectively describe different aspects of unreflective, dependent learning. He regarded these as habits, developed during a students’ school experience. The concerns in Table 17-1 reflect Baird’s ideas. Baird believed that, because these habits had been learnt, they could be unlearnt – students could learn how to learn better. This required students to become more metacognitive about their learning.

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|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Students rarely contribute ideas</li><li>2. Students don't think about the meaning of what they read or hear</li><li>3. Students don't link different lessons</li><li>4. Students don't think about why or how they are doing a task</li><li>5. Teachers find negotiations difficult</li><li>6. Students keep making the same mistakes</li><li>7. Students don't read instructions carefully</li><li>8. Students don't learn from mistakes in assessment tasks</li><li>9. Students won't take responsibility for their learning</li><li>10. Students dive into tasks without planning</li><li>11. Students have no strategies when stuck</li><li>12. Students don't link school work with outside life</li><li>13. Dealing with mixed ability classes</li><li>14. Students don't believe that their own beliefs are relevant</li><li>15. Students are reluctant to take risks in creative tasks</li><li>16. Students are reluctant to edit or check their work</li></ol> |
|---|

Table 17-1. A list of teacher concerns.

The first author heard Baird present at a conference, invited Baird to collaborate in a further project and approached the staff at his school. Ten teachers volunteered and PEEL was born. PEEL is not owned or controlled by Monash University, nevertheless it has always had close links with Monash, being very supportive of the project and where much of the infrastructure is based.

PEEL teachers share ideas and experiences and devise, refine, adapt and extend classroom approaches that address their concerns. PEEL groups both stimulate and support risk taking: teachers stepping outside their comfort zone to try something new to them. What follows is a typical example.

*Geography – Coastlines*

“In the past I would have conducted this class by first showing a series of slides with different types of coastlines. During the slides I would have given the students information about the different types of coastlines.

For this lesson however I stood aside a little and simply wrote the heading “Coastlines” on the board. I then asked students to describe different coastlines and put their ideas on the board.



The students' early response was fairly typical; "What do you want us to say, sir?" After fifteen minutes waiting and thinking time however, I filled the board with their responses.

When this was finished, I showed the slides and was pleased with the lively discussion during and after. In fact I was thrilled when, at the end of the lesson, I was talking to the class about estuaries and fjords and the students, not me, had taken the class there. The lesson ended where I would normally want but not necessarily be" (Greer, 1989).

Rod Greer was exploring what we describe as some new teacher behaviours; in this case increased wait-time (Rowe, 1974) and what we label delayed judgement – accepting all student contributions with equal encouragement and making no attempt to correct any that he knew were 'wrong'. This experience changed his conceptions of what was possible in terms of one aspect of student learning behaviours.

The fact that PEEL, which requires a substantial investment in time and energy from teachers, has operated without any system-level support or recognition for 20 years is very strong evidence that it meets needs that are important to many teachers.

There are perhaps three main reasons why PEEL has been so attractive to so many teachers. The first is the stimulation of the meetings. These meetings provide an opportunity to step back from the 'dailiness' of teaching and reflect on practice using frames and goals that have provided capable of sustaining innovation and development over a very long period of time. Schools are not well structured to allow this. There is a strong sense (and sometimes explicit system-level rhetoric) that if teachers are not in front of a class, then they are not really working.

PEEL professionalises teachers in that it helps them develop richer and much more sophisticated understandings of their classrooms and their practice. The opportunity for this sort of growth is frequently cited by teachers as a second reason for joining and remaining in the project.

The third reason is the often dramatic changes in student behaviours and teacher-student interactions. Teachers consistently report much higher levels of student intellectual engagement and interest and much lower levels of confrontation, alienation and off-task behaviour. Greer's article provides one example. PEEL generates classrooms that are rewarding places to teach. We argue that this outcome matters more to most teachers than any other educational outcome and that strategies to engage teachers and retain them in teaching should recognise and understand this desire for student engagement.

### **3 LONG TERM PROFESSIONAL GROWTH**

There are many teachers who have had 8 or more years involvement in PEEL. The professional growth in all these individuals has been very substantial along a number of interrelated dimensions.

#### **3.1 Willingness to take Risks**

Trying something new is always risky, but many of the risks turn out to be more perceived than real. This is one of several aspects to the journey that often accompanies PEEL that cannot be learnt without personal experience (Mitchell, 2002). Greer's story illustrates the extent to which risks associated with handing over some intellectual control to students can pay off. One aspect of long term growth is teachers' willingness to take risks with new approaches and their confidence that they can react to unknown outcomes.

#### **3.2 Willingness to problematise Practice**

Greer recognised that his previous approach to introducing new material via slides resulted in passive reception. This willingness to declare weaknesses in one's practice is a necessary initial condition for almost any professional growth: if nothing is wrong, why change? Initially, it can be a big step, particularly for an experienced teacher, to admit that their practice is flawed. However, as the teachers' understandings of the complexities of learning and change grow, problematising new areas of practice becomes part of a never-ending and increasingly non threatening journey of identifying new challenges.

#### **3.3 Changes in Focus: in what matters in their Classroom**

For long-term PEEL teachers, an initial focus on how and what students are learning (which in itself is an important shift from a focus on curriculum delivery) develops new directions and levels of detail. The student and teacher behaviours that the teacher considers most important in their classrooms change. Baird (1999) found that PEEL and non-PEEL teachers were very different in the teacher behaviours that they ranked as most important. The non-PEEL teachers placed far more emphasis on classroom management and teacher control. All our anecdotal evidence would suggest that much (probably not all) of this difference can be ascribed to the effects of PEEL on the teachers.

### 3.4 Teachers acquire a Learning Agenda

PEEL is a process in the classroom as well as outside the classroom. Key parts of that process are associated with understandings of student change. During the first year of the project, we discovered that our students had very narrow and conservative beliefs about what was and was not ‘work’. We needed to identify the changes in beliefs that were necessary and developed strategies for change in this area (Baird & Northfield, 1995).

One outcome is that experienced PEEL teachers have learning agendas running parallel with curriculum agendas. There are, for example, a range of student change issues associated with the umbrella question of whether and how a good discussion can be real work and lead to learning. *Returning to the Discussion* is driven by these issues of changing students’ perceptions of the role of discussion.

## 4 RETURNING TO THE DISCUSSION

“... I had introduced a Year 9 unit on food with an interpretive discussion that I had triggered and then sustained with a series of questions: “How would you define a food? What do you think we use food for? How do you think our body does this? What do you think happens to the foods we eat?” The discussion had been, by my criteria, a very good one in that it had been vigorous, with many students contributing, reacting to each others’ ideas and offering ideas, arguments, reasons and examples. In other words, the students had spent a long time thinking hard about the issues. The discussion had also, from my perspective, made clear progress with the class arguing their way towards useful answers to the above questions. However, as is usually the case, the success of the activity – it occupied much of a lesson – contained its greatest deficiency. Such discussions do not move in a linear fashion and deal with a number of related issues. Consequently I was aware that many students (particularly less able ones) were likely to be unclear about what had and had not been finally agreed upon. How could I ensure that the students retained a record of the key issues that had emerged?”

“... In this case, I capitalised on the fact that two students had made a series of very clear position statements and arguments. I wrote four of these up (using the students’ names) on a sheet and gave these to the class in a subsequent lesson and asked the students to comment on

each statement in the light of the discussion that had followed these statements. I stressed that the statements had been particularly useful to the discussion and that the evaluative comments now called for were being made with the benefit of hindsight and for the purpose of summarising (some of) what had emerged.”

#### **4.1 Four Useful Statements**

“For each of these statements, explain why Vera or Jo-Anne said it and then discuss to what extent you now agree or disagree with it and why.

1. Vera said that sugar is bad for you.
2. Jo-Anne said, “No, it is not, it gives you energy.”
3. Jo-Anne later said, “That’s why we eat food” [to get energy].
4. Vera then said that if that was true you should be able to live on water and sugar alone and she thought you could not do this.

These comments had opened up most of my big ideas for the unit:

- What are the roles of food in our body?
- Are all foods used for all of these roles?
- What is the role of sugar in our body?
- Why are some foods labelled healthy and others unhealthy?
- Are these labels accurate?

Consequently, one reason why I set the task was that responding (well) to these comments required the students to discuss considerably more content about food in our bodies than just the role of sugar. Using Vera and Jo-Anne’s comments on the task kept the ownership of the ideas and issues that we had developed with the students. There were several more strengths of this procedure.

It gave status to Vera and Jo-Anne and it helped the students link the (inevitably) more formally phrased ‘answers’ that we arrived at to specific comments and examples raised during the discussion. It also reinforced the point that discussion is real work.”

“Another positive aspect of the procedure is that it did require students to revisit their own current thinking on the issues. While there has been (from the front of the class) apparent consensus, it would have been naive to believe that this meant that all students had reached the same conceptual destination. The procedure of Return to the Discussion required me to be able to recall some specific names and comments, but during the discussion as part of my chairperson role, I had regularly referred to ‘Vera’s view’ and ‘Jo-Anne’s view’

and this made it easy to remember what they had said” (Mitchell, 2000).

By the time Mitchell taught this lesson, he had built a sophisticated understanding of issues associated with changing students beliefs about learning and their learning behaviours. His article illustrates a focus on students’ conceptions of when and how learning occurs. It also illustrates how problematising his practice had become the norm: he recognised that his success stimulating extended, fluid discussions raised new problems of summarising and clarifying what learning had occurred.

## **4.2 Tacit Knowledge becomes Explicit**

It took us a long time to learn how much of skilled practice is tacit: there are crucial features such as key teacher behaviours that teachers do not know they are doing. This means that they are absent from descriptions of the new practice – which often focus only on the details of the tasks – and makes sharing new practice (particularly via print) less successful than it could be. There were almost certainly a number of subtle things that Rod Greer did to maintain a flow of enthusiastic contributions that are missing from his account. As teachers develop more sophisticated frames for thinking about their practice, they are firstly better able to identify hitherto tacit aspects of practice and secondly better able to articulate new practice. Practice precedes understanding and we have often found that key teacher behaviours only emerged after the event as a result of reflection stimulated by being cross-examined (in a friendly way) in a PEEL meeting.

## **4.3 A Greater Sense of Professionalism**

A colleague of ours, working as a consultant in New York was recently abused by a school principal for daring to suggest something to his teachers that was not in the district “book”. “I don’t care if teachers can think for themselves in Australia, they can’t do so in New York”, he thundered. This instrumentalist view of teachers is in direct conflict with the strong growth of teachers’ sense of being truly professional that long term PEEL teachers report.

Chris Wilson (1998) reflected on his journey over four years in PEEL as part of a presentation he gave at a PEEL conference.

### *A Personal Professional Journey*

“In four years of PEELing, involving hundreds of hours of discussion of many issues, my professional journey has taken this course:

1. The initial concern was to develop good strategies. As issues arose, we talked through ways of addressing them. We all shared our good ideas.
2. As we trialled more new ideas, and found that they didn't always work – or if they did once they probably didn't next time – we looked to each other for support. It is OK to fail. In fact it's good to fail. Michael Jordan does.
3. In time common threads and themes started to appear, but only very slowly. This is very high level thinking, and does not come easily. It requires more than a conversation once a week – it can only come with continued reflection through the week. Perhaps this is the best of PEELing though.
4. Through all this discussion and reflecting and thinking, it starts to become clearer what matters. How many teachers can state explicitly what is most important in their classrooms? How many even think about it? I believe this is one critical step in our professional growth. It was for me. These are my own personal priorities. I write them down – often.
5. As these ideas crystallise, I can now make some confident statements about how things happen in general terms. We are not the same, and our classrooms certainly are not, but there are questions that can be asked and statements that can be made about what we do. Like: What is learning? How are kids different? How can I tell if I am teaching well?  
Our journeys will all be different. Mine has been exciting. I love my work” (Wilson, 1998).

#### **4.4 Development of New Frames for Thinking about Practice**

Changes in focus and in ways of problematising practice are associated with the development of new and more sophisticated frames for reflection on learning, teaching and change. The nature of the discourse in PEEL groups evolves over time. The list of concerns in Table 17-1 is one such frame; as discussed it helps teachers identify and tackle specific aspects of passive learning. PEEL teachers have also developed lists of what they call good learning behaviours and of desired changes in students beliefs about learning. The 12 principles of teaching discussed in the next section are another frame. Any of these frames can provide or clarify a new focus that problematises practice in a new way.

## 4.5 Confidence in the Authority of their Voice

Over a period of years, changes in the above dimensions give teachers more confidence in what Munby and Russell (1994) called the authority of their own experiences. It is a big step for most teachers to accept that their classroom contains practices that others can learn from. Moreover we have found that over time, teachers also change their perceptions of the kinds of advice that they have to share. One result is teachers who present as highly skilled and articulate professionals, capable of taking on major roles as leaders and change agents both within and across schools.

## 5 FEATURES OF SOPHISTICATED PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE

Over 20 years, in hundreds of different classrooms, PEEL as a project has generated an immense body of teaching knowledge ranging from practical tips to very sophisticated interpretations of practice. Examining the features of this knowledge is important to understanding what career long professional growth can mean.

As already discussed, one feature of this knowledge is an increased understanding of student and teacher change together with an appreciation of the complex, multi-faceted, interconnected nature of teaching. What PEEL has not developed is a fixed program – ‘x steps to promoting quality learning.’ There are two reasons for this: one is that the notion that there could be anything resembling a single program that could be applicable in all subjects, topics and year levels with all students is clearly nonsensical. The second is that even if relatively detailed advice could be written about (say) how to teach Food and Nutrition in Year 9, such prescription would be disempowering for teachers and run counter to all of the process aspects of how PEEL operates discussed earlier.

PEEL began as a cross-Faculty project, with teachers of five different subjects in the initial group. This structure meant that teachers could not share ideas in any subject or topic specific way. We had to identify the generic features of any particular activity and this led to the development of the construction of ‘generic teaching procedures.’ *Returning to the Discussion* describes one such procedure. The framing of teaching ideas in terms of teaching procedures and the development of new procedures has been an important aspect of the internal literature of the project.

The article below is a generic description of one of the 184 procedures on the current edition of the PEEL database (Mitchell, Mitchell, McKinnon, &

Scheele, 2004). Included in the article is some discussion of how the idea moved from Year 9 Geography to other subject areas.

*A27 Is it possible?*

“This procedure involves giving students a series of questions that all begin with ‘Is it possible (e.g., for a traveller to cross the equator while hiking round Indonesia?’ (Social Studies unit on Asia), ‘to drink a glass of water while standing on your head?’ (Science Unit on the digestive system). Try to avoid questions that involve merely recall of a fact. The best questions require students to work out an answer (e.g., by interpreting a map, graph or diagram) or extend an idea beyond what was specifically covered in class (e.g., by applying it to a new situation), or contain some element of ambiguity or uncertainty. It may be necessary to allow responses such as always/sometimes/perhaps if.../never.

In English (when studying a novel or play), it can be turned into a series of ‘is it likely?’ (or ‘is it plausible?’) questions about what characters might or might not do if some aspects of their context changed (e.g., ‘is it likely that Vaughn would have joined the cult if the Chi family had not been so against joining’ (novel *Rift* by Libby Hawthorn). In this case the students have to justify their answers with evidence from the text.

The first teacher to report this procedure, Cath Temple (‘is it possible?’), Year 9 Social Education – Asia our neighbour), used it early in a unit to get students exploring a map of Asia. However other teachers have used it more as a revision technique - one could use two columns and the students do the task closed book, then open book. In this context, questions that contained ambiguity or uncertainty become triggers for excellent follow-up discussion.

Lee Blake (‘is it possible?’) reports how teachers from four different subjects in her PEEL group used this procedure. In the mathematics examples, Heather Balkin created some questions that are problem solving challenges in statistics, for example, given a set of 20 basketball scores, is it possible for the player to attain an average of 6 per game if he plays only 2 more games? With this sort of task the question has shifted to ‘is it possible and, if so, how?’

Once students have experienced this procedure they can set (and swap) ‘is it possible?’ questions of their own. The setting of such questions is an excellent focus for small group brainstorming” (Mitchell, 2002).



Teaching procedures provide teachers with concrete tools for improving learning. Importantly, the descriptions of these procedures are not presented as context-specific lesson plans that can be copied and used intact. Rather they require teachers to develop their own specific applications; this is a very empowering process.

Another aspect of sophisticated teacher knowledge is an articulation of what are often tacit teacher behaviours, both of these issues have been discussed and illustrated earlier. Understanding how we needed to extend our behaviours has been crucial to changing student behaviours, this sort of discussion is often missing from curriculum packages.

Teaching procedures could be described as tactical in that most take less than one lesson to implement. Over time, PEEL teachers weave more of these into their classroom practice in ways that are not random selections of another new trick, but are guided by considerations of promoting different aspects of learning. Nevertheless, PEEL involves more than just the application of a range of teaching procedures. While there is no PEEL program, there are recurring themes in what the teachers do. After 13 years of PEEL we were able to codify (Mitchell & Mitchell, 1997) 12 strategic features (see Table 17-2) of what the teachers report as successful in promoting quality learning. These statements are the sorts of generalisations that Wilson referred to that emerge as teachers make sense of a pile of superficially disparate experiences.

Each of these principles can be enacted in many ways, but we describe them as strategic in that all of them can be applied regularly in all subjects at all year levels.

The constructs of generic teaching procedures and the 12 principles of teaching for quality learning have helped us clarify and articulate new practice. The generic description *A27 Is it Possible* contains at least five statements about how to use this procedure that the teachers identified as important and that had been tacit until a meeting that shared and analysed experiences.

1. Share intellectual control with students.
2. Create occasions when students can work out part (or all) of the content or instructions.
3. Provide opportunities for choice and independent decision-making.
4. Provide a diverse range of ways of experiencing success.
5. Promote talk that is exploratory, tentative and hypothetical.
6. Encourage students to learn from other students' questions and comments.
7. Build a classroom environment that supports risk-taking.
8. Use a wide variety of intellectually challenging teaching procedures.
9. Use teaching procedures that are designed to promote specific aspects of quality learning.
10. Develop students' awareness of the big picture: how the various activities fit together and link to the big ideas.
11. Regularly raise students' awareness of the nature of different aspects of quality learning.
12. Promote assessment as part of the learning process.

*Table 17-2. Principles of teaching for quality learning.*

## **6 ISSUES OF PRESENTING AND REPRESENTING SOPHISTICATED PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE**

At the present time in the USA, there are powerful pressures on education researchers to focus on developing detailed 'programs' and validating the effectiveness of these by large standardised trials involving statistical data from treatment and control groups. Teaching is too complex, multifaceted and interconnected for this approach to be effective. There is a substantial body of research (e.g., Fullan & Pomfret, 1977) that shows that teachers do not 'follow the script' when using prescriptive programs; they put their own stamp on the lessons and may well change it in ways that have little connection to the developer's intentions. Our experiences suggest that we should accept this reality and work to professionalise teachers so that, if they accept a particular approach, their applications and variations will enrich, not degrade what is being done. One important implication of this is

that advice to teachers should not be designed around a goal of reader replication, but rather that the reader will be stimulated to make manageable excursions outside their 'comfort zone' of tested practice in order to experience what cannot be told and must be lived.

The sharing of wisdom, via face to face meetings and sessions as well as the internal literature of the project has been crucial to PEEL sustaining growth over such a long period of time. However, deciding how to represent and then re-present this knowledge to other teachers has proved an increasingly complex challenge as PEEL has developed. What we have attempted is to share wisdom about how to improve learning in ways that, as far as possible, replicate the way ideas bounce around in PEEL groups, becoming richer in the process. This means sharing ideas in ways that carry credibility with teachers, that require users to (at least on most occasions) design original applications to their own practice and that encourage extension and development. Achieving this means keeping the teacher's voice and providing a mix of a rich range of possible classroom tactics that are cohered by some general strategic principles.

For all of the preceding reasons, as mentioned earlier, we have constructed a database of the teacher-authored articles in PEEL SEEDS (as well as several other publications) and structured this around the new ways of thinking about practice that have emerged from PEEL groups. The 12 Principles in Table 17-2 are one way of interrogating this database, the 16 teacher concerns in Table 17-1 are a second and the 184 teaching procedures (clustered into eight groups) are a third.

The structure of the database reflects the emphasis of PEEL teachers on problems of learning. Among other searches, combining the Classroom Practice of Getting started/Introducing new ideas with any or all of Teacher Concerns 1 (students rarely contribute ideas) or 12 (students don't line school work with outside life) or Principles of Teaching 1 (students rarely contribute ideas), 2 (students work out part of the content) will lead to *Geography: Coastlines* (as well as many other articles).

By the time we began to develop the database (about 10 years after PEEL began) the ways of thinking represented by the searches just described were deeply engrained in the developers. It took us a while to realise the extent of our own journey and how differently we now organised our teacher knowledge. When initially presented with the database, teachers new to PEEL did not construct searches based on general (i.e., subject and topic independent) problems of learning, such as those described above, rather they searched by their Subject and Year Level ('I teach Mathematics at Years 7/8: what have you got?'). We realised that teachers have their wisdom organised against topics that they teach (key ideas, typical problems, effective activities, etc.) and it is a journey to develop a parallel (not replacement) structure around content independent issues of learning.

While we have developed ways of easing this particular problem, it emphasises that long-term professional growth is just that – long term and there are limits to the extent to which it can be accelerated. One limit is the need to live some experiences and it is important to recognise that in many areas, one can do no more than provide teachers with a range entry points for exploration of new ideas.

## **7 SOME CONDITIONS FOR SUSTAINING LONG TERM PROFESSION GROWTH**

What we have learnt about sustaining long term professional growth challenges a number of common system and school level practices. One is that the complex cycles of risk taking, reframing, refocusing and searching for new problems described earlier cannot be imposed on teachers; they require too much time, effort and commitment. While they can be stimulated and supported by principals and systems, each teacher must own and control what s/he does. The goals and foci must be ones that matter to the teacher. We note that a focus on how students learn has proved to be one that addresses important concerns of many teachers and has never looked like getting talked out – has it sustained reflection and provided new challenges for 20 years.

Change is risky and needs support, part of this support comes from collaboration with colleagues. This means that time spaces must be created to allow teachers to meet regularly: the frequency of meetings has proved to be crucial to the rate of progress. PEEL teachers have never been given regular release time, but finding a protected space in the busy school week commonly requires a school prioritizing this meeting as worthwhile.

If teachers are to try something new in their classroom, they need to feel comfortable that they will not be penalized if its initial trial is imperfect and they lose a lesson or two. They also need a reasonable degree of freedom to capitalize on unexpected events such as good questions. Both of these require some curriculum flexibility. Very rigid curriculum and common assessment structures are a death knell to professional growth.

System initiatives typically have short time frames. The changes in classroom practice in long term PEEL teachers have been enormous, but they occurred over a time scale of several years, not the several months so often expected by systems.

Teaching is commonly a professionally lonely occupation, teachers operate behind closed doors and there are not good structures for recognizing, affirming and sharing good practice. This is important for the development in confidence mentioned before. This is one area where collaboration with university friends can be very helpful. They can have a

crucial role in building the perception that the teachers have something important to say.

The internal literature of PEEL has provided another vehicle for recognition. Moreover, as teachers read PEEL SEEDS articles they gain the confidence to write one themselves. In addition to this role, the accretion of a database of apparently context specific accounts has been important in allowing the identification of recurring themes and generalisable knowledge claims. These represent new frames and foci. Once again this is an area where teacher-academic collaboration can be very helpful – provided the knowledge generation is mutual, not top-down. A third role of the large internal literature is that it provides teachers with multiple entry points for exploration of new practices. Rod Greer had to live the lesson he described to build the conception of what students were capable of if he took the risk of letting go and waiting. His account encouraged others to try similar experiments.

At present we doubt if there ever could or should be a single teacher literature equivalent to the (idealised) academic literature. An internal literature is more accessible and less threatening; it also means that the articles share common concerns and so provide a higher hit rate of relevance for the readers than a more general literature.

To what extent can all the above be generalized beyond PEEL? We cannot know. It is relevant and encouraging that PEEL has operated with a very low investment of money (there is no danger of death from funding loss) and in hundreds of classrooms in many contexts. However, PEEL does have a number of idiosyncratic features. Generalizability must lie in the hands of the reader.

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## Chapter 18

### **RESILIENCY, RESISTANCE AND PERSISTENCE TO BE AN URBAN TEACHER**

*Creating standards that respond to the context of knowledge  
construction and learning to teach about teaching*

Francine P. Peterman

#### **1 INTRODUCTION**

“The other day, a man was shot in the face by another gang member outside my classroom window. Several students rose from their chairs, went to the windows, and pulled down the shades. “Teach Mr. K,” Leshay instructed me. “Well, we should acknowledge what has happened here,” I responded. Without a pause she declared, “No. That’s out there; we’re in here. Teach us, Mr. K.” So, I taught them about Coloumb’s Law. MUST didn’t prepare me for the violence, but it did provide me the ability to recognize the differences between my life and the lives of my students.”

*Brian*

Brian’s story captures the premise of (and a metaphor for) this chapter – Context matters! Where, how, and what one teaches is simply and clearly related to the defining characteristics of your community, school, and classroom. While teachers may choose at critical times to focus solely on what goes on inside the classroom and teach content, we cannot choose to ignore what goes on outside our classroom windows if we are to positively impact learning within them and change the cycle of inequity that exists within our communities. In America’s urban communities, context means poverty, diversity, bureaucracy, cultural incongruence, often violence and hopelessness. Yet, in the United States, today – generic standards for teacher competencies set at the national and state level focus mostly on what goes on inside the classroom – how the teacher teaches – and, these standards are set

to apply across settings with little attention to the differentiating characteristics of large, diverse, economically depressed urban communities.

In this American milieu of standards-based teaching, learning, and teacher preparation, many organizations have set forth standards and outcomes to guide the evaluation of teacher candidates, novices, and seasoned teachers. A majority of the United States have adopted, adapted, or replicated PRAXIS, a creation of the Educational Testing Service (2004), or Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) standards as measures of teacher performance required for initial and/or professional teaching licenses. Consequently, these standards are mirrored in those set to guide and assess teacher preparation programs and their graduates' preparedness for teaching and licensing. Even when states and institutions "invent" their own standards – they generally reflect similar expectations for teacher performance during entry to a career in teaching. Each set of standards takes a particular political or theoretical stance and was established to address a variety of classroom settings across a varied educational landscape. Thus, context was implicitly unimportant as a determinant of what a teacher must know, be able to do, and express as values, attitudes, beliefs or dispositions. In general, American standards for teaching performance are based upon the assumption that a teacher in any setting will succeed in the classroom – that is, his/her children will achieve – if he/she can demonstrate proficiency in the established standards.

After reading this chapter it will be evident that context matters. Specifically, urban teachers require context-based knowledge, skills, and dispositions that go beyond those delineated in the current sets of standards that guide teacher preparation and licensure, particularly the INTASC standards. Therefore, this chapter will (a) present the results of a study of new teachers' reflections upon urban teaching and how a specialized program prepared them for teaching in urban schools and (b) suggest a set of standards that are contextually responsive to urban teaching.

## **2 TOWARDS CONTEXTUALLY BOUND STANDARDS**

Intensely bureaucratic and contradictory, consistently under-resourced and riddled by the impact of poverty and violence, urban schools struggle to address the needs of populations that are especially diverse in their cultures, races, ethnicities, and languages (Darling-Hammond, 1997, 2000; Peterman, In Press; Weiner, 1999). City dwellers often experience their schools and their governments as unresponsive, alien bureaucracies that reinforce inequities and leave them feeling hopeless and abandoned (Yeo, 1997).



Everywhere in America schools face unfunded local, state, and national mandates that require tedious reporting of test scores and reinforcing classroom practices that focus on getting the right answer rather than developing deep understandings. Preparing teachers to teach in an urban setting, where there are significant achievement gaps and horrific teacher retention issues, requires attention to prevailing social and economic conditions that impact schoolchildren, their families, and – ultimately – their schooling. Yet, the impact of bureaucracy, poverty, diversity, violence, and unstable supports and infrastructures on teaching and learning in urban schools is virtually ignored in the American standards movement.

Many individual programs throughout the United States, some funded by federal grants that promote the recruitment, preparation, and retention of high quality teachers for highly diverse, low-income, and low-performing schools (e.g., urban schools – though not so stated in the requests for proposals distributed by the government), have begun to focus on cultural, economic, and linguistic diversity and incongruence as tantamount to preparing urban teachers (Ladson-Billings, 1994,1995; Peterman, In Press). But, such programs are the exception rather than the norm in urban American schools. Further, these concerns are covered to varying extents – running the gamut from course topics through dialogically developed mission statements such as those of Center X at the University of California in Los Angeles, Northeastern University, and the University of Colorado at Denver. Few programs, however, have adopted standards that distinguish their graduates as prepared to respond to the complexities and demands of the urban setting.

When designing a program to prepare urban teachers at Cleveland State University, however, a core of faculty developed several standards that respond to the context and its impact on teaching and learning: (a) social justice; (b) culturally relevant pedagogy; (c) commitment to urban school and community renewal; and (d) resiliency, resistance, and persistence. These standards emerged not only from our scholarly review of relevant literature but also from our lived experiences as urban teachers and urban teacher educators. As we reflected upon our practice and listened to our graduates, we recognized other urban-bound standards must be established and determined to examine the first years of teaching in urban schools as a starting point of inquiry.

### **3 URBAN TEACHERS' EXPERIENCE AND CONTEXTUALLY BOUND STANDARDS**

The Masters of Urban Secondary Teaching (MUST) program is our attempt to prepare urban teachers who are both responsive to the contexts in which they teach and reflective about their practice. MUST is an intense, 14-month, masters level teacher preparation program in which the University partners with 6 urban schools to prepare secondary (grades 7-12) teachers in mathematics, science, social studies, and English. Four full-time faculty members support the program, building the school partnerships, teaching courses throughout the program, and supervising teacher candidate's field experiences in the partnering schools. Most of the students are changing careers – returning to a calling, a love of teaching after 2 to 15 years in another profession. Some are recent graduates who see earning a master's degree and a teaching license in one year as an option to our 4-year teacher education programs, which generally take 5 years to complete. At best, only about half of the MUST teacher candidates actually come to the program to be urban teachers. Candidates are self-selected – although they participate in an extensive selection process, they are rarely rejected. Because state licensure has abundant course requirements, candidates for the program have already completed 24 to 30 hours of coursework in their content area before entering the MUST program.

The MUST curriculum – when enacted by core faculty, for the most part – focuses on urban contexts. That is, in core courses such as educational research, curriculum design, social foundations, educational psychology, and literacy we use readings that are situated in urban settings, promote and model teaching practices that are culturally responsive, create assignments that focus the learner on the urban context, and lead discussions about culturally congruent and liberatory practices. An integral part of the program is the development of a teaching portfolio focused on standards specifically designed for the MUST program and in conjunction with the college standards (which mirror those of INTASC). From the start through the conclusion of the program, teacher candidates develop and reflect upon artifacts that represent their competency as related to each of the college and MUST standards (see Table 18-1). The exit requirement for the program is a teacher research study planned in the summer, designed in the fall, implemented in the spring – while student teaching, and analyzed and composed in the second summer session. The teacher research study must focus on the implementation of a teaching strategy that, based upon research, shows promise for improving student learning in an urban setting. While the teacher research study focuses teacher candidates on synthesizing and applying what they have learned about urban teaching, the portfolio focuses

teacher candidates on the process of learning to teach – becoming an urban teacher.

This study was our first attempt to find out how the MUST experience translated into practice in an urban classroom. In particular, we wanted to know if the standards we had established for the program adequately addressed the complexities and demands of the urban settings in which our graduates worked, what new urban teachers learned on their feet that was distinctively related to teaching in an urban setting, and what were the implications of new urban teachers’ experiences for revising our standards.

<b>MUST Program Outcomes</b>
<i>Social Justice</i>
The MUST teacher candidate is a reflective, responsive teacher-leader who is prepared to effectively address the effects of race, class, and gender on student achievement.
<i>Urban Teaching</i>
The MUST teacher candidate promotes students’ learning through culturally responsive pedagogy and utilizes a variety of strategies to address the complex demands of urban schools.
<i>Urban Commitment</i>
The MUST teacher candidate demonstrates a strong commitment to urban schooling and community renewal.
<i>Resiliency</i>
The MUST teacher candidate responds positively to challenges and changes, demonstrating resiliency and an ethic of care in complex, demanding circumstances.
<b>College of Education Outcomes</b>
<i>Personal Philosophy</i>
The CSU teacher education student articulates a personal philosophy of teaching and learning that is grounded in theory and practice.
<i>Social Foundations</i>
The CSU teacher education student possesses knowledge and understanding of the social, political, and economic factors that influence education and shape the worlds in which we live.
<i>Knowledge of Subject Matter and Inquiry</i>
The CSU teacher education student understands content, disciplinary concepts, and tools of inquiry related to the development of an educated person.
<i>Knowledge of Development and Learning</i>
The CSU teacher education student understands how individuals learn and develop and that students enter the learning setting with prior experiences that give meaning to the construction of new knowledge.
<i>Diversity</i>
The CSU teacher education student understands how individuals differ in their backgrounds and approaches to learning and incorporates and accounts for such diversity in teaching and learning.
<i>Learning Environment</i>
The CSU teacher education student uses an understanding of individual and group motivation to promote positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation. .
<i>to be continued</i>

<i>Communication</i>
The CSU teacher education student uses knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques to foster inquiry, collaboration, and engagement in learning environments.
<i>Instructional Strategies</i>
The CSU teacher education student plans and implements a variety of developmentally appropriate instructional strategies to develop performance skills, critical thinking, and problem solving, as well as to foster social, emotional, creative, and physical development.
<i>Assessment</i>
The CSU teacher education student understands, selects, and uses a range of assessment strategies to foster physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development of learners and gives accounts of students' learning to the outside world.
<i>Technology</i>
The CSU teacher education student understands and uses up-to-date technology to enhance the learning environment across the full range of learner needs.
<i>Professional development</i>
The CSU teacher education student is a reflective practitioner who evaluates his/her interactions with others (e.g., learners, parents/guardians, colleagues and professionals in the community) and seeks opportunities to grow professionally.
<i>Collaboration and Professionalism</i>
The CSU teacher education student fosters relationships with colleagues, parents/guardians, community agencies, and colleges/universities to support students' growth and well-being.

Table 18-1. Outcomes.

### 3.1 Procedures

To conduct the study, I selected graduates who (a) had demonstrated skill and commitment to urban teaching while enrolled in the MUST program, (b) taught in an urban school for one to three years, and (c) were recognized by faculty, colleagues, and peers as an exemplary urban teacher. Because the program is only five years old and our number of graduates was limited to between nineteen and twenty-five during the first three years and not all graduates end up teaching in urban schools (for a variety of reasons), the sample was limited to eleven graduates, ranging in age from twenty-five to fifty-one, ten Caucasian and one African American. Four were in their third year of teaching in an urban school; three in their second year; and four in their first year. They taught social studies, English, and science. All taught in an urban school – as defined by high levels of poverty (more than half students receiving free lunch), high levels of transience, and high numbers of African American, Hispanic, and/or English language learners.

These new teachers were asked to reflect upon their first year(s) of teaching and discuss what they were well prepared for, what they were ill or not prepared for, and what they learned on their feet. In particular, they rated their preparation for each MUST standard used in the program ('0' meaning

not prepared to '4' very well prepared) and discussed examples of that standard in their professional practice. As well, these urban teachers talked about their experience, what they learned, and the implications for additional or revised standards for urban teaching. If the teacher did not mention anything related to the characteristics of urban settings, interviewers would ask, "What about...? Have you had experiences with this? What type of standard might we set to address that?"

The eleven transcribed, approximately one hour-long interviews served as data for this study. Through a content analysis of the data using a constant comparative method, a set of categories emerged – that is, the coders recognized consistent reference to different types of standards. The emergent categories mirrored those appearing throughout the literature on urban teaching: special needs; linguistic differences; poverty; lack of resources; social justice; resiliency, resistance and persistence; bureaucracy; activism; and violence. As well, additional categories emerged: classroom management, parents, caring, relationships, boundaries, community, and community of learners.

### **3.2 Findings**

In their first through third year of teaching, these 11 new urban teachers reported that overall they felt very prepared to teach in an urban setting. Their ratings on how well they were prepared in terms of each standard ranged from 0 to 4. The overall mean rating was 3.3, meaning the new teachers felt well prepared for their classroom experience. They felt best prepared in terms of their teaching philosophy, technology use, urban teaching, and instructional strategies. They felt least prepared in terms of their knowledge of development and learning, communication, collaboration and professionalism, development of a positive learning environment, commitment to urban school and community renewal, and understanding of the social foundations of education. Given the intensity and duration of portfolio development, teacher candidates found themselves expressing and defending their teaching philosophies throughout the program. But most surprising was how little they felt they knew about the social, political, and economic factors that influence education – the focus not only of a core course in the program but the theoretical framework for studies discussed in many classes. Several teachers explained they felt ill-prepared for the contexts in terms of how they work, upon what principles they were built, and how educational policies emerged over time, as an explanation for poorly rating their understanding of the social foundations of education. In addition, several teachers felt their knowledge of learning theories and development (taught before they worked with students) were inadequate foundations for their decision making and problem solving in the classroom.

They expressed a need to know more about how children learn, how they learn differently, and how to organize and differentiate instruction to accommodate these differences. Not surprisingly, given local research on why urban teachers leave urban schools and national research on new teachers' needs, most felt inadequately prepared for classroom management – creating a learning environment that is motivating and engaging while free from disruptions and misbehaviors.

In addition, these urban teachers discussed (a) the cultural incongruence among themselves and their colleagues, their students, and their parents; (b) their limited knowledge of the community, its resources, and how to understand and access them; (c) their students' special needs; (d) the challenge of addressing linguistic differences; (e) violence – like Brian's student saying "out there;" and (f) their resiliency, resistance, and persistence in responding to their highly bureaucratized, poorly resourced schools and districts. In addition, these urban teachers discussed: (a) the benefits of strong content knowledge; (b) an ethic of care – setting boundaries and establishing relationships with students, their parents, and colleagues; and (c) the value of inquiry and reflection – especially within the community. Several teachers noted they had learned a great deal through the MUST faculty members' modeling teaching and assessment strategies and culturally relevant pedagogy. Almost every teacher claimed that their own content knowledge was essential to their success in the classroom – a finding echoed throughout the research on student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 1997, 2000; Schmidt et al., 2001).

### 3.3 Cultural Incongruence

Time and again, the new teachers talked about incongruities – among their own lived experiences and those of their students and their families and those of their colleagues. In particular, they expressed a sense of loss of the optimism and support they experienced in their MUST cohort. One new teacher was disappointed that other teachers did not share her idealism and exhorted:

“... how much teachers who are stuck in a rut fight against anybody wanting to do anything different and how entrenched a lot of people are in their way of thinking, and if you come in and you have new ideas, you're constantly hearing, “These kids can't do that” or “You'll never get kids to do that.”

Another reiterated the dissonance between her teacher preparation and school communities:

“I just remembered the optimism – we were so excited and optimistic about everything. There was a change when I got into my school. When I got into my school, people had been there six, seven or more years, and they were not ... no longer optimistic.”

The students’ worlds were quite different from the new teachers’ as well. Several had to learn to understand the meanings of students’ interactions from their perspective. One new teacher said:

Kids and I get into lots of arguments about pride and they tell me, “Ms. O, you don’t understand. It’s about pride, and you don’t understand.” And I’ll say, “Couldn’t you just say, ‘don’t talk to me that way?’” And they say, “That’s white middle class, I’m not going to say that.”

Another said:

“So, an example of something that they do in their culture that I don’t do is they make fun of themselves – each other – to the point where they’re almost crying. Yet it’s all just a joke. And everyone knows that sometimes – except me. It’s not that they mean to be mean to each other. It’s all in play; it’s like a game. And it’s a very ... you have to be very intelligent to play that kind of game ... At first, I didn’t understand that, and I got very angry with everybody, and they would look at me, because everyone else knew that it was almost a game.”

The interns consistently talked about parents – how busy they were, how little time they had to support their students’ learning at home, how intimidating they could be to new teachers. One new teacher said:

“Another thing is parents. Parents – you’ll have parents who come into meetings drunk and mad and you’ll have to be ready to deal with that. And I am, I am ready to deal with it because of this kind of resiliency that I was taught. But at the same time, I don’t care how strong you are, it’s enough to take you off guard.”

The new teachers expressed a powerlessness about parents, claiming they had very few skills for talking with and partnering with or organizing parents to address the inequities they found.

### 3.4 Community

The programmatic commitment to partnering with local schools assumes that “urban” schools are alike – yet, as the interns noted, urban schools are different not only in terms of the race, languages, and socioeconomics of their communities but in terms of the community that develops within a setting (the school and the classroom).

One teacher reminded us that her new school was quite different from where she did her internship – where racial, linguistic and socioeconomic differences varied from the racial majority of African Americans she found in her new setting:

“I connected what we were talking about in the classroom to the students that I knew from H High. I spent a lot of time researching in that community because of the students that I met here. I had no idea about their culture and had I spent that kind of time focusing on that aspect of diversity and then went to a school where it was all African American. I don’t know if I hadn’t done that I would have had as easy of a transition between student teaching and teaching.”

Even having lived her life in the community she worked in, another new teacher came to understand her neighborhood differently in the classroom. She continued:

“I saw students who came in unbathed because they lived in a house with no water. I saw people who had on shoes that were too small or jackets all year ... kids that didn’t have money to wash their clothes, and things like that. It just made me sad. I saw students in foster homes, transferred in and out ... people who just didn’t have just normal stuff that you don’t even think about. I would never think about a child that lives in a house without electricity. I would never think of that as an issue of why homework can’t be done because it’s night time and they can’t see in the house. And that’s something that I really had to think about, how do you deal with these situations.”

One new teacher planned what he called “A Day in the Life...,” taking two work days to shadow 2 students. He said:

“I’m shadowing a student from the time they get up at home. I’m staying at their house, going to school with them, going to all of the classes with him, doing the homework they did that night, staying at



their place, getting up and going to another day of school. Because in so many of our cases ... I say, "Can you meet me after school." "No, I've got to work." Or, "No, I've got to baby-sit my niece, my sister, and my cousin."... I need to know just to be ... just to understand where they're coming from. I need to know."

Other new teachers echoed a concern about not only understanding the community but knowing what resources – people and agencies – were available to access. Further, they wanted to know how to write grants to supplement the books and materials they used with their students.

### **3.5 Special Needs**

Almost every new teacher mentioned working with special needs students; two detailed the bureaucratic mess involved in identifying these children and getting them the services they need; further, even if they weren't specifically served, many students needed differentiated instruction. One new teacher said:

"... there's definitely kids who aren't even identified as special needs but are. We deal a lot with the whole process of getting the kids, designating the kids, getting the kid tested, documenting behaviors, like the whole process you have to go through, even just to get a kid classified for the next year. But, you still have to have this student in your room, and they are not even going to be classified as special ed for another year or year and a half because there are so many problems with getting (them through the process). There are so many kids ... I would say that it is more than it being that you have kids with special needs, but you have kids with special needs and not enough resources to help them."

This story characterized the remarks of 10 of the new teachers. In a similar manner, the new teachers felt ill prepared and poorly resourced in addressing the multilinguistic nature of their classrooms.

### **3.6 Linguistic Difference**

Every new teacher found that linguistic differences posed pedagogical problems – not simply what to teach, but how, and with what types of materials. Linguistic differences in their settings was not simply across languages but within, as new teachers in primarily African American communities were compelled to learn the jargon and lingo of their students

while maintaining high expectations for their students' mastery of standard English.

One new teacher expressed concerns about the linguistic differences represented in her classroom – not simply English language competency but the varying languages students could speak and the lack of materials and strategies for helping students learn. She said:

“Where do you have material to fit everybody? Where am I going to find it? I’ve found ways, but that one of the things that maybe different resources and where to find material for class to make it more culturally responsive.”

Another learned that language diversity meant being humble and respectful when communicating with parents:

“The thing that I wasn’t prepared for was understanding broken English spoken through a veil of primary languages. And that’s just...but now I can. I wasn’t ready for it. It took me a while, and I had to say “Excuse me” or “Pardon me” a whole lot of times. Maybe letting the students know that sometimes you’re going to be humbled...or you might even insult somebody by having them have to say the same thing four times before you’re able to understand it.”

Other new teachers discussed the way their African American students spoke to each other and expressed concerns about students' crossing linguistic boundaries, knowing when and where that was acceptable, and understanding the economic “power” of language. One new teacher discussed her initial experience with student’s dialect:

“I guess I did feel a little resistant to it. Yes, I did. Because it was such a negative vibe, but at the same time, I did feel myself ... my speech pattern changes a little bit when I’m teaching with my kids. The things that I say, the things that I do – I’m using a lot of slang that I wouldn’t normally use, but it’s not inappropriate. It’s almost just a way of not teaching down to them, but my accepting...because I’m becoming a part of the environment, too, learning ways that are more appropriate to getting their attention. I would say, “everybody is strugglin’ with this”- things I would not normally say. But they would tease me a little bit, but at the same time, they would understand what I’m saying.”

Then, she echoed the words of another new teacher who said:

“I tell them straight, that don’t lose your language in the way you talk. But, the way the country is now, you’ve got to know this one, too. To get anywhere ... I really want them to write – and clearly, and be able to read ... but I think equally important is if they can read and write well; and if they’re mother-f\*\*king their boss, they’re not going to make it.”

Thus, teaching language for many of these new teachers became a political act of teaching the power of language in the community, in the workplace.

### **3.7 Violence**

These new teachers discussed violence in urban settings in an interesting manner – like Brian’s tale at the start of this chapter, each new teacher noted the difference between “out there” and “inside the classroom.” Taking full responsibility for creating a classroom where respect and non-violence were norms and learning to create such a setting was not easy for each of the new teachers. One said:

“It’s almost like you have to accept that some things aren’t going to be perfect; otherwise, you’re going to have a nervous breakdown. You have to accept that Tyrone, whose brother just got shot in the leg as a result of a gang drive-by shooting, no, he’s not going to do his grammar work today. He’s going to have his head down. That’s okay. If it’s not okay, I’m going to have a nervous breakdown.”

Time and again, these teachers discussed their role in creating a peaceful setting. One new teacher said:

“At X High, there have been many incidences of violence. There have been lots of fights. I think that as educators, we just need to think about how to deescalate conflicts in the classroom, because a lot of things start in the classroom and then move outside of the classroom where it would turn into a fight. We just have to rethink conflict and what role we play in that conflict. I know that in my classroom, we talk about other ways – about ways to speak to one another, because most often the violence starts with words. We talk about respect, respecting one another, protecting each other’s feelings, trying to put yourself in someone else’s shoes. I didn’t have any fights in my classroom, and none of my students fought each other. But, I don’t know. I know the lunch room is a big place for where the violence starts, but I think that if we just get people to start seeing the bigger

picture, that there are other ways to solve disagreements than fighting. I even did mediation in my classroom. There was one girl, who used to be best friends with another, fighting. I told them, “You guys are welcome come in, and I’ll do the mediation for you, but you just have to agree that you’re going to try to make this work.” They set the tone. Other kids tried to get them to fight, tried to; but, they said “No, we talked about it already, and it’s squashed. It’s over.” And, I think that set a big example for other kids.”

In almost every case, the new teachers expressed their role in creating spaces where students would “get along.” Another said:

“I know in my first year, my biggest fear was that a fight was going to break out. But then I found, then again, that if you set up a situation in your room, you don’t have to be afraid of that every second. Even a volatile kid, you can be pretty sure that nothing’s going to happen in your room.”

Julie recalled learning that what a student does is not necessarily a reaction to you or what goes on in your classroom. She said:

“Yes, what I think one of the ideas that I really remember learning and I think about this a lot during the day is what the students are dealing with when they come to you. And not just at home, but the way that they left another class and how you have to compensate stuff for that. And how a student can go from one room to another. We’d always talk about the fact that teachers would say, “In this class one teacher doesn’t have any problems with him and he goes to another class.” So, just really trying to not forget all the things a kid has to take in during the day and making sure that when you – when they come to you - that you prepare them for how they are going to be in your room, too. And I remember talking about that idea a lot. And I still think of that idea a lot when I have a kid that comes in that’s just off the wall. That you sometimes say, “Did something happen in the class before?” Or some days they’ll all come in, and you’re like, “What happened?” And you have to say, “Calm down.” I have to say that about 100 times a day ... so you really have to get them centered a lot of the times for what you’re going to do.”

Creating that calm atmosphere, another new teacher remarked, must also be related to understanding and accepting each person’s identity. She was reminded that it involves “certainly trying to create a classroom that’s non-judgmental, non-threatening, safe for our kids to feel like they can be heard,

comes from just appreciating the uniqueness of everyone.” These instances suggest that teaching nonviolence as a response to anger, hurt, and violence as well as setting boundaries are important to teaching in urban schools. Such concerns led to new urban teachers learning to practice an ethic of care.

### **3.8 Identity and Relationships**

The new teachers discussed identity, relationships, coming to know the other (their students, parents, colleagues) as well as coming to know themselves. That is, they referenced Noddings’ (1992) notion of an ethic of care. Many times, this ethic of care played out in resolving conflicts and maintaining the peaceful classroom atmosphere they desired. One new teacher said:

“I learned that you have to pick your battles. You have to choose your battles. Yes, So-and-So is standing up in the back of the room, walking in the back of the room, mumbling to himself, but I’m going to ignore him right now because everyone else is working. And I know he – that’s good for him, that’s something that he needs to be doing right now. He’ll sit down in a few seconds, and I can let him do that for a few seconds. If I yell at him, then things will escalate into a place that I don’t want there to be.”

In other words, the new teachers learned to set boundaries, explore boundaries, and come to know themselves as well as their students in the process. One new teacher thought, “I went in there thinking, ‘I’m going to have a hard time, because I’m not a mean person.’ And, it took me a year to learn you don’t have to be mean. You have to be consistent and very firm. And, I wasn’t the first year. And I thought, ‘Now I have to be mean,’ but you don’t.” Another echoed:

“One thing I had to learn on the job, I’m still learning is, when I get angry, it’s over. And I think, “I’m human; I’m going to get angry” – but to share that anger less. I pretended to be angry more, and when you pretend to be angry, you’re actually in control. This year, I pretended to be angry more. Last year I lost it many times, and that was horrible ... I did a lot of that last year, and I ended up in tears and fighting; and this year, with discipline, I was better about not calling attention to them in the middle of the class. I was better about taking them into the hall. I was better about stepping out of the room when I thought I was going to lose it and coming back. Not always. There were days that I lost it, but – and I also pretended to be angry more,

and those were my best days. And they'd say, "What are you all angry about?" and I'd say, "I'm not. I'm just expecting you to do this and that's it." And the kind of march I had was to be firm but kind."

Insights like this included coming to understand how students viewed the world. One new teacher said: "Sometimes when my students get loud, before I thought they were getting angry with me, but actually now I know that being loud is enthusiastic and wonderful and it shows that they're totally into what we're having a conversation about."

An ethic of care extended for some of these new teachers into rearranging their lives to accommodate those of their students. In coming to know one of her students, Carey found out why a young woman in her class was consistently late and found a solution. She explained that after learning why one student was having a difficult time getting to school, she determined "This is silly. She's on my way. I'll just pick her up. And it's not a problem; it just seems like a natural thing to do. And I can't imagine not doing it."

In coming to know their students, the new teachers found interests and talents to draw into their curriculum. Brian said:

"The big thing is music in this community. I always use music. In fact, a lot of times I will write a song to a beat of a popular song that's on the radio that my kids listen to and concerning what we're going to do in the class that day, and I'll sing it to them at the beginning of class. They crack up at me and make fun of me; but also they understand, and it's kind of neat. Just the other day, I actually had students write a rap about the behavior of bees. Rapping and music is totally what these kids are doing 90% of the time."

And, coming to know oneself and the other was equally important for the students in the new teachers' classrooms.

"At E High I have all African American students, except one. I had one white student this whole year. So, what had started happening at class, we had to go over just being sensitive to other people's needs, other people's background. Even though everyone in the class is African American, there's one white person. We still need to keep in mind that we are human beings that we all have feelings, and that's something that came up over and over again during the year. But what happened at the end, that class called themselves "The Family." And at the end, they all hugged one another, they all cried because we took the time to just talk about the differences, talk about the stereotypes, talk about why when he makes a comment, how people take it

differently than when someone else does it. To me, that just stands out in my mind because I wished that everybody could have that experience.”

One of the teachers simply said: “The closer we’re connected to that the better we can serve them.”

### **3.9 Inquiry and Reflection**

The new teachers valued the reflective practices they developed. Although several lamented that they needed to begin journaling again, almost every new teacher talked about reflection and inquiry. One said:

“I learned to reflect on my practice, and I learned the type of questions to ask to grow as a professional. That continues everyday, I keep a teacher journal just to reflect on what things went well, what things didn’t, and how can I change this lesson, and I think those are questions that never go away.”

Another found that this type of inquiry, however, was not as easy for some of his colleagues. He noted:

“I watched a lot of other teachers that were in the faculty meeting today squirm in their chairs as they were forced to reflect on what they did poorly throughout the year and what they did good throughout the year. And, when they were reflecting on what they did good, it was easy. And, I imagine that it was easy for me too. But then, when it came time to reflect on what they did poorly, everybody kind of squirmed and nobody wanted to have the conversation about it.”

Another new teacher talked about how she learned to reflect:

“A huge part of this, again, is the introspection. I don’t remember a day that I was on CSU campus that I wasn’t forced to stop and think: What happened and what could that mean? And, how could that be different? But, it strains me to do it now. That makes me a better teacher that I’m able to stop and look and say, “Was it successful or wasn’t it? And, how can it be different?””

Another talked animatedly about how reflection improved her performance and that of her students:

“And, the one thing that I really love about teaching is that you always have the opportunity the next year to do it differently. To think about the way you did a lesson; or, even in one day, you may have the chance at nine o’clock doing the lesson once and it really didn’t go the way you wanted it to, not just kind of the importance of what went wrong, really going over the lesson. I think I learned the importance of that in the program. Just sort of, “What did you think worked there? What would you do differently?”

Reflection helped another new teacher solve problems. She said:

“What helped me the most through it all – because no matter what the problem was – I started to think quickly on how to solve things, how to work with students with issues, and work through them instead of panicking. I’d also act first ... think it out as we go along and then go back and reflect on it.”

Yet another missed sharing reflections with colleagues. She said:

“I feel that, that’s one of the things that is missing from my teaching now is the forum to speak with other teachers about the big ... about why are we here, what does this mean, and how ... the big stuff, what does it mean to be an educator. In just the daily workings of a school, you don’t have the time. There are just too many issues to deal with, too many things going on. You don’t have the time to have those big conversations. That was a wonderful thing, and I’m glad I had an entire year with such a close cohort, to be able to talk so openly.”

Interesting, this comment brings us back to one of our initial concerns – the cultural incongruencies within the school as well as between school and community. This study has many limitations – among them the small number of new teachers graduating from one specialized program based upon inquiry, reflection and a set of urban standards. Yet the new teachers provided insight to the difficulties in preparing teachers for urban settings – not only in the sense of their own identity formation but in regards to the incongruities they find there and their responses to them.

#### 4 CONCLUSION

The complexities of urban settings present a confounding set of demands on urban teachers – not simply to teach content and meet high standards of performance but to come to understand themselves and others, across



cultural divides. These eleven new teachers echo the concerns of novices throughout the literature (Darling-Hammond, 1997, 2000; Weiner, 1993, 1999, 2000, 2002) yet highlight the conditions of urban teaching that differentiate their experience from those of new teachers in suburban and, perhaps, rural settings. In particular, these new urban teachers talked about the cultural incongruencies they experience within and across communities – those of their schools, their universities, and the students and families where they work. They struggle with coming to understand these interdependent communities and to access resources that can support teaching and learning in their classrooms. They identified challenges that distinguish many American urban schools and communities – vast linguistic differences within and across settings, the over identification and mainstreaming of special needs students, and the relationships between violence and classroom learning. As well, these new teachers discussed coming to know more about themselves and others through developing relationships and setting boundaries. Last, they noted how inquiry and reflection were essential tools for becoming more adept at urban teaching. These new teachers provide important insights into the complexities and demands of becoming an urban teacher and the time, energy, engagement, collaboration, and reflection it takes to truly make a difference in student learning.

These new urban teachers provided an interesting critique of current standards guiding teaching preparation across the United States, for they make explicit skills and dispositions that are simply implicit in standards used by American teacher preparation programs. For example, while many national teacher preparation standards suggest new teachers must understand how to teach diverse learners, including those with special needs, the standards do not delineate what teachers must know and be able to do to address the linguistic diversity of their students and its impact on teaching and learning. Further, given that the number of special needs students multiplies in urban settings (Artiles, 2003), urban teachers need to know more about working in a classroom with a high percentage of students with a variety of special needs – learning disabilities that range across but are not limited to linguistic, mathematical, auditory, memory, and other students in urban settings. National standards simply do not address the skills and dispositions necessary not only to work in such complex classrooms but also to actively address inequities that arise because well-intentioned initiatives compound the challenges they face.

Therefore, these teachers' experiences suggest an additional set of standards that might be used in preparing urban educators:

1. *Identity Formation.* The teacher candidate creates a context in which identity formation, especially in relation to race, class, gender, socioeconomic status, age, language, and culture, is valued and

- advanced when interacting with students, their families, and other members of the school community.
2. *Special Needs*. The teacher candidate uses a variety of strategies for meeting the special needs of students, including planning, teaching, grouping and assessing in ways that are responsive to the diverse talents and needs of the learners.
  3. *Linguistic Diversity*. The teacher candidate applies theories of language learning and development and models metacognitive strategies to create instructional conversations that value linguistic difference while developing English language proficiency.
  4. *Culturally Responsive Pedagogy*. The teacher candidate promotes students' learning by using culturally responsive pedagogy by valuing differences in race, class, gender, socioeconomic status, age, language, and culture within the classroom, school, and community.
  5. *Non Violence*. The teacher candidate creates a classroom environment of non violence that promotes conflict resolution through mutual respect, boundary setting, and creative problem solving.
  6. *Social Justice*. The teacher candidate is a reflective, responsive teacher-leader who effectively addresses the inequities of policies, practices, and achievement related to race, class, gender, and linguistic differences.

Given that new teachers leave teaching between the fourth and eight years of their careers – often much earlier in urban settings, another standard must be set:

7. *Resiliency, Resistance, and Persistence*. The teacher candidate addresses the bureaucratic complexities and demands of urban settings by responding appropriately with resiliency, resistance, and persistence.

As these teachers discussed, urban schools are highly bureaucratic, complex and demanding while equally economically unstable and resource poor – as are the broader community contexts in which they are embedded. Thus, in urban classrooms, the interaction of context and the challenge of learning to teach are complicated by the enactment of local and national mandates that are severely underfunded. If we fail to prepare teachers who are sensitive and responsive to the contexts in which they teach, we will fail the students and communities where they teach. The voices of new urban teachers confirm the need of standards for their preparation to focus on context – particularly, culture, nonviolence, community, equity, inquiry and

reflection as measured responses to the conditions that distinguish urban settings.

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## Chapter 19

# **DESIGN AND METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES RELATED TO RESEARCH ON PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN TEACHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND SCHOOLS**

Annemie Schepens

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

This contribution focuses on the way research on partnerships between teacher education institutions and schools might be conducted. It is stated that research in teacher education partnerships can be improved by investigating what has been done in this respect and what the strengths and weaknesses are of research and evaluation in that context. The article suggests how researchers might find their way in doing research on educational partnerships by providing an adequate research design, taking into account the restrictions and challenges of partnership research.

### **2 DESIGN AND METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES RELATED TO PARTNERSHIP RESEARCH**

Research-based understanding of the impact or effectiveness of alternative arrangements in educational partnerships is important. Partnerships between teacher education institutions and schools have increased enormously the past few years. Although ‘partnership’ has been one of the buzzwords of the 90’s (Rudduck, 1999), some stakeholders remain very sceptical. For example, research literature concerning the impact of collaborative partnerships is quite limited in some respects (Bullough & Kauchak, 1997; Smedley, 2001; Wideen, Mayer-Smith & Moon, 1998; Wilson, Floden & Ferrini-Mundy, 2001). Only preliminary works are published; reports include mainly programme descriptions rather

than the effects on people involved (Bullough & Kauchak, 1997; Wideen et al., 1998); most of the evidence is anecdotal or based on little data and primarily related to elementary school partnerships (Bullough & Kauchak, 1997). In some countries, however, this critique contrasts with the financial and moral support of stakeholders. The danger that Teitel refers to by citing Kimball, Swap, LaRosa and Howick (1995, in Teitel, 2001, p.61) is therefore realistic:

“The means to effective partnership can easily become ends in themselves. For example, the energy for change in schools may become focused only on improving working conditions for teachers, establishing more collaborative decision making structures, or creating more flexible schedules, all of which can be means to the end of the learning but should not be ends in themselves. Administrative practice can change without passing the advantage to the classroom.”

Obviously, research on teacher education partnerships can be improved by investigating what has been done until now and what the strengths and weaknesses are of research and evaluation in the context of partnerships between teacher education institutions and placement schools.

### **3 TEACHER EDUCATION AS RESEARCH DOMAIN**

Teacher education research is repeatedly reproved for not being scientific enough (Bullough & Kauchak, 1997; Lowyck & Pieters, 1993; Wilson et al., 2001). This perceived lack of scientific character is mostly explained by the complexity of the research objects and the social contexts they are situated in. In addition, educational researchers experience social pressure to offer solutions for current societal problems.

More than it is the case in natural sciences, researchers in human and social sciences have to account for their personal beliefs, but also for those of the people involved in the research context. Labaree (2000, p.58) summarizes this characteristic as “a messy interaction of the researcher and the research project.” Referring to the cultural historical activity theory (Wardekker, 2000) included in theories on situated learning (Billett, 1996), ecosystems and system analytic thinking (Capra, 1996; Wielemans, 2000; Wideen et. al., 1998), it can be concluded that real independency and objectivity in education and educational research is impossible.

Another impediment related to educational research is that “if Sisyphus were a scholar, his field would be education” (Labaree, 2000, p.68), because

similar questions remain the centre of attention. Educational researchers and educators are expected to prepare for current and urgent societal issues. These comprehensive expectations make the educational debate accessible to outsiders as well.

Education is, according to Labaree (2000), the most soft among the softest research domains. It is a social system that results from actions of several stakeholders: teachers, pupils, administrators, parents, teacher educators and the government. (Labaree, 2000; Lanier & Little, 1986, in Lowyck & Pieters, 1993). Unambiguous criteria on which educational decisions are made are therefore an illusion. In education everything results from a dynamical interplay of specific needs, expectations, goals, interests of all actors in interaction with the broader society which education is situated in.

In this respect, teacher education largely depends upon societal expectations sometimes translated in professional profiles, competences or standards. Therefore, educational researchers share a responsibility for what education achieves with pupils and students and towards society as a whole (Labaree, 2000).

The normative character of education as a research domain and its accessibility can be a weak point as well as a strong one. The character of its knowledge base makes educationalists politically less influential; their findings can easily be disregarded. Nevertheless, according to Labaree (2000, p.73), educationalists have "... a ready rhetorical access to the public that is lacking in more authoritative fields."

These specific features of teacher education as a research domain obviously influence the search for an appropriate methodological frame of reference.

## **4 PARADIGMATIC FRAME OF REFERENCE**

Because of its situatedness, educational research is faced with a dilemma (Labaree, 2000): "The more widely researchers throw their net around a complex array of variables, the less valid and reliable their conclusions become; but the more narrowly and rigorously they construct their studies methodologically, the more likely it is that they are leaving out important variables..." (p.65). Wardekker (2000) refers in this respect to two paradigms existing next to each other: the positivistic research tradition and the interpretive paradigm (see also Florio-Ruane, 2002; Walker & Evers, 1997; Wideen et al., 1998). As Wardekker (2000) argues, there is no universal way to judge the quality of research. Each paradigm has its own set of quality criteria. This lack of unity forces researchers to handle the mentioned dilemma in an eclectic way and allows unclear research designs.

Identical problems exist in the domain of programme evaluation. Rossi, Freeman and Lipsey (1999, p.4, in Bosker, 2000, p.97) describe programme evaluation as: “the systematic application of social scientific research procedures to determine the conceptualisation, design, implementation and usefulness of social intervention programmes.” According to Bosker (2000), however, programme evaluation is more than pure scientific research because it should lead to practical information for stakeholders in teacher education. This practical application is, according to Hagger and McIntyre (2000), what makes educational research valuable: it offers suggestions for good practice.

Likewise, Wardekker (2000) argues that research should focus on practice but provides a broader perspective on educational research. “It should take into account both the historical and the actual dynamics of that practice.... As these dynamics are the result of meaning-making discourses, research should be sensitive to the socially constructed character of activity structures” (p.269). Traditional educational research represented by the positivistic or interpretive paradigm does not meet this request. Instead, Wardekker (2000) calls for an alternative to both paradigms referring to cultural historical activity theory as a synthesis of both. In research literature on general systems theory, the same arguments for a more holistic approach are stated (Wielemans, 2000), leading to more common criteria in educational research (Walker & Evers, 1997).

This alternative paradigm is also related to new perspectives on learning and knowledge construction. Current beliefs about learning are inspired by reconciling cognitive learning theories with cultural historical, socio-cultural inspired learning theories (Billett, 1996; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wardekker, 2000; Wenger, 1998). This evolution has been called a situated perspective on learning (Billett, 1996), and is reflected in many learning theoretical variants with related ontological, epistemological and phenomenological propositions (Jonassen & Land, 2000).

This perspective has specific consequences for how research on teacher education is perceived: “our knowledge of activity systems is contextual, as opposed to the decontextualized (or rather seemingly decontextualized) knowledge in the nomological paradigm. However, this contextualization is not limited to the actual context-as-experienced, as in the interpretive paradigm” (Wardekker, 2000, p.269). Following, research findings are the result of two practices: the research practice on the one hand and the practice under study on the other. This community of inquiry that reflects the dialogue between researchers and respondents leads to transformational collaborative research where researchers become co-responsible for the changes they introduce (Wardekker, 2000). The alternative paradigmatic frame of reference, based on a situated cultural-historical activity

perspective, is therefore extremely valuable. It refers both to the heart of collaborative partnerships and to the importance of personal experiences.

If the effectiveness or impact of partnerships are to be explored starting from this holistic, systemic paradigm, new challenges come to the front in partnership research.

## **5 CHALLENGES OF PARTNERSHIP RESEARCH**

Teacher educators as well as researchers are, when designing programme evaluations or research, confronted with challenges featuring most educational research. In comparison with literature on the development of educational programmes, little research literature exists on the evaluation (Galluzzo & Craig, 1990) or impact of comprehensive teacher education arrangements such as partnerships (Wideen et al., 1998). The main characteristic of partnerships is the intensive collaboration between teacher education institutions and the working field. Evaluating or examining the effectiveness or impact of arrangements like partnerships gives an extra turn to the above mentioned limitations and challenges in teacher education research (Knight & Wiseman, 2002; Teitel, 2001). For example, a universal accepted educational model for partnerships does not exist because of specific legal restrictions concerning teacher education. The value of research findings is therefore limited to specific institutions in specific locations. Besides this limitation, methodological challenges are in play as well.

Because the research basis concerning comprehensive educational arrangements in the form of partnerships is still in its infancy (Knight & Wiseman, 2002; Teitel, 2001), an exploration of possible research designs is necessary. Challenges such as deciding the research purpose, the participation of stakeholders in the research process, the research methods, the data-analyses, the way of formulating conclusions and recommendations should be considered thoroughly. Literature regarding programme evaluation on the one hand and teacher education research on the other can offer relevant suggestions for these designs.

## **6 MODELS FOR EVALUATING TEACHER EDUCATION**

In general, teacher education evaluations are described as systematic studies of the worth and merit of programmes to take informed programme related decisions (Bosker, 2000; Galluzzo & Craig, 1990). The worth of a



programme refers to its quality compared with external criteria. The merit refers to the effectiveness of what the programme means for its stakeholders.

Galluzzo & Craig (1990) distinguish two approaches to programme evaluation: objectives-based and decision-facilitation models. These models include a variety of methods and ideological premises, which forms evaluation heuristics by way of normative data collection (Scriven, 1981 & Stake, 1981, both in Galluzzo & Craig, 1990). Until the 1960's programme evaluation was limited to goal measurement. Since the 1980's, programme evaluation has been receiving attention in the form of follow-up studies and once-only surveys, mostly by way of questionnaires addressed to graduates after they had left the institution. A first critique on this kind of evaluation is that it is institution specific. Secondly, most follow-up studies are process-product oriented, which means that a programme is effective when graduates perform the required 'competences' (Galluzzo & Craig, 1990). There is, however, little research published on these accountability evaluations (Galluzzo & Craig, 1990; Wilson et al., 2001). Although conventional methods are used in these goal-directed evaluations, they are considered to represent a restricted perspective on research and evaluation.

A valuable alternative for goal-directed evaluation has been the decision-facilitation model. A widely known decision-facilitating model in teacher education is the CIPP-model of Stufflebeam en Guba (1971, in Galluzzo & Craig, 1990 and Bosker, 2000). The acronym CIPP refers to a combination of four evaluation forms: the evaluation of context (i.e., preconditions), input (i.e., means), process (i.e., implementation) and product (i.e., outcomes). Product evaluations within the CIPP model are focused on gathering results of the programme and related to findings from the context, input and process evaluation.

The central point in this contribution is to discover an appropriate research design that considers restrictions and challenges of research on partnerships, referring to the systemic perspective proposed by Wardekker (2000). Likewise, Galluzzo and Craig (1990) plea for a more extended evaluation model that collects, analyses and reports on a variety of quantitative and qualitative data to evaluate the worth and merit of programmes. The surplus value of the CIPP model compared to other evaluation models is its validity towards all aspects of educational programmes. With their model, Stufflebeam and Guba emphasise that programme evaluation is above all a social process which situates learning outcomes within a network of social interactions (see, among others, Lowyck & Pieters, 1993).

Exploring the impact of partnerships between teacher education institutions and schools serves accountability purposes towards government and society, but more important, a better understanding of the learning to teach process as well. The research design that is proposed here for

exploring the effectiveness or impact of partnerships from a holistic or systemic viewpoint must be directed towards a better understanding of the learning to teach process, towards an extension of knowledge about teacher education, and towards good practice. Considering this combination of purposes different stakeholders in the programme should be involved.

## **7 EMBEDDED TEACHER EDUCATION RESEARCH**

### **7.1 Between Participation and Distantiation**

As mentioned before, the work of teacher educators and teachers, of the educational community and researchers is embedded in a micro-political, historical and socio-cultural context which determines the conditions for teacher education research. All stakeholders give meaning to their experiences in interaction with their work environment based on individual and collective frames of reference. Neither evaluation nor research is, therefore, value-free. Therefore, research data reflect beliefs of stakeholders rather than a pure objective view on the effectiveness of educational arrangements under study (Galluzo & Craig, 1990). Wardekker (2000) argues that making use of what he calls transformational collaborative research accommodates this situatedness. His suggestion towards researchers is to stand up to this problem balancing between participation and distantiation. Researcher and stakeholders should “be stimulating partners in a dialogue, but at the same time they must not be carried away by their enthusiasm” (p.271).

### **7.2 The Relation between Researchers and Stakeholders**

Partnership activities such as formal and informal consultation expand existing tasks of people involved. Less time becomes available for research design, for collecting and analysing data, for reporting (Knight & Wiseman, 2002; Teitel, 2001). A valuable alternative is collaboration with researchers external to the partnership. Although external evaluators form an important trump in many ways (i.e., time investment, expertise on the domain of research) there is a risk of wrong emphases or lack of clear views on programme goals. External evaluators or researchers can use less clear terminology in the eyes of the stakeholders which leads to less relevant information for those involved in the partnership.

A few of the following suggestions to face these problems agree with the transformational collaborative research perspective proposed by Wardekker (2000). Providing sufficient feedback about one's activities can prevent alienation between researcher and partnership stakeholders. It is the basis for the essential trust to engage in a research project because it permits actors to give additional and adequate information about the programme and evaluation process (Teitel, 2001). Between stakeholders and researchers, professional as well as personal relations make a richer information exchange possible. Ideally, researchers and partnership stakeholders should function relatively independent from one another but on the basis of collaboration (Galluzzo & Craig, 1990).

A critical precondition for successful partnerships is collaboration based on equality and mutual respect. What counts for the relation between teacher education institutions and schools, definitely counts for the collaboration between partnership stakeholders and external evaluators or researchers.

Partnerships that focus on action research in which actors play a bigger role in the research process, offer a valuable alternative (Knight & Wiseman, 2002), but the lack of time can manifest itself again. Clearly, action research can increase the involvement of teachers and the appreciation of studying one's own actions systematically. However, the danger of taking wrong decisions on the basis of weak research designs exists, followed by a fragmented or limited impact of such research on educational practice. Once more, collaboration with external researchers can offer the necessary support.

### **7.3 Stakeholders under Pressure**

Studying partnerships can place existing partnership networks under pressure. The trust necessary for successful collaboration between partners can be disturbed (Knight & Wiseman, 2002; Teitel, 2001). Stakeholders in teacher education often express the wish to know more about the impact of their activities. However, their fear for misinterpretation can lead to resistance towards research participation or result in anecdotal or hallelujah stories as well as in only reporting positive findings (Knight & Wiseman, 2002; Teitel, 2001).

An accountability policy can also cause stress. Some stakeholders invest much time and energy in partnerships and can perceive negative outcomes as a personal failure. Possibly, they do not want to share this failure with others (Knight & Wiseman, 2002). Besides, few partnerships are strong enough to present these less positive results. Knight & Wiseman (2002) underline, however, that negative outcomes can be very valuable if they are framed in

the context of the learning process, which, after all, an educational reform usually is for its stakeholders.

Another challenge for exploring the effectiveness or impact of partnerships is related to the evaluation or research moment (Teitel, 2001). Significant questions in this respect are: to what degree is the implemented reform explorative or has it been evaluated and adjusted, and who is involved in these processes? Depending on the answers the research results can vary in many ways. The social context of the programmes can change over time as well. What is demanded on one moment can change quickly, influenced by an altered regulation, for instance (Galluzo & Craig, 1990).

## **8            METHODODOLOGICAL CHOICES AND               CONCEPTUAL MODELS**

Clearly, different aspects related to partnerships form a challenge in research on the effectiveness of teacher education arrangements. Until now, a specific paradigmatic perspective on designing educational research was suggested to face these challenges, with reference to programme evaluation literature. This kind of research focuses on comprehensive parts of educational arrangements such as partnerships. It provides valuable views on designing teacher education research, for example regarding the importance of the social context in combination with the relevance of an extended research model. Evidently, recent literature on partnership research is relevant as well to develop an appropriate design.

### **8.1        Design Principles for Partnership Research**

On the basis of a review on teacher preparation research, Wilson et al. (2001) concluded that a lot of research lacks a strong basis for informing educational practice and teacher education policy. The reviewers selected seven principles to strengthen the research base for designing and implementing teacher education research. Other authors (Bosker, 2000; Darling-Hammond, Chung & Frelow, 2002; Knight & Wiseman, 2002; Shulman, 2002; Teitel, 2001; Weiner, 2002) provide additional suggestions and points of attention to investigate the impact of educational arrangements. Referring to these authors, relevant design principles and difficulties to consider in partnership research can be summarised as follows:

- Defining educational arrangements by means of a number of courses or hours of student teaching practice is insufficient and even misleading. Data which only ask for a minimum of effort in the form of standardised tests ignore the central activities in teacher education settings and

partnership settings in particular (Knight & Wiseman, 2002; Wilson et al., 2001).

- Specific content related, cultural, structural and even historical features of the arrangement under study should be described in detail. Profound analytic and descriptive research tools which reflect what takes place are helpful in this respect (Shulman, 2002; Weiner, 2002; Wilson et al., 2001). Sensitive, refined and stable measures to determine the knowledge and behaviour of future teachers related to the preconditions and features of different learning environments are needed as well. A too strong simplification and the use of ambiguous or vague variables both hinder a thorough interpretation of findings. For example, a concept like 'alternate learning route' should be made explicit, otherwise, this arrangement can not be evaluated in its full potential (Wilson et al., 2001). Obviously, different educational routes can recruit different target groups. Differences concerning the impact of arrangements can, accordingly, not only be explained as a result of the quality of the educational routes but explained due to different kinds of previous education as well (Galluzo & Craig, 1990; Knight & Wiseman, 2002).
- According to Wilson et al. (2001) and Teitel (2001) teacher preparation research has to be related to what (student) teachers really learn. Much research is restricted by the fact that attention only goes to what future teachers have learned in specific courses or programme components, but not if they learned differently because of changing preconditions. Nevertheless, the central question remains: what kind of conditions does teacher education have to pursue to optimize the learning to teach process of future teachers? (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002). Comparing two similar groups of students in alternative arrangements is, therefore, considered to be essential within teacher education research (Shulman, 2002; Teitel, 2001; Wilson et al., 2001). Mostly, comparisons in quasi-experimental designs focus on specific components of the programme but can encompass a broader focus as well (Knight & Wiseman, 2002). Examples of this kind of research are sometimes called 'design experiments'; new programme components are created inspired by promising practices described in interpretative studies (Wilson et al., 2001).
- Within research on the effectiveness of educational arrangements, issues of replication and generalisation are often discussed. Experiments with randomisation or controlled group design which suit the ideal of replicable research according to Cronbach (1980, in Bosker, 2000) offer useful information for educational practice only if it concerns research about lifelike situations (Bosker, 2000; Shulman, 2002; Wardekker, 2000). On the other hand, authentic situations are liable to external

disturbing processes and the actual research design (Wardekker, 2000). Case studies on how institutions realise teacher education can provide additional information or inspire research questions for designing surveys. Qualitative evaluations of educational arrangements based on partnerships are for the time being rare or indistinctive about the used research methods (Knight & Wiseman, 2002; Teitel, 2001; Wilson et al. 2001). The question of transferability to other contexts is, therefore, considered problematic. Scholz & Tietje (2002), however, recommend the use of embedded case studies. It is a means to comprehend a case as a whole in its real-world context and allows for a multiplicity of methods not limited to qualitative analysis alone. Obviously, large scale and local studies should inform one another (Knight & Wiseman, 2002; Wilson et al., 2001).

- Bosker (2000), Teitel (2001) and Knight & Wiseman (2002) refer to the problem of uncontrolled selection. Mostly, reforms and innovations attract motivated persons. Persons not comfortable with innovations drop out before the first effects of the programme are measured. Results of an evaluation or research project can then be due to a Hawthorn effect or effect of novelty (Koetsier & Wubbels, 1995). In addition, persons involved in the programme can change spontaneously without being influenced by the programme. A problem related to working with control and comparison groups for studying educational arrangements like partnerships concerns feelings of injustice that go along with not being part of the research activity, innovation or intervention (Knight & Wiseman, 2002).
- Research has to focus on relations improving the learning processes of (student) teachers as well as those of pupils (Knight & Wiseman, 2002; Weiner, 2002; Wilson et al., 2001); however, the question remains how. Most teacher education research contributes to the identification of features that enhance the learning of future teachers (Wilson et al. 2001; see also Knight & Wiseman, 2002; Teitel, 2001). Research findings should be linked to learning performances of pupils as well. Measuring the knowledge, skills and attitudes of future teachers which are supposed to characterise effective teacher behaviour, is a valuable alternative. However, studying the impact of specific teacher education arrangements on the performances of pupils is challenging because of the many intervening variables. Research that maps relations between pupil outcomes, student teacher performances and teacher preparation arrangements must check for variables related to these relations such as the learning styles of both pupils and student teachers (Wilson et al., 2001).
- Research should pay explicit attention to teaching in specific areas and to specific target groups in teacher education (Weiner, 2002; Wilson et

al. 2001). Research findings confirm that alternative routes recruit diverse target groups but many worry about the fact that unqualified people teach in schools.

The overview of Wilson et al. (2001) focuses on initial teacher education. Current knowledge about learning to teach suggests that this process is a continuum that goes beyond initial teacher education. Teacher education research must, therefore, focus on longitudinal studies about teacher learning and this, for example, by following the learning experiences of teachers during initial teacher education until beginning teacher induction.

The design principles formulated by Wilson et al. (2001) are part of recommendations for teacher preparation research. Still, a sound research tradition related to teacher education partnerships does not exist yet. Two conceptual models, however, provide promising suggestions to meet the need for methodological criteria concerning partnership research: (1) the integrated assessment model of Teitel (2001) and (2) the research evidence model of Knight and Wiseman (2002).

## **8.2 The Integrated Assessment Frame of Teitel**

The integrated conceptual framework constructed by Teitel (2001), refers to different methods and data related to features of professional development schools (PDS's) and the impact of PDS's. The goals of PDS's are, among other things, an increase of the learning process of pupils and the professional development of future and experienced teachers. Teitel (2001) argues that PDSs should provide evidence about specific structural, organisational and cultural changes to achieve these purposes. They should demonstrate how they encourage better results for three groups of stakeholders in partnerships: pupils, future teachers and experienced teachers (Teitel, 2001, p.62).

According to Teitel, expected outcomes should be documented on the basis of reflection on (1) changes in learning experiences (e.g., changes in student teaching practice experiences) and on (2) organisational and cultural changes (e.g., changes in beliefs about teaching and learning) that support the learning experiences. The assessment frame that Teitel presents, reveals resemblances to the extended evaluation model in which the relation between context, input, and process factors are used to frame the results of educational arrangements.

### **8.3 The Research Evidence Model of Knight and Wiseman**

Joining Teitel (2001), Knight & Wiseman (2002) present suggestions for overcoming some limitations and challenges related to partnership research. Unique in their contribution is the focus of partnerships, the research design and evidence needed, combined in one model. They argue that some combinations of research designs and focuses of partnerships demand more evidence or more formal measures and methods to document possible relations between partnership activities and output data such as learning performances of student teachers and pupils. According to Knight and Wiseman (2002) the quality and credibility of a study can not be judged by its design alone without considering the quantification and qualification of evidence that supports possible relations between process and results. The focus of a partnership on the one hand and the research design on the other are two factors that direct the data collection to investigate the impact of specific partnerships. Three categories of partnerships are distinguished depending on the focus and intensity of the activities within these partnerships: (1) partnerships based on comprehensive reform efforts, (2) partnerships founded on targeted curriculum reforms, and (3) partnerships based on action research. Knight and Wiseman (2002) show how to assess the evidence needed to make convincing relations between process and output, using a grid (Table 19-1) with two continuums reflecting the possible focuses and research designs.



	<b>Traditional Design</b>		
<b>Targeted Reform</b>	least evidence needed	context description needed	<b>Comprehensive Reform</b>
	less formal measures and methods	assessment of degree of implementation	
	some evidence needed	most evidence needed	
	formal measures and methods	multiple sources of data  formal measures and methods	
	<b>Non-traditional Design</b>		

Table 19-1. Assessing need for evidence to make linkages (Knight & Wiseman, 2002, p.30).

Traditional research designs are located at one end of the vertical continuum. These designs refer to studies which meet the demands of internal and external validity. These (quasi) experimental or correlation designs are often based on matched comparison groups, because randomisation in educational settings is mostly impossible or undesirable (Anderson, 1990).

At the other end of the vertical continuum, less strong non-traditional designs are situated. These designs are often criticized regarding internal and external validity. Examples of non-traditional designs are once-only case studies or pre-post designs (at the end of the continuum) and designs on the basis of non-equivalent comparison groups (in the middle of the continuum).

Knight and Wiseman (2002) define the focus of reforms as a second dimension. Comprehensive reform efforts are located on the right of the continuum and targeted curriculum reforms on the left.

Partnerships focused on targeted reforms and studied within traditional research designs are situated in the quadrant on the top left. Targeted reforms are less complex and demand, according to Knight and Wiseman

(2002), less formal measures and methods to collect convincing evidence to prove possible connections.

Studies placed in the top right quadrant focus on more comprehensive reform efforts. Such studies demand less evidence to investigate possible relations than studies which use non-traditional designs. They have nonetheless specific demands on other domains. As a consequence of the comprehensive character of the reforms, traditional designs turn out to be less effective than in the former quadrant. Matching schools is problematic in many cases and studying isolated interventions in partnerships which are based on comprehensive reforms is misleading as well. Comparing different partnership settings increases the danger of omitting contextual descriptions to check possible relations. To compensate these methodological problems, comprehensive context descriptions are absolutely needed.

The bottom right quadrant refers to studies in which comprehensive reforms are investigated, but not by using traditional research designs. Therefore, more evidence is needed from several data sources by way of formal measures and methods. Much research on partnerships between teacher education institutions and schools can be classified in this quadrant.

In the bottom left quadrant research focuses on targeted curricular reforms and requires less evidence. However, the lack of a strong design asks for more formal measures and methods to gather additional data.

## **9 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION**

Considering possible adequate research designs is essential in view of collecting convincing evidence concerning the effectiveness or impact of partnerships. Based on the arguments in this chapter, not all research paradigms and designs are equally convincing. Conventional and restricted process-product approaches in the form of follow-up studies were perceived as limited. The same holds for the accountability purpose which was regarded as a restrictive way to use evaluation and research data. More valuable designs and methods were pursued.

Research on the impact of collaborative partnerships should be realised in consultation with all stakeholders in teacher education (Wardekker, 2000). This led to choose a research frame that refers to three related theoretical movements: the situated learning approach, the cultural historical tradition and the system theory. Based on the CIPP-model of Stufflebeam and Guba (1971; in Galluzzo & Craig, 1990), this paradigmatic frame of reference was matched to an extended evaluation and research model. This model comprises collecting, analysing, interpreting and reporting on a variety of quantitative and qualitative data with which the worth and merit of a

programme can be investigated. The centre of attention in this extended model is the specific context in which the evaluation takes place. This context is principally reflected in a diversity of stakeholders and partners involved.

Based on the research principles of Wilson et al. (2000) and the research design models constructed by Teitel (2001) and Knight and Wiseman (2002), well thought-out methodological choices can be made related to the research design and possible independent (partnerships) and dependent variables such as specific goals to attain within partnerships. In accordance with the proposed comprehensive research models, it is clear that stakeholders should be informed about the viewpoints and methods used. In turn, they inform the researchers during the research process to contribute to what Wardekker (2000) calls transformational collaborative research.

Knight and Wiseman (2002) quite rightly relate the focuses of educational arrangements under study with research designs to assess the evidence needed to make the necessary links between context, input, process and product. For example, the learning process of student teachers directed to the attainment of specific goals such as the acquirement of starting competences, is the central purpose of many teacher education partnerships. As Teitel (2001) suggests, evidence is needed based on reflection on (1) differences in experiences of all stakeholders and (2) structural and cultural differences within institutions or between partners. This reflection should not only concentrate on the acquirement of starting competences as a result of experiences during teacher education, but on the kind of preconditions which make these experiences possible as well.

According to different authors (Kirk, 1997; Knight & Wiseman, 2002; Wilson et al., 2001) existing examples of alternative educational arrangements should be used as “laboratories” for strong comparative research. The structure of teacher education partnerships does not make this an easy undertaking. The overview in this chapter suggests that future research can be improved by scrutinizing what has been done previously and what the strengths and weaknesses are of current research and evaluation in the context of partnerships between teacher education institutions and schools.

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## Chapter 20

# TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF THEIR PROFESSIONAL AUTONOMY IN THE ENVIRONMENT OF SYSTEMIC CHANGE

Barbara Šteh and Barica Marentič Požarnik

### 1 INTRODUCTION

In Slovenia, an all-pervading reform of school organisation and curricula at all levels of pre-university education is being carried out. One of the main changes is that compulsory education is being extended from 8 to 9 years, and school entrance age lowered from 7 to 6. The previous organisational division of the 8-year primary school (into two 4-year periods) is being changed to three 3-year periods (“triads”). In the first grade, team-teaching (cooperation between a pre-school teacher and a primary teacher) is being introduced for half of the class time. The age to begin learning a foreign language has been lowered from 11 to 9 years. Also, children with special needs are being integrated into mainstream schools. Previously unified school organisation is being diversified by introducing ability grouping (setting system) in three subjects – Slovene, English and Maths – in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grades. In the last “triad” pupils can also choose between several elective subjects. External national examinations are being introduced after each triad, with results at the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade counting towards secondary school entry (“high stake” testing). At the end of general secondary school programs (“gimnazija”) with direct access to university studies, the results on final exams with a strong external component (“matura”) are most important when entering university. There were also more or less radical curricular changes made during the curricular reform (1997-2000) in all the subjects.

All these organisational changes were supposed to be congruent with the general goals of education. According to the official document of the reform, the following are the most important goals or “changes that would contribute

to solving the existing problems in education” (Nacionalni Kurikularni Svet, 1996, pp.13-15):

- to increase the autonomy and professional responsibility of schools and teachers;
- to reach a higher level of interdisciplinarity of knowledge;
- to prevent pupils’ fatigue from being overburdened;
- to introduce varied teaching methods and to increase the active role of students;
- to foster a harmonious physical and mental (cognitive, emotional, social and other) development of students;
- to increase the role of teachers as facilitators;
- to increase the social integrative role of the school, to prepare students for a life of quality, for lifelong learning and for vocational life;
- to reach internationally comparable standards of knowledge;
- to increase the quality and durability of knowledge;
- to develop the abilities of independent, creative, critical thinking, to give students the self-confidence and skills necessary for successful problem-solving.

Thus, an increase of teacher autonomy and professional responsibility is being mentioned as the first and most important change that has to be effected. But what is meant by teacher autonomy? In the White paper on Education in Slovenia, the official document preceding the reform, we find the definition that the main sphere of teacher autonomy is the choice of teaching methods, while teaching goals, standards and content are defined by the national curriculum (Krek, 1995, pp.91-92). It is also stated that “among conditions that most limit teacher autonomy are detailed prescriptions of how and what is being taught; this ... shifts responsibility from the teacher to authorities who prescribe content and methods of work” (Nacionalni Kurikularni Svet, 1996, p.9). It has to be noted here that teachers in Slovenia are traditionally used to very detailed prescriptions of curricular goals, content and even methods.

The official definition thus considers the choice of methods to reach predetermined goals and standards to be the main aspect of teachers’ autonomy. Looking at the difference between the “weak” and “strong” conception of teacher autonomy, this is the ‘weak’ conception, defined as “free usage of approved professional knowledge in implementing study programmes that have been designed elsewhere”, while according to the strong conception of teacher autonomy “... teachers are seen as experts in education and thus the only, or best qualified persons to decide what is taught and why” (Dale, 1989, cit. after Peček & Razdevšek-Pučko, 2000, p.265).

In the concept of “new professionalism”, required by societal changes (Niemi & Kohonen, 1995), teacher autonomy holds a central position. It is closely linked to ethical responsibility – the ability to make responsible choices in promoting active learning, meaningful knowledge and also autonomy in their students. Teacher autonomy is regarded as a prerequisite for teachers’ own professional growth and also a result of professional training (“to become autonomous, one needs to acquire various capacities, dispositions, reflective skills...” (Niemi & Kohonen, 1995, p.17). Thus, we can regard them as interdependent. New professionalism entails commitment, independence but also the ability to cooperate with colleagues (Kohonen & Ojanen, 1993; Niemi & Kohonen, 1995). According to Bauer, teacher autonomy is closely linked to all aspects of a teacher’s ‘professional self’ – to existing values, subject and professional knowledge and action repertoire (Bauer, 1999).

Important goals of the reform (like development of higher order thinking and independent learners) require shifts in methods (from transmission-oriented to more interactive and student-centered methods) and also in the conceptions of ‘good teaching’. Conceptual changes form a basis for changes in teaching strategies and in learning results (Gow & Kember, 1994).

In a sense Slovenian teachers were given a contradictory message: on the one hand they were supposed to be more autonomous in teaching; on the other, their teaching is being increasingly controlled by standards, external high-stake tests and also by detailed regulations (about classroom assessment, discipline...) and school inspection which should not be typical of a liberal policy. At the same time, they were not consistently supported in their professional development.

To what extent does the existing pre-service and in-service training in Slovenia help teachers to cope professionally with significant changes? All teachers in Slovenia are at present being trained in 4-year university programmes; but only in the case of primary school class teachers (teaching children aged 6 to 10) can we speak of “professionally-based” education, which has in the recent years also made big efforts to reconstruct the study programmes in connection with the Tempus project RESPECT, (Peček & Razdevšek-Pučko, 2000). Subject teachers (teaching students aged 11 to 14 in primary school and students aged 15 to 18 in secondary schools) are trained at two Faculties of Education and at Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Science and Technology, Faculty of Biotechnology, Faculty of Sport and others. A consequence of this dispersion of responsibility among many academic institutions is a lack of professional coherence and identity in study programmes for teachers. Professional education of teachers is often treated as a rather marginal activity, “added” to numerous academic subjects which by tradition have a very powerful central position. Also, there is a



lack of common doctrine in methods of teacher education. Especially the practical component is being neglected and not integrated into the programme (Valenčič Zuljan, 2001; Razdevšek-Pučko, 2000; Marentič Požarnik, 2000; Marentič Požarnik & Valenčič Zuljan, 2002; more about the Slovenian system of teacher education can be found in Eurydice Study on Teachers, 2001).

The system of in-service training has recently expanded in scope and quality, but it has not set itself clear priorities to correspond to real needs of teachers in the process of school reform, with the exception of training modules taken by primary teachers (Razdevšek-Pučko, 2000).

At this moment, very little is known about how teachers themselves perceive the process and goals of the reform, their own role in this process and the nature and scope of their autonomy and professional responsibility. This is surprising if we consider that “little will be accomplished if teachers do not understand and support those reforms” (Lang, Olson, Hansen & Bänder, 1999, p.10). ‘The subjective reality’ of teachers, their perceptions, conceptions, experiences, mental models, etcetera, determine to a great extent how they are going to respond to the reform and different innovations it entails (Van den Berg & Ros, 1999).

## **2 AIMS AND SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH**

In the evaluation study carried out in 2000-2002 (Marentič Požarnik, Kalin, Šteh & Valenčič Zuljan, 2002), the main aim was to get insight into the professional autonomy and responsibility of teachers in the process of school reform from their own perspective.

We would like to present here some results of the study connected to the following main research questions:

- What is teachers’ conception of their professional autonomy – does it conform to the expectations and main goals of the reform?
- Has the perceived level of teacher autonomy changed after the reform?
- How do teachers perceive the main goals of the school reform – to what extent are they aware of changed goals which require shifts in their professional thinking and acting? How is this linked to their perceived level of autonomy?
- What are the differences in those perceptions among primary school class teachers (teaching students aged 6 to 10), primary school subject teachers (teaching students aged 11 to 14) and secondary school subject teachers (teaching students aged 15 to 18)?

### **3 METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Main Instrument**

The main instrument was a questionnaire with a number of closed and some open-ended questions, which allowed for a free construction of answers by the teachers. The questionnaire was pre-tested. The basis for categorising the answers obtained was a preliminary classification of teachers' answers according to their complexity. Answers were also compared and validated by theory and findings from previous research. Three researchers cooperated in setting categories and in classifying answers.

The data was processed using the statistical package SPSS for Windows, using the following statistical procedures: Descriptive Statistics, univariate and multivariate Analysis of Variance, chi-square, and, in the cases of significant correlations between variables, also the appropriate correlation coefficient.

#### **3.2 Sample**

The study has been carried out on a population of Slovenian primary schools of the second and third "wave" of school reform (this means all teachers from the schools that introduced the 9-year primary school in the school years 2000/01 and 2001/02 in their 1<sup>st</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades). Also, teachers from a stratified sample of general secondary schools (»gimnazije«) were included. In those schools, the new curricula have been gradually introduced from the first grade on, starting in 1998.

The questionnaires were returned by 268 or 68% of primary school class teachers (grades 1 - 4; among them were also pre-school teachers), by 129 or 66% of primary school subject teachers (grades 5 - 9) and only by 71 or 22% of secondary school teachers (grades 9 -12). We can presume that those teachers were more concerned than the rest that did not respond. But we have to be cautious in generalising the results. Among primary class teachers, 57% had a 2-year professional training, the rest had a 4-year university training. In primary school subject teachers, there were 36% with a 2-year training, in secondary school subject teachers, only 3%.

The sample included four different categories of teachers according to the years of teaching experience, namely:

- 0 to 2 years (7.7%);
- 2.5 to 10 years (27.8%);
- 10.5 to 20 years (38.8%);
- 20.5 to 38 years (25.7%).

It has to be mentioned that 9-year schools included in the sample were in a sort of privileged position as they, as “leaders” of reform, enjoyed a relatively strong support in terms of in-service training, material conditions and public attention.

## 4 MAIN RESULTS

### 4.1 Teachers’ Conception of Autonomy

We tried to establish authentic constructs by forming categories based on content analysis of teachers’ responses to the open-ended question “What does it mean to you to be autonomous?” A preliminary categorization showed that the main dichotomy was simplicity – complexity of the conceptions of autonomy; more complex answers included also the value dimension - responsibility (in terms of ‘new professionalism’). This was the basis for the following 5 categories (examples - quotes from original answers are added):

1. *Simple, non-differentiated conception – 21.6%*  
(autonomy as independence and freedom)  
Example: “Autonomous for me means independent, free.”
2. *Autonomy as opportunity to make choices – 23.1%*  
(in teaching content, methods or both)  
Example: “It means to be free in the choice of teaching methods and approaches and also some content.”
3. *Autonomy of decisions in the given context/frame – 24.2%*  
(the context represents a frame with certain limits, like: existing curricula, teaching goals, textbooks)  
Examples: “An autonomous teacher has free choice of content and methods but not of goals, which are given,” “The teacher can chose among verified textbooks; s/he decides how to proceed in the classroom. It is goals that are important, not teaching content.”
4. *Autonomy as professional responsibility (non-differentiated) – 6.9%*  
Example: “More autonomy means more responsibility.”
5. *Autonomy as professional responsibility (differentiated) – 23.5%*  
Aspects of teachers’ responsibility:
  - for in-service training and personal growth;
  - for team work, cooperative learning;
  - for considering students’ and parents’ ideas and needs;
  - for setting appropriate learning goals.

Examples: “It means to choose content and methods according to my observations of pupils’ abilities and interests,” “To choose content according to goals, together with my colleague and in cooperation with parents,” “Independent planning of goals and their realization.”

The answers varied a lot in complexity – from simple, one-dimensional to more elaborated and differentiated conceptions. Only about 30% of the teachers connected autonomy with professional responsibility, which brings it nearer to the concept of ‘new professionalism’; most of the answers correspond with the ‘weak’ conception of autonomy (see Table 20-1).

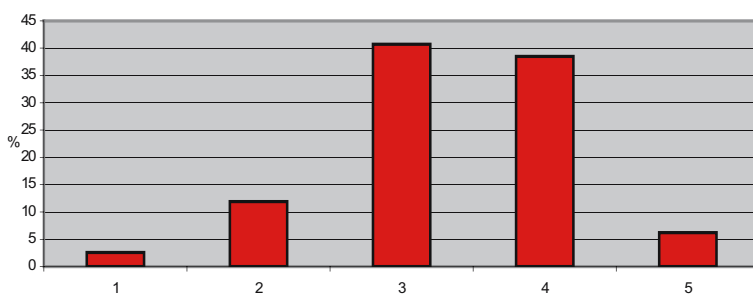
There were no consistent or statistically significant differences found in the frequencies of categories of autonomy between different groups of teachers ( $\chi^2 = 8.74, df = 8, p = 0.365$ ), nor with the level of their education ( $\chi^2 = 8.85, df = 4, p = 0.065$ ), or years of service ( $\chi^2 = 12.95, df = 12, p = 0.373$ ).

Conceptions of autonomy	Class teachers		Primary s. subject teachers		Secondary s. subject teachers		All teachers	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1. Simple, non-differentiated conception	67	25.7	19	14.7	14	19.7	100	21.6
2. Autonomy as opportunity for choice	56	21.4	33	25.6	18	25.4	107	23.1
3. Autonomy of decisions in the given context/frame	58	22.2	37	28.7	16	22.5	112	24.2
4. Autonomy as professional responsibility (non-differentiated)	18	6.9	7	5.4	7	9.9	32	6.9
5. Autonomy as professional responsibility (differentiated)	60	23.8	32	24.8	16	22.5	109	23.5
6. Other	2	0.8	1	0.8	0	0	3	0.6
Cum. F/%	261	100	129	100	71	100	463	100

Table 20-1. Conceptions of autonomy in different groups of teachers.

## 4.2 The perceived Change of Autonomy after the Reform

Teachers were asked to rate on a 5-point scale the perceived change of their level of autonomy after the reform (see Figure 20-1.)



- 1 – much less autonomous
- 2 – less autonomous
- 3 – equally autonomous
- 4 – more autonomous
- 5 – much more autonomous

Figure 20-1. Teachers' ratings of the level of their autonomy after the reform ( $M = 3.34$ ,  $S.D. = 0.86$ ,  $N = 454$ ).

There were statistically significant differences among different groups of teachers in mean ratings of change of their autonomy after the reform ( $F = 22.38$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ); see Table 20-2).

	Mean	Std. Dev.
primary school class teachers	3.55	0.05
primary school subject teachers	3.17	0.07
secondary school subject teachers	2.85	0.10

Table 20-2. Differences among groups of teachers' levels of autonomy after the reform.

The open-ended comments that teachers added to the ratings of perceptions of their autonomy shed additional light on reasons for those differences. The comments were categorized on the basis of content analysis (by three independent researchers) ranging from those teachers who experienced less autonomy to those who experienced increased autonomy. We present here only answers from the extreme categories, which also show

the greatest differences between the groups of teachers ( $\chi^2 = 74.90$ ,  $df = 14$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ; Contingency Coefficient = 0.39):

I feel less autonomous...

“... because of administrative regulations and other limiting conditions.”

was mentioned by:

- 6% of class teachers;
- 10% of subject teachers;
- 40% of secondary teachers.

“... because I have to cooperate with other teachers.”

was mentioned by:

- 7% of class teachers;
- 13% of subject teachers;
- 3% of secondary teachers.

I feel more autonomous...

“...because I have more responsibilities and because of personal growth and cooperation.”

was mentioned by:

- 20% of class teachers;
- 13% of subject teachers;
- 3% of secondary teachers.

The differences can be partly explained by differences in pre-service professional preparation of primary and secondary teachers and partly by the amount of support during the first phase of the reform. As already mentioned, primary class teachers were given a large amount of support to cope with changes. There were numerous projects, seminars, visits by school counsellors; the novelties were very well prepared like team teaching in the first grade (team consisting of class teacher and preschool teacher, half of the time) and introducing descriptive assessment in addition to numerical in the first 3 grades. National tests are optional at the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and were not yet introduced at the time of our study.

Subject teachers in the grades 7-9 in the schools of the first two “reform cohorts” were also quite well supported; they were also very few (because,

since schools were given a choice as to whether to introduce the new programs beginning with the 1<sup>st</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> grade, only a few decided to start with the 7<sup>th</sup> grade). Teachers of the same subjects had to increase their level of cooperation with other teachers and adapt in other ways to teaching in the new setting system, consisting of three achievement groups in Slovene, English and Maths in the last two grades. Those teachers in comparison with other groups of teachers most often (13%) report that they are less autonomous as they have to adapt to other teachers. This shows a lack of an important component of 'new professionalism' and autonomy, that is ability to cooperate.

The finding that secondary teachers expressed the same or lower level of autonomy after the reform is surprising only at the first sight. Those teachers enjoyed a relatively strong academic but weak professional training, as already described. Other research studies show that up to one half of those teachers see themselves mainly in the role of transmitter or shaper (after Fox, 1983, Šteh Kure, 2000); they tend to employ traditional methods of teaching – lecturing with some questions and answers. Also, most of their students expect them to be just 'a good transmitter' who responds to student questions (Šteh Kure, 2000).

Those teachers did not get enough additional training during the reform in order to introduce more active and varied methods of teaching. At the same time, high stake external testing at the end of secondary school increased the tendency – and the pressure from students and parents alike – to transmit information, necessary to pass exams.

On the other hand, primary class teachers who were often believed not to have "their specific expert field" as they have to teach all the subjects, have shown more confidence in their professional autonomy, which consists also of wise and reflected teaching decisions for which they seem to be quite well prepared. "One can be as autonomous as one is capable of being" (Peček & Razdevšek-Pučko, 2000, p.268).

### **4.3 How the Teachers perceive the Main Goals of the School Reform**

The answers of teachers to the open question "What is in your opinion the main goal of school reform?" were categorised based on a preliminary review of responses, classifications confirmed in previous research (Fox, 1983; Valenčič Zuljan, 1999) and a theoretical concept of 'new professionalism', which implies "a new orientation to teaching" as an important feature of teacher autonomy. An essential component is a shift from teaching as transmission of knowledge to transactional and transformational, student-centred teaching, whereby learners are trained in

autonomous, active thinking and learning for themselves (Niemi & Kohonen, 1995).

The categories were as follows (examples in terms of quotes from original answers are added):

1. *Changes in curriculum content – 11.5%*  
Examples: “Adding new content,” “Omitting superfluous content,” “Making interdisciplinary connections.”
2. *Different transmission of content – 5.7%*  
Example: “Better, more interesting transmission.”
3. *Orientation to students – 25%*  
Examples: “A more pupil-friendly school,” “Less stress,” “Caring for each student, taking into account individual abilities, interests and expectations.”
4. *Different, active methods of instruction – 9.4%*  
Examples: “Learning through play,” “Teaching by problem solving,” “Project work,” “Creative learning, pupil as researcher.”
5. *The quality of knowledge – 16.1%*  
Examples: The result of schooling should be “Useful knowledge,” “Permanent knowledge,” “Learning for life.”
6. *A more complex view (of instruction) – 11.7%*  
(a meaningful combination of categories 3, 4 and/or 5, like seeing connections between goals, methods and results or employing different methods because of individual differences in students)  
Examples: “Taking into account students’ interests and abilities – give to everybody the maximum,” “Less stress, teachers should limit themselves to the essential goals, transmit less facts – making students more independent.”
7. *Metacognitive aspects of knowledge, learning and personal growth – 11.7%*  
Examples: “In today’s changing world, students should not only learn content, but also strategies for using new technologies, planning their work, analysing problems...,” “To learn how to learn,” “To teach students how to seek knowledge, prepare for life-long learning,” “The student should be independent, capable of self-assessment.”

8.9% of the responses were categorised as “other.” Some of these responses referred to the implementation of the school reform in general (such as: better cooperation among teachers).

In the perceptions of the main goals of school reform we found significant differences among the three groups of teachers ( $\chi^2 = 78.54$ ,  $df = 14$ ,  $p = 0,000$ ) (See Figure 20-2).



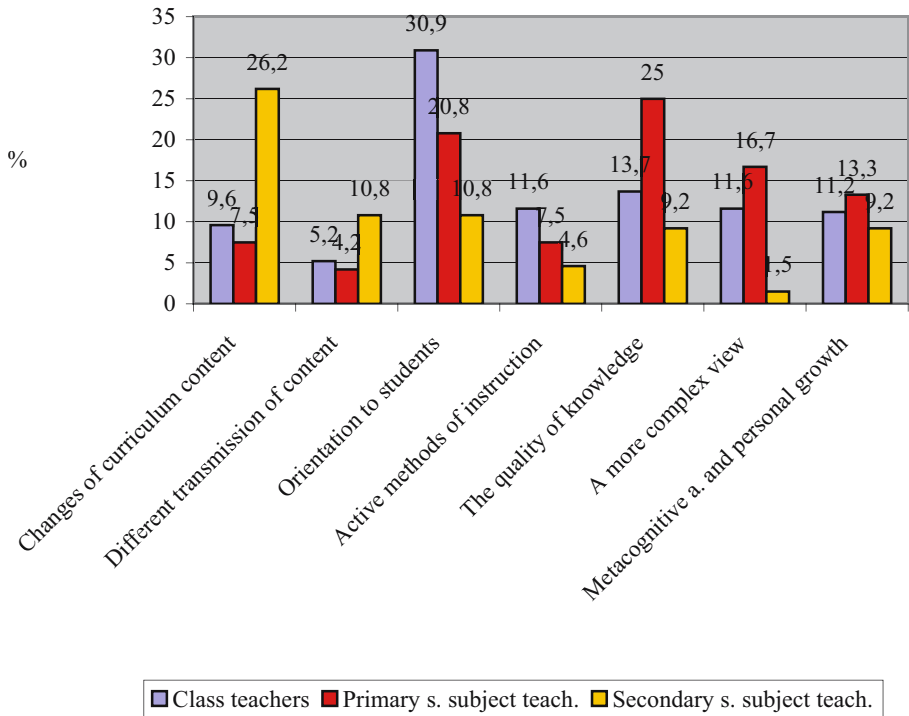


Figure 20-2. The main goals of the school reform for the three groups of teachers.

For *class teachers*, the most important category of goals has to do with orientation to students (30.9%); only 20.8% of primary school subject teachers and 10.8% of secondary school subject teachers gave answers that fell into this category. The least important category for them is “different transmission of content” (5.2%).

For *primary school subject teachers* the most important goal is to increase quality of the results obtained – the knowledge that should be permanent, useful, practical, etcetera (25%). This category is less pronounced in the other two groups of teachers. “Different transmission of content” (4.2%) has, like class teachers, the lowest rank.

The picture is quite different in *secondary school subject teachers*; the largest category of answers about the goals of reform is “changes of the curriculum content” (26.2%); this category is not as prominent for class teachers (9.6%) and primary school subject teachers (7.5%). Secondary

teachers, on the other hand, very rarely mentioned “different, active methods of instruction” (4.6%) and a more complex view of instruction (1.5%).

Generally speaking, goals like “a more complex view of instruction” and “metacognitive aspects of knowledge, learning and personal growth” are higher in the hierarchy. They come nearer to a transformational view of teaching and to the main (declared) goals of the reform. The category of “a more complex view of instruction” includes 16.7% answers of primary school subject teachers, 11.6% answers of primary school class teachers and only 1.5% of secondary school subject teachers. The metacognitive category comes fourth in all groups of teachers, with 13.3% in primary school subject teachers, 11.2% in primary school class teachers and 9.2% in secondary school teachers.

#### **4.4 The Connection between the perceived Level of Autonomy and the Goals of School Reform**

We were interested in whether there are statistically significant differences between groups of teachers in evaluating the degree of autonomy as related to the conceptions of autonomy, goals of the school reform and experiencing obstacles in introducing the changes. Results show that all these factors significantly influence the teachers' evaluation of the degree of their autonomy. In particular, the influence of the goals of the school reform is statistically significant:  $F = 3.86$ ,  $df = 7$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ,  $r^2 = 0.08$ .

The teachers that see the main goal of the reform in metacognitive aspects of knowledge, learning and personal growth, also feel more autonomous than before (level of autonomy after the reform:  $\bar{x} = 3.60$ ,  $SD = 0.15$ ); the same could be claimed about the teachers who see the main goal in quality of knowledge (mean rating  $\bar{x} = 3.50$ ,  $SD = 0.16$ ). The lowest mean rating of their level of autonomy after the reform came from teachers who see the main goal of the reform in changes of curricular content ( $\bar{x} = 2.69$ ,  $SD = 0.15$ ). Here, secondary school teachers prevail.

## **5 CONCLUSION**

Development of teachers' professional autonomy is regarded (and officially stated) as the main goal of the school reform. The results of the study show that teachers' conceptions of autonomy vary a great deal in terms of complexity. Only a minority (about 30%) has a more complex perception that connects autonomy with professional responsibility, in accordance with the concept of 'new professionalism' (Niemi & Kohonen, 1995). In general,

a “weak” conception prevails, which limits teacher autonomy to classroom activities which may conform to the expectations of official school policy.

Consistent differences among different groups of teachers (class primary school teachers, subject teachers and secondary school teachers) have been found in perceptions of their changes of autonomy after the reform. Primary school class teachers feel, on average, more autonomous than before, secondary school teachers the same or less, and with primary school subject teachers falling in-between. The analysis of the system of pre-service and in-service education and support of changes, as well as of teachers’ own comments help to explain those differences. A good professional education seems to be more important than strictly “academic” training; besides, an increase of external pressures – a stress on external testing, together with strict regulations – contributed to lowering the sense of autonomy in secondary school teachers. This is probably also due to the fact that the amount of support to cope with the changes, in terms of in-service training, school counselling, project work, was much more pronounced at the lower levels of schooling.

Correspondingly, the perception of main goals of reform varied a lot among different groups of teachers. Goals that entail changes in teachers’ roles in the sense of more student-centered, active teaching were more frequently mentioned by primary school class teachers and subject teachers, who also stressed the quality of knowledge. Again, secondary teachers have shown a reduced perspective (and a least complex view) of the reform as comprising mainly changes in the teaching content and its transmission. There was also a significant connection between the complexity of perceived goals and level of autonomy after the reform; teachers who see the main goal of the reform as being changes of the teaching content - over which they feel they do not have much influence – feel less autonomous than before. These are especially secondary teachers, traditionally ‘masters of content’ who did not get enough support to change their beliefs and practice. On the contrary, students and parents expect from them to prepare students to pass the tests successfully.

Thus, the results show some considerable discrepancies between the intentions and rhetoric of the reform and the perceptions on the part of the teachers. These discrepancies seem to increase with the level of school (from primary school class teachers through primary school subject teachers to secondary school subject teachers). Teachers’ perceptions of autonomy are mainly congruent with the “weak” conception (which may be in line with official intentions) and only partly conform to “new professionalism” needed to realise the “inner” reform. More research on interdependence of different aspects (perceptions of autonomy, teaching goals and teachers’ roles, together with professional development) is needed.

The findings indicate that in our school policy a more systemic approach to school renewal and more powerful, teacher-centred and school-centred strategies are needed, aiming at important changes in teachers' thinking and acting in accordance with the main goals.

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