

**Advances in Research on Teaching**  
Volume 13

# Narrative Inquiries into Curriculum Making in Teacher Education

**Julian Kitchen**  
**Darlene Ciuffetelli Parker**  
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Editors



NARRATIVE INQUIRIES  
INTO CURRICULUM MAKING  
IN TEACHER EDUCATION

# ADVANCES IN RESEARCH ON TEACHING

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ADVANCES IN RESEARCH ON TEACHING VOLUME 13

**NARRATIVE  
INQUIRIES INTO  
CURRICULUM MAKING  
IN TEACHER EDUCATION**

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# FOREWORD

This is the book many of us need and have been waiting for. Graduate studies are a transformative educational experience in teacher's lives. Exhausted teachers sitting down for an evening's master's level course after a day of teaching often say they are rejuvenated by the opportunity to reflect on their hectic days. Doctoral graduates often speak of their doctoral programs as intellectually life changing. In the idiom of this book, doctoral graduates feel they have retold a story of themselves as educators. But, inevitably, the real test begins. How to relive this retold story as many take up the role of teacher educator. Their students' journeys are altogether different than their own transformative journey through graduate school. Their students are under pressure to successfully take up the job of school teacher. Their landscape of teaching and learning is altogether unlike the professional development landscape of experienced teachers, and it is altogether unlike the teaching/learning landscape of university level graduate studies. As newly minted graduates with a new teacher education job at hand realize, what to do with one's retold story is a puzzle. They ask, "How can I use narrative inquiry in my teacher education classes? No one else is teaching it in my faculty and all the courses seem to be about content and teaching method." Depending on circumstances, some add "What do I do about the new school policies that I really don't understand but which don't seem to fit what I'm thinking?" What seemed so transformative in graduate school now seems to present a mountainous hurdle. It is a hurdle in the sense that this is the moment to begin reliving the retold story.

Reliving the untold story is easier said than done. Living and reliving are altogether unlike telling and retelling, the latter two of which might be thought of as the theoretical, textual, side to a narrative journey. Colloquially put, reliving comes down to rather sharp brass tacks. It often comes down to teaching against the narrative grain embedded in student teachers' educational narratives, and it often comes down to going against the narrative grain of one's university landscape of teacher education. Further complicating this double hurdle is the narrativist's understanding that the hurdle is much more than a relatively easily filled knowledge gap. Narrativists cannot tell students why they are wrong by providing the facts

nor can they “enlighten” their institutions by bringing them up to date through institutional committee structures. The hurdles are narrative ones, students with narrative educational histories and institutions with the equivalent. Students and institutions need to be viewed as expressions of historically embedded narratives of experience. Reliving is complicated because neither the name calling and judgments of criticism (“My narrative is right. Theirs is wrong. They are racist. What can one do?”) nor the status quo of giving in and going with the flow is a satisfying reliving. Reliving means living on edge, in tension, among intersecting, competing, narrative threads. But saying this is facile. In many faculties these days, judgment is rendered in yearend reviews where student evaluations are what impress institutional administrators.

How to respond when asked “What to do?” Before this book my answer, and I suspect the answer of many in positions such as mine, was to be wise beyond words and say things like “Do your best,” and, “Well, you have come to the reliving stage. Go forth and relive.” I was director of a Hong Kong doctoral cohort program. Once, when cohort members were participating in a Mainland China workshop on narrative inquiry, the group expressed angst over trying to use narrative inquiry in their teacher education classes in the context of a test and achievement-oriented educational setting. I responded by saying, “Context can’t be wished away. All narrative work is done in context which, too, has its own narrative history(s). So figure out the context and how to work with it. This is your central narrative inquiry.” Had I been wiser I would have asked Flora Wai Ming Yu to speak up. Her dissertation was, in large part, a study of her efforts to use narrative inquiry in her Hong Kong preservice teacher education classes. Her writing is directly relevant to this book’s inquiry. Readers will find her thoughts a useful addition to the intellectual community under creation in this book (There are, of course, many others who belong in this book or its sequel and in this community.)

Easily offered responses to the “what to do” question are not what is needed. What is needed is a community for discussion and exemplars to explore. In an often quoted book, *The Call of Stories*, Robert Coles uses literature as a therapeutic narrative resource for medical patients. Cole’s idea is that by interacting with literary texts patients could begin to put their health situation in context and explore potential options. *Narrative Inquiries into Curriculum Making in Teacher Education* is such a text for teacher educators. This book is a literature resource for exploring the question, “What do I do now that I have a job in teacher education?”

I also believe that this book could be a start for making a narrative inquiry teacher education discourse community. Somewhat by way of an aside to Editors and Authors, I want to suggest that they explore some of the modern technologies to create a site where teacher educators struggling with narrative issues in their teaching can enter into discussion. The moral struggles Ramona Cutri expresses regarding her cultural teaching is illustrative. She puts it beautifully when she writes “The effort to achieve shared narrative authority, even when teacher educators and teacher candidates disagree on moral grounds, is a narrative tension that I still, and probably always will, find a challenge to negotiate.” Without a safe community setting, tensions such as this are forbidding. Why not make the book a centerpiece for a discourse community?

The book is filled with stories by teacher educators of themselves and of their students. As the editors and authors insist, these are stories of teacher educators and their students *in relation*. The stories draw us in as imagination goes to work on the detailed practical realities of the stories. This is so for a general reader such as me. I can only imagine how gripping particular chapter stories must be for music educators, social studies educators, multiculturalism and cross-cultural educators, community, parent and family educators, immigrant educators (I am using these words quite loosely), and those building their teaching on specific methodologies such as letter writing, metaphor, reflective journals and body mapping, topics explored in specific chapters. A potentially compelling feature of all the chapters is how one’s ideas of teaching grow by teaching, and how teacher educators may simultaneously educate, be educated, and engage in genuine, publishable, inquiry.

The language throughout the book is rich with humanity: relationship, living authentically, teaching authentically, co-constructing, living curriculum, written honestly, reciprocal learning, neuro networks of my brain, re-imagining reform, engaging holistically, emotionally and aesthetically, candidates’ experience, letter writing, metaphors, curriculum of lives, curriculum of life, collaboration, conversation, and many more. Each chapter, even Craig’s scholarly, highly citable, literature review, has a personal author voice, expressing strong personal and social ambitions for student teachers and for society. The chapters, and the book they collectively craft, end in uncertainty. How could we do it better? What is the next step? What is happening to me as I pursue these inquiries and ways of teaching teacher candidates? Where do we go from here? These questions keep alive the inquiry in narrative inquiry.

In the final chapter Debbie Pushor, Julian Kitchen, and Darlene Ciuffetelli Parker lend their voice to Cheryl Craig's important suggestion that the book points the way toward research on the preparation of teachers as curriculum makers. Under different circumstances, one could write a full paper, indeed a book, in response to this suggestion. For now, however, we should welcome this book for how it speaks to teacher educators searching for ways to co-construct teacher education curricula. There are rich possibilities herein for exploring the question "What do I do now that I have a teacher education job?" As I imagine this teacher education landscape, admittedly from a distance and up 10 floors, I tend to see the reliving narrative as life-long. In due time, and as relatively comfortable narrative threads and patterns take shape as teacher educators relive and, so to speak, re-retell their reliving, the grand themes suggested by Craig, Pinnegar, and Hamilton, and the book's three editors, may begin to take on the shape of narrative inquiries.

I want now to develop a thought that itched at me as I read the book. I trust that the authors and editors will not think I am being ungenerous as I scratch this itch. My thought may be considered as offered in the spirit of collegial debate.

As I read this book I felt the need, as I often do, to talk to my teacher, Joe Schwab. I have had many direct, extraordinarily intense, conversations with Joe Schwab over my dissertation and related matters. For several years following his retirement from Chicago and move to California, and my leaving Chicago for Toronto, we had conversations over narrative inquiry, especially conversations over personal practical knowledge. In recent years I have had to make do with an imaginary conversation with Schwab. He was not one to easily give praise and his form of praise mostly came in the shape of paying enough attention to what one said or wrote to tell them why it was off track, wrong, or even stupid, and what they might do, as he always said, to "fix." So I want to do a little of that with this book as I explore the source of the itch.

Partly my urge to consult with Schwab reflects the universal respect students have for influential teachers, a reflection perhaps of a Chinese genetics of education. In this post-modern era teacher authority is to be avoided like the plague. (But have a look at Margaret Olson's notion of narrative authority.) Still, I regularly consult myself on how Schwab might have thought about things. Beyond this, and more important to the book, is the fact that Schwab provides a practical framework for thinking about this book's practical curriculum inquiry topic. Some of the authors explicitly use Schwab's work and others do so by association. What is missing from the

book and which partly explains my urge to consult with Schwab as I write this Foreword, arises from the fact that he was an advisor, and detailed paper critic, on the early work in narrative inquiry, particularly on the concept of *personal practical knowledge* which he thought to be of significance. The concept of knowledge at the base of narrative inquiry continues, at least for me, to reflect Schwab's 1983 editing of a definition of personal practical knowledge to read "What we mean by knowledge is that body of convictions – conscious or unconscious – which have arisen from experience intimate, social, and traditional from which choice of alternative actions proceed. We are saying, then, that the teacher's choice of what to do in a classroom, for example or what a principal's choice of decisions may be, are choices grounded in knowledge in the sense defined which is personal in the sense defined." (JJS) So when people in this book say "C and C did this and that" they are, whether they know it or not, saying something like "Consider Schwab's influence on this and that." Moreover, if Schwab were to actually read this book he might well say, continuing the intellectual genealogy, "I would like to discuss this with John Dewey, Richard McKeon, Robert Hutchins, Plato and Aristotle." As the Sister School project with China develops I find myself seeing Confucian thought in cross-cultural narrative inquiry studies. It is well known that John Dewey spent several years in China. Although the influence of Dewey on Chinese thought is often explored, the influence of China on Dewey is mostly neglected. Yet, 17 years after his China travels, Dewey wrote: "Nothing Western looks quite the same any more, and this is as near to a renewal of youth as can be hoped for in this world." These words speak to an intellectual transformation. When we read Dewey, especially works following his China visit, we are reading hidden expressions of Confucian thought. The narrative lesson is that, like individual lives, intellectual narrative histories are webs of inquiry spreading over space and time.

We find ourselves in an intellectual age or, perhaps, it is a feature of our Western academic culture, in which we feel the need to claim territory. Although I am grateful for the shape of the book and for its noting of C and C's "this's and that's" it is important, at least for me, to think of myself as part of an intellectual genealogy. I see Joe Schwab in everything I do and, though perhaps a touch veiled, I also see Dewey, McKeon, and Hutchins, and always further veiled, the dialectic created by reading Plato and Aristotle and now, it seems to me, Confucius. As I read the book I see intellectual narrative threads trailing back through time. The book might have been written with a more narrative sense of the long temporal and spatial reach of the threads embedded in its pages, or, put another way, with less attention to C and C's, "this's and that's."



I need also to say, as I have tried to acknowledge in a number of writings, that the particular direction and shape of one's thinking and writing, the "this's and that's" attributed to C and C in this book, are almost always under the influence of particular students. I was once asked by someone doing a book on innovations in methodology to name the student I thought was most significant to my thinking, to which I replied, "The last one," meaning that ideas keep chugging along and if we are sensitive to intersecting narratives with students, we are led along new plot lines. Being part of on an intellectual genealogy means being a fulcrum or nexus point in-between one's intellectual ancestors, one's teachers, and one's students.

In short, the thought that itched as I read the book is that it gives too much to C and C. "Good" C and C tends to be contrasted with "bad" educational reform landscape. Both have narrative histories. Understanding where we are in the order of things, including where we are in an intellectual genealogy, is one of our overall narrative tasks. With hope that the editors are forgiving I am compelled to say they are overly generous in claiming "Narrative inquiry in teacher education would not have been possible without the groundbreaking work of Connelly and Clandinin."

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**PART I**  
**AN OVERVIEW OF NARRATIVE**  
**INQUIRY IN TEACHER EDUCATION**



# NARRATIVE INQUIRY, CURRICULUM MAKING, AND TEACHER EDUCATION

Darlene Ciuffetelli Parker, Debbie Pushor and  
Julian Kitchen

## INTRODUCTION

This is a book for teacher educators. It is also a book for teacher candidates and educational stakeholders who are interested in using storied practice in teacher education. It is about teacher educators and teacher candidates as *curriculum makers* (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992) who engage in narrative inquiry practice. As editors of this volume, we came to this important writing project as a result of our respective work using narrative inquiry that originated from our studies with Dr. Michael Connelly and Dr. Jean Clandinin. In a large sense, this book represents our interpretations, as second-generation narrative inquirers, of three main ideas: narrative inquiry, curriculum making, and teacher education. Narrative inquiry, curriculum making, and teacher education are vitally interconnected concepts that offer an alternative way of understanding the current landscape of education. Narrative inquiry in teacher education would not have been possible without the groundbreaking work of Connelly and Clandinin.

In the mid-1980s, Michael Connelly and Jean Clandinin began working with classroom teachers who shared stories, journals, letters, and

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biographies. These narratives of experience formed the basis for their seminal book, *Teachers as Curriculum Planners: Narratives of Experience* (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988). Through this research alongside teachers, Connelly and Clandinin came to understand that experience was central to teachers' lives; they termed these experiences *personal practical knowledge* and began to view teachers as *curriculum planners*. Their influential research program on the Narrative Study of Teachers' Personal Practical Knowledge consolidated their meaning and gave rise to the terms *teachers as curriculum planners* and *personal practical knowledge* of teachers. Connelly and Clandinin revolutionized the way curriculum was conceptualized by foregrounding how classroom teachers *experienced* and *made* curriculum from their personal and professional knowledge, rather than through the top-down conduit of policy, documents, and standardized measures. Indeed, their work and research was cutting edge at a time when "best methods" were becoming standardized. Their work remains relevant to educators confronting the present era of "accountability."

In this opening chapter, we look back at Connelly and Clandinin's *Teachers as Curriculum Planners* to reflect on their conceptualizations of teacher knowledge and their practical narrative inquiry applications in the context of the current landscape of teacher education. We seek to make explicit the use of narrative inquiry with teacher educators living alongside teacher candidates, just as Connelly and Clandinin made explicit their groundbreaking use of narrative inquiry working alongside classroom teachers. To explore and illustrate our intention further, we have organized this chapter into three parts:

1. Personal curriculum as a metaphor for understanding teacher candidates in teacher education;
2. From curriculum planning to curriculum making, and
3. From Schwab's four commonplaces of curriculum to Connelly and Clandinin's three commonplaces of narrative inquiry.

In this manner, we merge the past with the present, and we re-figure both the past and the present in our use of *Teachers as Curriculum Planners* as a way of living, narratively inquiring and practicing alongside teacher candidates in teacher education milieus. We imagine ways to bring Connelly and Clandinin's conceptualizations of teacher knowledge and narrative inquiry techniques and methods from the classroom landscapes of the late 1980s into present day teacher education classes, with teacher educators who are engaged in narrative inquiry as a way of making *curriculum in practice* (Connelly, He, & Phillion, 2008) with teacher candidates.

## **PERSONAL CURRICULUM AS A METAPHOR FOR UNDERSTANDING TEACHER CANDIDATES' CURRICULUM IN TEACHER EDUCATION**

### *How We Came to this Book Project*

As education becomes increasingly complex at the local, national, and international levels, as society becomes more diverse, and as the information age adds new pressures, many people take comfort in standardized, formulaic, and traditional approaches to education as a means of reducing its complexity. In contrast, narrative inquiry helps us attend to this complexity by grounding our teacher education practices in experience. In so doing, we become *curriculum makers* alongside teacher candidates and we help them to see possibilities for becoming *curriculum makers* alongside their students. It is in this *curriculum making* that they are able to navigate through current complexity while learning to teach and live in 21st-century society.

As we imagined this book, we were convinced that many teacher educators also were very interested in utilizing personal experience methods and narrative inquiry in their courses. It was a critical incident that occurred at a conference that Julian and Darlene attended in 2008 that brought our thinking to the forefront. Julian recounts here the story of how this book was first conceived from that conference experience:

Darlene and I attended a conference presentation in 2008 in which narrative inquiry methodology was criticized for focussing more on personal stories than on improving practice. This comment reminded Darlene that the accountability agenda continues to press against our understanding of meaningful teacher education. I reflected further and wondered what we could do to increase teacher educators' understanding of narrative inquiry as a means of improving practice. After puzzling deeply about the issue and through detailed conversations with other narrative inquirers, I raised the idea with Darlene of the need for a book on narrative inquiry and teacher education, perhaps something akin to *Teachers as Curriculum Planners*. Over the next few weeks, we entertained the possibility of editing a volume that, through the telling and retelling of stories, would support teacher educators as they reflect critically on their practice to prepare teacher candidates for classroom teaching. We conceptualized a collection of chapters by teacher educators who employ narrative inquiry in their daily practice as they live alongside teacher candidates in the making of curriculum. Stefinee Pinnegar, the Emerald's teacher education series editor, encouraged us in our efforts.

Soon after, we invited Debbie Pushor to join us because we believed that her related yet varied perspectives on narrative inquiry in teacher education would enrich our book. In particular, we were impressed by [Clandinin, Pushor, and Murray Orr's \(2007\)](#)

articulation of the importance of “[m]oving from telling stories of our teaching practices to narratively inquiring into our teaching practices” (p. 30). Believing, as they did, in the complexity and richness of narrative inquiry, beyond simple storytelling, we imagined chapters in which multiple teacher educators would make visible that complexity as they attended to the impact of their narrative inquiries on their own and their teacher candidates’ beliefs and practices. Knowing Debbie’s work in teacher education reflected an appreciation of narrative inquiry as both the phenomenon of stories and a rigorous methodology for constructing meaning from these stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), we invited Debbie to take this journey with us. (Julian, Reflection, October 14, 2010)

Our journey began “in the midst” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 63) as narrative inquiry had been central, for each of us, to our development as teachers and teacher educators because we were first introduced to it in the early 1990s. Since that early introduction, Darlene has been inquiring narratively into her practice in regard to administration (Ciuffetelli Parker, 2008a), teacher education programming (Ciuffetelli Parker & Volante, 2009; Ciuffetelli Parker, Fazio, Volante, & Cherubini, 2008; Ciuffetelli Parker & Cherubini, 2008), tenureship in the academy (Ciuffetelli Parker, 2006; Ciuffetelli Parker & McQuirter Scott, 2010), and teacher candidates’ literacy narratives (Ciuffetelli Parker, 2008b, 2010). For Debbie, in contrast, her narrative inquiries have attended to the positioning of parents on school landscapes (Pushor, 2001; Pushor & Ruitenberg, 2005; Pushor & Murphy 2010), to parents as holders of knowledge about children, teaching, and learning (Pushor, 2010a, 2010b), and to expanding teacher’s and teacher educator’s notions of milieu as we make curriculum attentive to all four of Schwab’s commonplaces (Pushor, 2009). Julian’s narrative inquiries have focused on his teacher development practices (Kitchen, 2006, 2009a, 2009b) and teacher education practices (Kitchen, 2005a, 2005b, 2008, 2009c, 2010).

### *A Personal Curriculum*

Connelly and Clandinin (1988) professed that “there is no better way to study curriculum than to study ourselves” (p. 31). Furthermore, they reasoned that understanding the lives of students is an important undertaking, one which recognizes that there is no test that tells teachers what is most important and that “this realization will come about as you ask yourself very hard narrative questions. Your curriculum is a metaphor for understanding your students’ curriculum” (p. 31). We and the other authors in this volume take this notion seriously and it underlies the ways in which

we educate teacher candidates. We do this first by following Connelly and Clandinin's (1988) central view on understanding curriculum:

It is simply that all teaching and learning questions – all curriculum matters – be looked at from the point of view of the involved persons. We believe that curriculum development and curriculum planning are fundamentally questions of teacher thinking and teacher doing. We believe that it is teachers' "personal knowledge" that determines all matters of significance relative to the planned conduct of classrooms. So "personal knowledge" is the key term. (p. 4)

In their book, Connelly and Clandinin (1988) devote an entire section – "Narrative: Your Personal Curriculum as a Metaphor for Curriculum and Teaching" – to introducing the term *personal practical knowledge*, knowledge that, as they described, is found in a person's past experience, in their present mind and body, and in their future plans and actions. Their emphasis on teachers' knowing in the classroom, a main emphasis, was based on their reading of Dewey's (1938) theory of experience: that curriculum is experienced in situations and that people have experiences which are, by nature, made up of and surrounded by other people and the environment (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988). Curriculum, then, is viewed as experience, as having feeling and emotion and with an aesthetic and moral component; it is alive with the interaction of persons, situations, from the past, present, and future. Thus, to understand curriculum, by their definition, is to understand yourself. It is one's personal lived experiences – school experiences and outside of school experiences – that make up the core of education. Because teachers' knowledge is found and lived in their narratives of experience, narratives of experience are, then, educative. And teachers' knowledge is found and lived in their narratives of experience.

Living alongside teacher candidates as teacher educators, we, like they do, live a personal and professional curriculum. Our curriculum can be understood and lived out as Connelly and Clandinin lived theirs out working alongside classroom teachers. There is no better way to illustrate this than to talk further about our own personal curriculum as a metaphor for understanding our teacher candidates' curriculum. Here, we use Darlene's personal curriculum story as an example. Her retrospective narrative illustrates how the act of lifetime writing has been a metaphor for understanding her personal curriculum:

It seems as if I have been writing my life forever. When I was twelve years old I began writing daily entries of my school life, my friendships, my family, and all those "worldly" experiences that seem so critical to an adolescent girl approaching adulthood. I had not the insight then to imagine that my writings would one day become documents to a living life. I had not the awareness of how much self-reflection, self-knowledge and



self-identity my writing was providing. I wrote and I write still, because it is a passion. But more than a passion, writing is a way of representing my world—to myself.

I understand my journal entries now, along with countless other writings in my life, as my *personal literacy narrative*. Goldberg (1986) believes that being a writer “is a whole way of life, a way of seeing, thinking, being” (p. 29). For me, writing has been a life-long tool of thought, a way of reflecting upon my life experiences, a way of pulling my life forward with new understandings and meanings. It is as if I write in order to critique my own living experiences so that I am then able to fulfill future experiences with a documented history of the lessons life teaches me.

My [*personal narrative*] tells my story as an educator. Such was my introduction to narrative inquiry. As Connelly and Clandinin (1988) reason, narrative as a story of life means that we need to move our idea of education beyond that of schooling. The *personal literacy narratives* of my life have encouraged me to cope, even make sense of my personal and professional experiences. “Writing out” my life has become a mode of learning about myself. It has become a tool of thought (Staton, 1982). I have come to understand, through writing, that my life story is my literacy story, and ultimately my curriculum. And I have embraced a narrative approach to teacher education, beginning with my own life experiences. (Ciuffetelli Parker, 2004)

Darlene viewed the act of writing as paramount to understanding her life. When she first came across the work *Teachers as Curriculum Planners* in the early 1990s, she was inspired to enroll in the graduate program at University of Toronto and, subsequently, register in Connelly’s curriculum foundation course in which *Teachers as Curriculum Planners* was the core text. At the time, Darlene was a beginning teacher, enthusiastic about constructivist learning and understanding her diverse elementary students’ life experiences in an urban marginalized school community. She immersed herself in her graduate narrative inquiry work, which informed her teaching and which ultimately led to a deeply meaningful career using writing and narrative inquiry approaches – as a classroom teacher, a literacy consultant, a master and doctoral student, a school administrator, and now as a teacher educator. Her use of *literacy narratives* (Ciuffetelli Parker, 2010) in her teacher education foundation course has become a capstone to teacher candidates’ curriculum and, consequently, the narratives, “as a writing and reflective method of narrative inquiry, serve to provide storied knowledge of teacher candidates’ educational experiences as they move through to becoming teachers” (p. 1259).

Darlene’s writing experiences throughout her childhood, young adulthood, and career as a teacher educator are seen as a metaphor for her personal curriculum. From Darlene’s narrative fragment, we see how her personal life writing experiences have developed into a method of writing alongside teacher candidates and a way for her to understand her teacher

candidates' curriculum. In this volume, readers are invited to live alongside a range of authors as they make visible in their narrative inquiries the movement between their personal curriculum and their curriculum making in teacher education. Whereas Darlene used writing as a means to excavate her personal curriculum, Connelly and Clandinin presented several suggestions for excavating one's personal curriculum in *Teachers as Curriculum Planners*. They introduced practical methods for understanding personal practical knowledge through reflection (e.g., journal keeping, biography, and document analysis), through shared reflection (e.g., letter writing, storytelling, and teacher interviews), and through other aesthetic, creative means (e.g. images, personal philosophy, rhythms, narrative accounts, and metaphor). In this book, authors employ many of these methods, and in varied and diverse ways, as they make and contemplate their personal curriculum.

Stefinee Pinnegar and Mary Lynn Hamilton have a long history of shared reflection based on their correspondence with members of the Arizona Group; in chapter 3, they draw on *narrative fragments* from their correspondence as they puzzle over the question of how story becomes research in studying teacher education. The chapters in the second section "Narrative Histories/Narrative Beginnings" focus on how teacher educators have engaged in narrative inquiry to position themselves as practitioners. Grace Feuerverger's narrative inquiry in chapter 4 features a powerful personal biography combined with living alongside her students as they engage in reflective and aesthetic consideration of diversity issues. In chapter 5, a team of teacher educators from Kaye College draw on their years of collaboration to examine the complexities of storying curriculum making in a collaborative landscape of teaching and research. Julian Kitchen in chapter 6 draws on his personal professional use of metaphor as a teacher and teacher educator to illustrate practical ways in which teacher educators and teacher candidates might employ metaphor to develop their personal professional knowledge.

## FROM CURRICULUM PLANNING TO CURRICULUM MAKING

In the previous section, we revisited Connelly and Clandinin's (1988) foundational work on personal practical knowledge as a way of understanding how curriculum is lived and experienced in educative ways through

story. In this section, we turn to Connelly and Clandinin's notion of *teachers as curriculum planners* and then the further development of that notion in subsequent work (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992) to *teachers as curriculum makers*.

In *Teachers as Curriculum Planners*, Connelly and Clandinin (1988) focused on curriculum planning as curriculum inquiry, from the perspective of teachers' work in the classroom and in reform initiatives. They wrote, "Our focus here is ... on understanding [teachers'] planning as a form of inquiry into curriculum practices" (p. 170). They storied, through a lived inquiry process, how teachers shifted and changed their classroom curriculum as they "engaged in a kind of action research, an extension of the notion of curriculum inquiry ..." (p. 175). The emphasis was on a lived inquiry process: "This view of planning acknowledges the centrality of a teacher's personal practical knowledge in a narrative understanding of curriculum" (p. 185).

Clandinin and Connelly (1992) later renamed a teacher's active inquiry into curriculum as *curriculum making* rather than curriculum planning. Their new term was expansive, capturing their understanding of how the teacher makes curriculum *alongside students*. Originally, in *Teachers as Curriculum Planners*, Connelly and Clandinin (1988) defined curriculum as "one's life course of action" (p. 1); as "a person's life experience" (p. 1). Within these definitions, in the words "one's" and "a," there was a sense of singularity, a strong point of focus on the teacher as the curriculum planner. As Connelly and Clandinin continued to work with their notion of curriculum, their rich focus on education as all of life's experiences – what happens in school and everything else that surrounds it – remained. What shifted, though, as they began to attend to curriculum as something *made* rather than something planned, was the more visible foregrounding of the *relationality* of this process of *making*. They emphasized that when curriculum is made alongside students, it is made through the intertwining of the teacher's life course of action with the students' life courses of action. Curriculum, then, was expressed not just as curriculum of life; it was simultaneously expressed as a *curriculum of lives*. Although it continued to be understood as curriculum of life – curriculum centered in lived experience, it was also understood as *curriculum of lives* – curriculum centered in the experiences of many individuals living in relation (Huber & Clandinin, 2005; Downey & Clandinin, 2010). Over time and with further narrative inquiries into curriculum making, the use of the term *curriculum of lives* has also expanded. There is increasingly more research in the field of teacher education that is attending to the lives of children, families, teachers,

and administrators in curriculum making (Clandinin et al., 2006; Chung & Clandinin, 2010; Mitton Kükner & Murray Orr, 2010). We illustrate further with Debbie's notion of *curriculum of lives* in her work as a teacher educator:

I sit here, wanting to express the richness of today's teacher education class, and yet the kaleidoscope of images, thoughts, emotions and moments that swirl in my mind and body make it difficult to hold it solid enough to capture. Perhaps I need to move back in time first. As I often do, I began this language arts methodology course with a story. I started the course by reading *Me and Mr. Mah* (2001), a poignant story written by Andrea Spalding about a young boy Ian who moves with his mom from the farm to the city when she and his dad separate. As the movers bring their things into their rented house, Ian takes his "special box" to the backyard and sorts through the items he has collected there which tie him to his father, the farm, and to cherished moments and memories of his life. Over time, Ian comes to know Mr. Mah, an older man who lives next door and spends many hours outside in his garden and who, it turns out, also has a "special box." As they share their special boxes with one another and tell stories of their lives, sipping Chinese tea in little cups in Mr. Mah's Vancouver backyard, we learn of their pasts, their present realities, their hopes for their futures. We learn of their families – those who are with them, and those no longer there. We move between the farm and the city, China and Canada. We are privy, in the unfolding of their story, to their curriculum of lives. It is alongside Ian and Mr. Mah that I introduce the teacher candidates to Schwab's (1978) conception of curriculum as comprised of the commonplaces of student, teacher, milieu, and subject matter. For the rest of the course, these commonplaces shape our teaching and learning of language arts.

Today the teacher candidates shared their own "special boxes" with one another. We began with a potluck lunch. Then we moved around the classroom, spending time with the artifacts that spilled out of each teacher candidate's special box, reading the written stories which captured what surrounds the objects and considering the statements of belief which formed for the teacher candidate as a result of that experience. Our classroom was at moments noisy and at others quiet. There was laughter – and tears. In our talking circle afterward, teacher candidates spoke about one another's courage – to be vulnerable, to share hard stories, to be honest, to look deeply at what has shaped the people they are today. In this shared endeavour of curriculum making, we were called to learn from the experiences of multiple others and, in so doing, to examine, affirm and challenge deep-seated beliefs and assumptions which shape our understanding of children, families, teaching and learning.

We talked about being awake to who we are as teachers when we enter a classroom; to knowing that our history, our family, the place we are from all comes with us and shapes what we do in the classroom and why we do it. We explored what changed for us as we brought our lives and our families into our teacher education classroom. We imagined how teacher candidates will bring children's, parents' and families' lives into their prospective classrooms. We considered how they may start their year as teachers, how they will decide what literature to select for their classrooms, how they may organize their classrooms, the literacy ideologies they will adopt – always attentive to a curriculum of lives. (Debbie, Reflection, October 18, 2010)

Thus, like Clandinin and Connelly, we employ the term *curriculum making* and, subsequently, *curriculum of lives* in this volume to capture the curriculum inquiry of both teacher educators and teacher candidates and to reflect our understanding of curriculum making as relational work. In this manner, “the narratives of experience of [teacher educators] and [teacher candidates] interweave and mingle such that both are educated” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, p. 197). We see this illustrated poignantly in Section 3 of the book entitled “Teacher Educators Working Narratively Alongside Teacher Candidates.” In chapter 7, Darlene Ciuffetelli Parker showcases the use of *literacy narratives*, letters written among teacher candidates and with Darlene’s letter responses, as a narrative inquiry method that brings teacher identity and knowledge to the forefront in a manner that is both constructivist and relational in nature. In chapter 8, Lynnette Erickson and Amy Miner work diligently alongside teacher candidates to develop, reconstruct, and relive a curriculum of social studies to engage in democratic practices. And, in chapter 9, Shelley Griffin moves out of her comfort zone of music education teaching to understand deeply her teacher candidates’ music learning experiences. Together, through the narrative technique of body mapping and narrative writing, Shelley and her teacher candidates are curriculum makers and discover new ways to understand the teaching and learning of music education.

A narrative approach to teaching and teacher education as curriculum making is consistent with acclaimed practices in teacher education. *Preparing Teachers for a Changing World: What Teachers Should Learn and Be Able to Do* (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005), the National Academy of Education’s Committee on Teacher Education in the United States, outlines core concepts and strategies they feel are essential to initial teacher preparation” (p. vii). The Committee emphasizes how important it is that what we know about student learning and teacher learning informs teaching and teacher education. They call for a focus within teacher education programs on the development of teachers with *adaptive expertise*, teachers who can continuously extend and refine their knowledge of learners, milieu, subject matter, and teaching to shift and change with changing social and professional circumstances. Developing adaptive expertise, as we all know, is complex work – work that is uncertain, improvisational, particular, and “always open to revision” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 17). Adaptive expertise is not some *thing* we develop or impart to teacher candidates in our teacher education programs. It is a disposition, a way of being as a teacher that we nurture as we make curriculum alongside them, curriculum based in their lived experiences and hopes and dreams for the future, and our own.

In *Powerful Teacher Education: Lessons from Exemplary Programs*, Darling-Hammond (2006) addressed the challenges teacher education programs face in light of the complex human endeavors they are. Examples in her book illustrated this complexity, and foregrounded the collaboration required to build coherent programs. Central to powerful programs, Darling-Hammond asserted, are “[e]xplicit strategies [which] help students (1) confront their own deep-seated beliefs and assumptions about learning and students and (2) learn about the experiences of people different from themselves” (p. 41). Examples she gave of the ways in which these programs addressed this component include journals, self-reflection, and autobiographical writing. Narrative inquiry, particularly through the well-considered approaches to using personal experience methods identified by Connelly and Clandinin, invites deep explorations of the self in relation to students and the learning milieu. It invites curriculum making that arises out of the lives of our teacher candidates as they intertwine with our lives as teacher educators.

We find examples of this deep exploration by teacher educators throughout the chapters of this book in the fourth section, “A Curriculum of Lives in Teacher Education.” Ramona Cutri and Dixie Keyes use Olson’s (1995) notion of *narrative authority* to explore the intersections between and among their stories of experience and the stories of their teacher candidates. In chapter 10, Ramona Cutri’s inquiry into curriculum making in a blended learning format multicultural education course, she moves inward to her own family stories and outward to the personal and family stories of her students and inquires into the ways in which her teacher education practices both create space for narrative authority *and* dis/position teacher candidates’ in relation to powerful multicultural issues.

In chapter 12, Dixie Keyes’ chapter on living a story of critical literacy, she also works thoughtfully with these poignant issues. Her own story of teaching in the borderlands of Texas and Mexico strongly shapes her later curriculum making alongside teacher candidates in an undergraduate course on critical literacy as she unfolds the development of one teacher candidate’s narrative authority in the milieu of her student teaching experience. In both chapters, as the narratives of experience of teacher educators and teacher candidates mingle, as their lives intertwine and diverge, there is a strong sense of the educative nature of their shared curriculum making.

In both Shijing Xu’s and Debbie Pushor’s chapters, they position parents and families as central in their curriculum making with teacher candidates. In chapter 11, Debbie defines and explains her *curriculum of parents*, its purpose and importance as an addition to teacher education curriculum,

and how she lives out this curriculum alongside teacher candidates. Debbie makes visible how the teacher candidates' conscious interrogation of their beliefs and assumptions about parents and their place in their children's schooling, and the opportunity to live new stories of parents, interrupted their acceptance of dominant plotlines of parents being lived and told on school landscapes.

In chapter 13, Shijing's conceptualization of *intergenerational family educational narratives* shows how reflective narrative inquiry activities work toward student understanding of the idea that all students are "other." Drawing on her lived experiences as a newcomer and the use of intergenerational family education narratives she developed in her doctoral research, Shijing scaffolds her curriculum making with teacher candidates in ways that challenge them to consider the notion of reciprocity in learning between newcomers and the receiving society.

### **FROM SCHWAB'S FOUR COMMONPLACES OF CURRICULUM TO CONNELLY AND CLANDININ'S THREE COMMONPLACES OF NARRATIVE INQUIRY**

Connelly and Clandinin, building on Schwab's (1960, 1969, 1971, 1983) conception of curriculum as practical, focused on what Schwab termed the four commonplaces: teacher, learner, subject matter, and milieu. For Schwab (1973), without the teacher's input in the curricular bit, practice is likely evidenced as minimal because, more often than not, curriculum reform implementations are passed on to teachers as a rhetoric of conclusions (Schwab, 1969) and they end up, to paraphrase Cheryl Craig (1995), conflicting with other rhetorics that have previously come down the conduit, leaving the teacher with little say in their production. The four commonplaces, as Connelly and Clandinin eloquently demonstrate in their work, recognize teachers as central to curricular decision-making. A narrative approach to curriculum planning involves deep reflection on how the other commonplaces of subject matter, learner, and milieu are affected by the teacher's personal practical knowledge on the narrative landscape and how curriculum making happens alongside a teacher's students. Although Connelly and Clandinin's research began with the commonplace of teachers, subsequent research by them and other narrative researchers has extended this work to include all dimensions of curriculum.

This is an important facet in the work of this volume; teacher education focuses on all four of Schwab's curricular commonplaces equally.

We bring the work of narrative inquiry in teacher education further by laying the concept of curricular commonplaces alongside Connelly and Clandinin's (2006) three concepts of narrative inquiry commonplaces, looking simultaneously at curriculum making and narrative inquiry. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) first expressed their notion of narrative inquiry as a three dimensional space, drawing on John Dewey's (1938) theory of experience. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) wrote,

With this sense of Dewey's foundational place in our thinking about narrative inquiry, our terms 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, with temporality along one dimension, the personal and the social along a second dimension, and place along a third. (p. 50)

Paralleling Schwab's use of the commonplaces, Connelly and Clandinin (2006) later referred to the three dimensional space of narrative inquiry in terms of the commonplaces of narrative inquiry – *temporality*, *sociality*, and *place*. Still three-dimensional in nature, the commonplaces give us a way to inquire in our curriculum making into the depth and breadth of experiences told and retold through story. Teacher educators and teacher candidates deepen their knowledge and understanding of events as they attend carefully to their past, present, and future. *Sociality* invites teacher educators and teacher candidates to take into account personal conditions (such as hopes, feelings, and morality) alongside social conditions (such as milieu, surrounding factors, and other people) that shape the context of their experiences (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). *Place*, the third commonplace, brings teacher educators' and teacher candidates' attention to the topological and physical features of a place to recognize its shaping qualities. *Temporality*, as one of the commonplaces, distinguishes a telling inquiry (i.e., time-limited) from a living inquiry (i.e., living alongside others over a period of time). The three commonplaces are at play simultaneously as the experiences of teacher educators and teacher candidates move backward and forward in time, inward and outward in space, and as new stories are folded in and understood anew. In this manner, the narrative inquiry commonplaces are useful concepts that enable teacher educators to attend to, alongside teacher candidates, curriculum making and teacher education.

In conclusion, employing the layered framework of narrative inquiry *and* curricular commonplaces serves to bring together the three foci in this book: narrative inquiry, curriculum making, and teacher education. In this



chapter, we attended to how these concepts intersect, interconnect, and interplay within our teacher education practices. We encourage our readers to hold the woven image of the intersections of narrative inquiry, curriculum making, and teacher education in the foreground as they read through the chapters of this book. We begin with Cheryl Craig's overview of the development of narrative inquiry in teaching and teacher education. As Craig moves us backward and forward in time, to the work of many narrative inquirers situated in a range of contexts, she provides a contextual history of the field of narrative inquiry and a basis for readers to situate themselves within the rich discourse of teacher education.

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# NARRATIVE INQUIRY IN TEACHING AND TEACHER EDUCATION

Cheryl J. Craig

## ABSTRACT

*Purpose – The purpose of this chapter is to trace the origins of narrative inquiry as an empirical research method specifically created to examine how teachers come to know in their own terms.*

*Approach – The chapter reviews key conceptualizations in the teaching and teacher education field chronologically.*

*Findings – The review begins with Clandinin and Connelly's ground-breaking work concerning teachers' personal practical knowledge, the professional knowledge landscapes of schools, and stories to live by (teacher identity). Three other important narrative conceptualizations on the research line are then highlighted: narrative resonance, narrative authority, and knowledge communities. Special attention is also paid to how narrative inquiry has fueled studies having to do with curriculum, subject matter, and culture. Narrative inquiry's important contributions to the emergence of the self-study of teaching and teacher education practices genre of research is additionally highlighted, along with several more recent advances having to do with collaborative narrative inquiries, studies with children, and reforming school landscapes.*

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Research implications – *Lingering issues relating to narrative inquiry's acceptance as a legitimate research approach are also discussed; latent opportunities are likewise paid attention.*

Value – *The value of the chapter is that it is the first work that has specifically followed developments on the Connelly–Clandinin research line. The chapter shows the major contributions that the world-class research program – and the associated research projects spawned from it – have made to teaching and teacher education internationally.*

**Keywords:** Narrative inquiry; personal practical knowledge; professional knowledge landscape; teacher identity; narrative resonance; narrative authority; knowledge communities.

The most important aspects of teacher education are often ephemeral, passionate, shadowy and significant. For the most part, [they] ... reflect teachers' lives ... (Connelly & Clandinin, 2004, p. 42)

Because teacher education is inextricably linked to teachers' lives and narrative inquiry studies lives in motion, the link between teacher education and narrative inquiry could not be stronger. This is because they are pieces of the same cloth. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) pioneered the narrative inquiry research method in the throes of their groundbreaking research program examining what and how teachers come to know, a program recognized as one of the most leading edge in the world (Fenstermacher, 1994). Yet, for Connelly and Clandinin, narrative is less a method and more a way of thinking about the curriculum field. From the beginning, narrative inquiry and person-centered, curriculum-related studies have walked hand-in-hand, taking up a respected place in the teaching and teacher education literatures. In fact, Clandinin and Connelly have been credited with initiating the spread of narrative practices in teacher education (Munby, Russell, & Martin, 2001), especially with respect to the use of reflective journals (Munby & Russell, 1998) in fueling teacher understanding. In this opening chapter, I emphasize the unfolding of narrative inquiry in teaching and teacher education. At the same time, it is important to realize that the original research could have just as easily have been conducted with nurses, for example, as narrative inquirers who followed in Connelly and Clandinin's footsteps have shown (i.e., Chan, 2008; Chan & Schwind, 2006; Lindsay, 2006a, 2006b; Schwind & Lindsay, 2008).

## FIRST-GENERATION NARRATIVE EXPLORATIONS

### *Images of Teachers*

Central to Clandinin and Connelly's narrative understanding of education – indeed, their entire research program – is the conceptualization of teacher image. In 1988, Connelly and Clandinin released their book, *Teachers as curriculum planners* (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988), which was not inconsequentially subtitled *Narratives of experience* and which prefigured the first article (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) where the term, narrative inquiry, was used (Clandinin, Pushor, & Orr, 2007). The book followed the syllabi of Connelly's introduction to curriculum course, which was likewise titled *Teachers as curriculum planners* (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988; F. M. Connelly, 2010, personal communication). Written for a teacher audience, the volume presented an alternate vision of the teaching profession. Following Dewey (1908/1981) who believed teachers were “moved by their own intelligences and ideas” (p. 16), Schwab (1954/1978) who envisioned teachers as “agent[s] of education, not of subject matter” (p. 128), and Jackson (1968) who sought to understand classroom life in teachers' and students' own terms, Clandinin and Connelly positioned teachers as knowers and doers in the educational enterprise. To them, teachers – one of Schwab's four curriculum commonplaces (together with learner, subject matter, and milieu) – are “fountainheads of the curricular decision” (Schwab, 1983, p. 241; also see Fox, 1985, p. 77). They “*must* be involved in debate, deliberation, and decision about what and how to teach” (Schwab, 1983, p. 245, italics in original).

Clandinin and Connelly's championing of the teacher as curriculum planner image, which they later referred to as the image of teacher as curriculum maker (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992), provided an alternate image to the teacher as implementer, the historically dominant image in the curriculum, change, and administration literatures. To Connelly and Clandinin, teachers actively make curriculum alongside students, not merely implement curriculum as dictated by policy makers. From this perspective, “teachers and students live out a curriculum [in which] an account of teachers' and students' lives over time is the curriculum, although intentionality, objectives, and curriculum materials do play a part” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992, p. 365). In this competing view, attention shifts from written plans and mandates to curriculum as it is lived, ultimately becoming a curriculum of lives (Downey & Clandinin, 2010).

*Teacher Knowledge*

Consistent with this conceptualization, Clandinin and Connelly's longitudinal research program has steadfastly maintained that teacher education is all about teacher knowledge. It is, as they emphatically have stated, "a question of teacher knowledge" (Clandinin, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 2000) – whether that knowledge be of prospective or practicing teachers or of teacher educators themselves. Thus, what narrative provided was a way to address problems of knowledge. However, the kind of narrative knowledge that Connelly and Clandinin (Clandinin, 1986; Connelly & Clandinin, 1985) foreground – and the kind this edited volume focuses on – runs against the grain of the dominant perception. The prevalent, politically charged conception of knowledge for teaching is that of a codified script detailing what teachers must know and do. In that technical rationalist view, knowledge is a possession dictated, controlled, and tested by others. In stark contrast to this publically understood view stands Clandinin and Connelly's notion: a narrative understanding of teacher knowledge based on meaning constructed over time. In the knowledge as possession type, teacher education is compartmentalized – it begins, it ends, it starts over and over again in one-shot training sessions. However, in the teacher knowledge as meaning making variety, in which phenomena become known narratively, it is expansive. It has a narrative history, is growth-oriented and continuous, and necessarily involves relationships among people. An entirely human enterprise, it cannot be engineered. It is education achieved through personal and social meaning making, not education determined by injection.

Sitting at the root of the teacher knowledge conception of teacher education as studied through the narrative inquiry lens is a different understanding of expertise. Although researchers, theoreticians, and policy makers determine what is worth knowing in the injection model of teacher education, prospective and practicing teachers and teacher educators themselves are experts in the teacher education through reconstruction of meaning approach. As active agents, they use and produce knowledge, with their sense of knowing being both personally and socially imbued. Accordingly, "questions about preservice teacher education [for example] do not begin with what theoreticians, researchers, and policy makers know but, rather, with what preservice teacher know and have found in professional practice" (Clandinin, 2000, p. 29). Put differently, the primacy of teachers' experiences (Eisner, 1988) is honored and "strategies, tactics, rules and techniques that flow out of other ... considerations" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 188) are purposely avoided.

Connelly's beginning work with Dienes (Connelly & Dienes, 1982) and Elbaz (1983) borrowed the Deweyan term and initially called such knowledge practical. Connelly and Clandinin (1985) in their collaborative research enterprise coined the phrase, personal practical knowledge, which Clandinin (1992) later described as

in a person's experience, in the person's present mind and body and in the person's future plans and actions. It is knowledge that reflects the individual's prior knowledge and acknowledges the contextual nature of the teacher's knowledge. It is a kind of knowledge, carved out of, and shaped by, situations; knowledge that is constructed and reconstructed as we live out our stories and retell and relive them through the process of reflection. (p. 125)

As foreshadowed, this narrative understanding of knowledge has pervaded Connelly and Clandinin's research program over time and has made their program of research one of the three most lauded in the world.

### *The Contexts of Teaching*

Clandinin and Connelly's teachers' personal practical knowledge conceptualization allowed them to extend the reach of their research agenda and situate teachers' knowledge in context – or as they described it – as shaping and being shaped on a “professional knowledge landscape.” They explained that:

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 ... Because we see the professional knowledge landscape as composed of relationships among people, places, and things, we see it as both an intellectual and moral landscape. (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995, pp. 4-5)

In a nutshell, the professional knowledge landscape metaphor allowed Connelly and Clandinin to focus attention on two different, albeit porous, places in which teachers dwell: the in-classroom place and the out-of-classroom place (p. 14). The in-classroom place is a reasonably safe place where teachers and students live out curriculum, whereas the out-of-classroom place is the professional place outside the classroom where expectations and mandates from external sources rain down on teachers. Neither of these places is completely self-contained as mandates travel through the conduit (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995; Craig, 2002) from the out-of-classroom place to the in-classroom place. Also, teachers live and tell, and re-live and re-tell, cover stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995;



Olson & Craig, 2005) of certainty in out-of-classroom places frequently to mask what they are figuring out in their in-classroom places from others (and sometimes themselves).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the flow of both people and mandates across the boundaries (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2006) between the in-classroom and out-of-classroom places creates dilemmas in teachers' personal and professional lives. This further compounds the complexities of the intellectual and moral landscapes of schools. As a result, tensions and resistance in teachers' stories have been chronicled by Connelly and Clandinin (1999), Huber, Huber and Clandinin (2004), and Craig (2006a, 2009a), and tensions relating to teachers' professional development have been addressed by Huber and Whelan (1995), Hogan (1995), Enns, Rüegg, Schindler, and Strahm (2002), and Latta and Kim (2009). Samson (1999) and Rose (1999) have also taken up the same topic from an administrator perspective, Pushor and Murphy (2004) from a parent perspective, and Enns from a graduate teacher education perspective. Also, tensions in one school site have been examined through the metaphor of a still pond by Huber and Whelan (2001), through the lens of narrative interlappings by Sweetland, Huber, and Whelan (2004) and through stories of changing school contexts (Yu & Lau, 2006). The ever-widening dissonance between teachers' personal practical knowledge and others' prescriptions has served to increase the pitch of the tensions, further contributing to the "contested classroom space" (Craig, 2009b) and increasing the volatility of a globally shifting teacher education landscape (Clandinin, Downey, & Huber, 2009).

Not only did Connelly and Clandinin's professional knowledge landscape metaphor take into account historical, moral, emotional, and aesthetic shaping forces, but their narrative inquiries into teachers' professional knowledge landscapes birthed a set of useful narrative terms, "teacher stories – stories of teachers – school stories – stories of school" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996). These paired narratives have subsequently framed many teaching and teacher education studies (i.e., Clandinin et al., 2006; Craig, 2003). Teachers' stories, which Clandinin et al. (2006) equate with teachers' "personal practical knowledge" (p. 7), are the stories teachers live and tell, and re-live and re-tell, whereas stories of teachers are shifting stories that others hold or expect of teachers. Similarly, school stories are the ongoing narrative constructions of school composed by teachers, principals, children, and family members, whereas stories of school are outsider constructions of what the school is or should be all about. Building on Connelly and Clandinin's professional knowledge landscape metaphor, Craig added two more sets of paired stories, "reform stories – stories of

reform and community stories – stories of community” (Craig, 2001a) to the matrix of stories comprising teachers’ professional knowledge landscapes as her narrative inquiries increasingly chronicled teachers’ lived and told stories in the midst of organized school reform. Stories of reform are stories given to schools and teachers, whereas reform stories are the reform narratives are those stories that are humanly lived. Similarly, stories of community are narratives told about communities, whereas community stories – which necessarily would include parent stories – stories of parents (see Pushor & Murphy, 2004) – are those narratives lived and told, and re-lived and re-told, by community members.

### *Teacher Identity*

As Clandinin and Connelly’s narrative inquiries unfolded over time, they moved from narratively accounting for teacher knowledge to narratively accounting for the context in which teachers come to know – their professional knowledge landscapes – to narratively accounting for teachers’ identities – that is, teachers’ “stories to live by” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999, p. 4). In fact, the conceptualization, stories to live by, merges personal practical knowledge (i.e., Lau, Yu, & Chan, 2008), life on the professional knowledge landscape, and teacher identity. In stories to live by, identity takes on “narrative understandings of knowledge and context” (p. 4) as Li (2008) and Li and Niyozov (2008) acknowledged in their studies undertaken in Canada and China. Cooper and Olson (1996) call this phenomenon the “multiple ‘I’s’ of identity.” Closely linked to stories to live by are the ways in which change occurs in the narrative inquiry research method (i.e., Conle, 1997). In Clandinin et al.’s (2006) book, for example, readers encounter some teachers, a principal, and several students, all of whose stories are interwoven with others in their school contexts and with the researchers with whom they are also in relationship. As Pinnegar (2006) pointed out, the shifting plotlines of these multiple stories to live by suggested new “ways of imagining and reimagining both the lives of those being researched but also ways of researching” (p. 179).

As might be expected, Clandinin and Connelly’s research interests not only contributed to their highly acclaimed research program, but helped spawn student research agendas adjacent to their own as the discussion thus far has foreshadowed. From this point onward, emphasis will be specifically placed on next-wave developments through focusing on (1) narrative conceptualizations in the field of teaching and teacher education;

(2) narrative understandings of curriculum, subject matter, and culture as they relate to teachers, students and schooling; (3) how narrative inquiry is undertaken in teaching and teacher education studies; and (4) advances in how narrative researchers conduct their inquiries.

## NEXT-WAVE DEVELOPMENTS

### *Second-Generation Narrative Conceptualizations*

One of the strongest outgrowths of Connelly and Clandinin's research program is Conle's conceptualization of narrative resonance, which appeared in *Educational Researcher*. To Conle (1996),

Resonance is a process of dynamic, complex, metaphorical relations. It is not confined to one single strand of connections. It is a complex relationship among many aspects of a story. The metaphorical connections or correspondences come holistically as a field, a scene, a narrative image. (p. 313)

In Conle's view, resonance is a useful and illuminative tool that arose in the context of her teacher education practice. Four preservice teachers she taught discovered resonances through sharing their narrative inquiries and staying close to their experiential stories. Their personal practical knowledge was found to both shape and be shaped by the narrative resonances Conle and the teacher education students discovered as they, alone and together, laid their narratives of experience alongside one another. It follows that resonance forms a valuable lens with which to interpret experience in the ongoing cultivation of in-service teachers.

Olson's (1995) notion of narrative authority is a second major conceptual offshoot of Connelly and Clandinin's research agenda. The conceptualization first appeared in *Teaching and Teacher Education* and resulted in Olson receiving the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE) Outstanding Writing Award in 1996. Adopting Clandinin and Connelly's narrative view of education, Olson illustrated how narrative authority took "the complexity of personal practical knowledge into a social, public, and self-reflective realm" (Olson & Craig, 2001, p. 669). In contrast to the positional and/or epistemic authority/certainty offered by positivism, her conceptualization of narrative authority

develops through experience made manifest in relationships with others. Because the narrative version of knowledge construction is transactional, authority comes from experience and is integral as each person both shapes his or her own knowledge and is

shaped by the knowledge of others. Thus, narrative authority becomes the expression and enactment of a person's personal practical knowledge that develops as individuals learn to authorize meaning in relationship with others. (Olson & Craig, 2001, p. 670)

Like narrative resonance, narrative authority is a concept of vital importance in teaching and teacher education. The development of preservice and in-service teacher's narrative authority represents a generative as opposed to a disjointed, one-size-fits-all approach to teacher development because knowledge carved from experience over time and across context is the focus of attention. Cultivating narrative authority has also helped faculty members in Atlantic Canada to revitalize a teacher education program (Olson, 2008).

The idea of knowledge communities (Craig, 1995a, 1995b) is the third major conceptualization on which this chapter shines the spotlight. Craig's early research on preservice teachers' knowledge communities was carried by *Curriculum Inquiry* and later articles (Craig, 2001a, 2001b) expanded her knowledge community work into the in-service teacher domain. Unlike narrative resonance and narrative authority, Craig's idea of teachers' knowledge communities emerged within the context of Clandinin and Connelly's (1995) research program while she served as a research assistant. As a result, Huber and Whelan (1995), who also worked on the project, additionally picked up on the knowledge community theme, taking it into classrooms and explicating the knowledge communities that develop between and among teachers and students. In Craig's words, knowledge communities are

safe, storytelling places where educators narrate the rawness of their experiences, negotiate meaning, and authorize their own and others' interpretations of situations. They take shape around commonplaces of experience (Lane, 1988) as opposed to around bureaucratic and hierarchical relations that declare who knows, what should be known, and what constitutes 'good teaching' and 'good schools' (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996). Such knowledge communities can be both found and created. (Craig & Olson, 2002, p. 116)

As an aside, it is significant to note that Olson and Craig (2001, 2005, 2009a, 2009b) have consistently woven together their conceptualizations of narrative authority and knowledge communities over the course of their careers. Because their conceptual offerings enhance how preservice and in-service teachers may be cultivated as well as how teaching may be studied narratively, they have asserted the position that their joint contribution to understanding narrative in teaching and teacher education is stronger than their individual efforts. Also, it is important to add that others of the third generation such as Seaman (2008a) who was Craig's student have picked up

on the knowledge community conceptualization. Seaman, for example, took up the challenge of mapping the similarities and differences between Wenger's (1998) idea of communities of practice and Craig's (1995a, 1995b) notion of knowledge communities in his "birds of a feather?" article. Keyes (2010), another of Craig's students, has followed in both Olson and Craig's footsteps, intertwining the narrative authority and knowledge community conceptualizations.

Having focused on three major second-generation narrative terms – narrative resonance, narrative authority, and knowledge communities and augmented them with some third generation observations, attention will now turn to narrative understandings of curriculum, subject matter, and culture.

### *Narrative Understandings of Curriculum, Subject Matter, and Culture*

Because narrative inquiries on the Connelly–Clandinin research line typically involve the intersection of teaching and curriculum, it is not surprising that many publications continue that tradition. For example, Olson (2000) has explored curriculum as a multistoried process; Murray Orr and Olson (2007) have chronicled "curriculum moments"; Schlein (2007) has focused on the temporal experience of curriculum; Pinnegar (1996) has accounted for narrative in her teaching practice; and Elbaz-Luwisch, Gudmundsdottir, and Moen (2002) and Beattie (2007, 2009) have similarly probed narratives of teaching. Also, Conle (2003) has proposed a narrative anatomy of curriculum and Cooper (2003) has approached curriculum as "stranger." As for Craig and Ross (2008), they traced Connelly and Clandinin's image of teacher as curriculum maker as threaded through their students' work and reaching back to Schwab, and Elbaz-Luwisch (2006) conducted a comprehensive literature review of narrative inquiry in K-12 teaching.

Where the intersection of subject matter/teaching/curriculum is concerned, Young and He (1995) have explored subject matter and authority; Murphy (in press) has studied students' responses to report card comments; Beattie (1995, 1997) has been active in music education and reflective practice; You (in press) in physical education; Chan (2004) and Wong (2003) in early childhood education; and Chang and Rosiek (2003), Ross (2003, 2004), and Sack (2008) where mathematics, science, and technology are concerned. Ciuffetelli Parker (2010), Craig (2009a), Elbaz-Luwisch (2002), Elbaz-Luwisch and Pritzker (2002), Keyes (2010), and Kooy (2006) have additionally written in the literacy arena.

Also, a substantial body of research in narrative inquiry centers on multiculturalism and diversity in education. Conle (1999) has worked in this area, as has Chan (2005, 2007), Chan and Boone (2001), Eng (2006; in press); Pedrana (2009), Ross and Chan (2008), Li, Mitton-Kükner, and Yeom (2008), Estola and Elbaz-Luwisch (2000), and Schlein (2009). Huber, Murphy, and Clandinin's (2003) focus on diversity and communities of imagination also comprises a significant contribution, as do multicultural inquiries conducted by He (i.e., 2002a, 2002b, 2003). Phillion (i.e., Phillion, 2002; Phillion, He, & Connelly, 2005), and Connelly (i.e., Connelly, Phillion, & He, 2003). Rodriguez (2007) has examined the experiences of male Hispanic teachers in the southern United States and Young et al. (2010) have explored Aboriginal teacher intergenerational narratives in western Canada and Kitchen, Cherubini, Trudeau, and Hodson (2010) have addressed Aboriginal teacher education challenges in eastern Canada. Further to this, Xu and Stevens (2005) have used narrative inquiry to instantiate unity in diversity, Xu and Connelly (2008) have narratively addressed the reform of English as a foreign language in China, and Xu and Connelly (2009) have captured, again through the narrative inquiry process, the need to cultivate curious and creative minds in multicultural and cross-cultural educational settings.

## **EMERGENT DEVELOPMENTS IN NARRATIVE INQUIRY IN TEACHING AND TEACHER EDUCATION**

### *Teacher Education*

Clandinin and Connelly have been instrumental in employing narrative inquiry innovatively in the teaching and teacher education domain as well. Clandinin's 1993 collaboration with Davies, Hogan, and Kennard (Clandinin, Davies, Hogan & Kennard, 1993) blazed a preservice education pathway matched only by Clandinin, Pearce, and Mickelson, along with principals McKenzie-Roblee, Simpson, and Whelan, a few years later (see Clandinin, 2000). These collaborative teacher education projects breathed life into the dialectic of learning to teach/teaching to learn. Both efforts pierced to the core the historical legacy of "university-school relationships [which] have been characterized by relationships of inequality, relationships where schools and teachers play the scripts written and directed by university teacher educators" (Clandinin, 1995, p. 175). In the former study,

preservice teachers and cooperating teachers collaboratively authored their joint learning arising from an extended practicum experience. In the latter study, principals additionally served as collaborators in an attempt “to reconstruct educational systems where teachers model learning rather than authority” (Bateson, 2000, p. 212 in Clandinin, 2000, p. 30).

Carola Conle (2006) additionally has examined the teacher education terrain, particularly with respect to the place of narrative in a preservice teacher education curriculum in her co-authored book with students. The volume primarily consists of student exemplars of four narrative assignments Conle constructed as part of a “narrative curriculum” (p. x) with beginning teachers. The narrative curriculum included (1) a narrative portrait of a school; (2) a personal narrative of teaching and learning; (3) a personal cultural narrative; and (4) a narrative of the techniques and strategies preservice teacher education students encountered and used in their practicum experiences.

Recently, Xin Li, Carola Conle, and Freema Elbaz-Luwisch (2009) have taken up another question critically important to teacher education, also in a jointly authored volume. As professors in the United States, Canada, and Israel respectively, the authors have increasingly experienced social polarization among students in their teacher education classes, especially in multicultural and cross-cultural education courses where diverse political opinions, competing economic interests, and adversarial religious beliefs are expressed. Using Daoist intersubjective meaning making, continental philosophy, and the contributions of the Jewish mystic, Martin Buber, as interpretive tools, Li, Conle, and Elbaz-Luwisch demonstrate how polar opposites can become more malleable through active engagement in narrative inquiry practices. To the authors, “narrative inquiry has great potential in preventing increased polarization and diminishing existing ambivalence among groups” (p. 321). In their view, a “pedagogy of narrative shifting” (p. 281) is especially relevant and timely for use in teacher education settings.

### *Self-Study of Teaching and Teacher Education Practices*

A second major avenue where narrative inquiry has made stellar inroads is in teachers’ and teacher educators’ studies of their own practices. Clandinin and Connelly (2004) intellectually and methodologically aided the development of the self-study movement by declaring that self-study research holds “the highest possible potential for improving education” and is “important

not for what it shows about the self but because of its potential to reveal knowledge of the educational landscape” (p. 597). Because self-study is understood by some to be a genre of research (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009), not a distinct mode of inquiry, narrative inquirers have done much to assist self-study in teaching and teacher education researchers in establishing a distinctive line of study. Pinnegar (i.e., Pinnegar, Dulude Lay, Bigham & Dulude, 2005) and Kitchen (2005a, 2005b, 2009a) have led the way, investigating such matters as mothering and teaching (Pinnegar, Dulude Lay, Bigham, & Dulude, 2005) and the personal and relational aspects of self-study examined from the narrative inquiry perspective (Kitchen, 2005a, 2005b, 2009b). (Conle, 1998) Conle, Loudon, and Mildon (1998) followed suit; so did Craig (2006b, 2010) and Chiu and Chan (2009). In addition, Ciuffetelli Parker and Volante (2009), Kitchen, Ciuffetelli Parker, and Gallagher (2008), and Ciuffetelli Parker, Fazio, Volante, and Cherubini (2008) have been instrumental in productively melding self-study, narrative inquiry and research on teacher education programs and partnerships. A groundbreaking contribution has furthermore been made by Seaman (2008b) who narratively unpacked the self-study topic of “first-time teacher, second time around.” Other self-study researchers (i.e., Pereira, 2005; You, *in press*) have also joined in, finding that the personal and relational aspects of the narrative inquiry research method illuminates their chosen topics.

### *Advances in the Narrative Inquiry Research Methodology*

Since its introduction to the teaching and teacher education arena over two decades ago, narrative inquiry as a research methodology has yielded many methodological advances. Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) landmark book on the genesis of the research method they birthed has eloquently and decisively offered an insider view of narrative inquiry research. Elbaz-Luwisch (2010), for example, has praised Connelly and Clandinin for their wakeful probing of their own teaching in their groundbreaking volume. Elbaz-Luwisch observed:

The kind of personal inquiry [in which they engage] is as rare as it is essential, and in enacts two conditions of an educative experience. First, the book depicts the authors bringing themselves personally to the encounter with students, with all their flaws; and second, putting their own stories up for inquiry along with the stories of students is what allows Clandinin and Connelly to create a safe place for inquiry. In this, they model quality in academic teaching and at the same time prepare students to bring those same qualities to their future inquiries.



Not only did Elbaz–Luwisch applaud Clandinin and Connelly’s methodological cultivation of wakefulness, she concurrently stressed that Connelly and Clandinin single-handedly “shaped a language for talking about teaching and learning from the perspective of individuals within schools” (p. 277). Reflecting curriculum as life (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992), that language was a narrative one.

Other significant methodological progress where narrative inquiry and teaching and teacher education is concerned is Clandinin et al.’s (2006) award-winning book, *Composing diverse identities*. Craig (2007) declared that volume a “crowning achievement” where relational inquiry and collaboratively written texts are concerned. She wrote:

Not only does the volume portray a team of researchers conducting a sustained inquiry in the throes of the doings and goings on of several characters (principals, teachers, children, parents) situated in two school settings, it involves the mindful negotiation of texts – field texts and research texts – with participants and fellow researchers alike ... . The authors’ collaborative signature suggested that these researchers lived as deeply alongside one another as they did alongside their research participants ... (p. 379)

She furthermore concluded: “Through this volume, readers are awakened to new possibilities of how research can be enacted and fresh ways that education can be lived.” (p. 380).

A third book making an enormous contribution is the *Handbook of Narrative Inquiry: Mapping a Methodology* (Clandinin, 2006), which confirmed that narrative inquiry is a leading way to study educational experience in the world. In Gomez’s (2007) words, the narrative inquiry handbook represents “a broad-ranging overview of a nascent branch of study.” Of particular import to this discussion is Pinnegar and Daynes’s (2006) chapter chronicling the emergence of narrative inquiry as a grounded and defensible research method.

Along with these major methodological advances are several smaller achievements. Craig, for example, has been credited with “develop[ing] the most extensive programme [sp] of research linking teachers, reform, and narrative inquiry in North America” (Xu & Connelly, 2008, p. 221). Huber and Clandinin (2002), Chan (2007), Clandinin et al. (2006), Murphy (in press), among others (i.e., Cautillo, 2008), have made significant progress in living narrative inquiry research alongside children. Also, Clandinin, Pushor, and Orr (2007) and Clandinin, Murphy, Huber, and Murray Orr (2010) have advanced how sites for narrative inquiry are navigated in a tension-filled mist; Latta, Buck, Leslie-Pelecky, and Carpenter (2007) have enlarged understandings of “terms of inquiry”; and Ellis (2007) has probed

wordless narration. Finally, Clandinin et al. (2006), Craig and Huber (2006), and Kitchen (2009b) have broken important ground where relational inquiry is concerned.

## CHALLENGES/LATENT OPPORTUNITIES

Without a doubt, narrative inquirers have accomplished a great deal in less than three decades. There has been a near library of books, a rich vein of articles in top national/international journals, a bevy of important research awards, and a critical mass of handbook chapters and editorships. In addition, the Narrative Research Special Interest Group (SIG) of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) has become one of the largest and most active SIGs in AERA's constellation. Also, narrative inquirers regularly participate in the biennial Narrative Matters Conference in Canada.

Still, significant challenges lie ahead (i.e., Elbaz-Luwisch, 1997). Historically conservative institutional review boards, journal editors with dogmatic understandings of evidence/transparency, research peers who consider the approach under-theorized, and those who routinely equate relationship with research contamination (Craig & Huber, 2006) will continue to present obstacles. So, too, will fellow teacher educators holding different visions of teacher knowledge and what constitutes empirical research be problematic. Also, within the education community, discussion concerning the way narrative research has contributed to the current state of the curriculum field (Connelly with Xu, 2007) will continue, as will talk about the ways narrative inquiry is similar to and different from other qualitative methods, for example, reflective practice (Downey & Clandinin, 2010), action research (Pushor & Clandinin, 2009), and the self-study of teaching and teacher education practices (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009). Bridging methodological divides where different varieties of teacher knowledge research is concerned appears not to be in sight (Rosiek & Atkinson, 2005). And acknowledgement of narrative inquirers' significant contributions to state-of-the-art understandings of curriculum is also not forthcoming. These matters will be further exacerbated by the fact that all school-based studies and all qualitative research methods appear at this time to be under attack as quantitative, directly evidential investigations stripped of teacher experience as narrative inquirers understand it (Pinnegar, 1997) continue to take front and center stage, aided and abetted by those in the curriculum field who consider field-based research outdated and those in the teaching field who

exhibit major blind spots where the role of narrative in (1) the excavation of teacher knowledge, (2) the conduct of educational research, and (3) the representation of teacher education research findings are concerned. At the same time, narrative inquiry is uniquely positioned to address the most chronic problem in teaching and teacher education (Ben-Peretz, 2009; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 2009; Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005; Grimmitt & Chinnery, 2009): the absence of research attention paid to how prospective teachers are prepared as curriculum makers in teacher education settings and how this nurturing could productively continue throughout the sweep of their careers. This volume takes up this topic internationally in a person-by-person, program-by program way. I commend the chapters to your reading.

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# NARRATING THE TENSIONS OF TEACHER EDUCATOR RESEARCHER IN MOVING STORY TO RESEARCH

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## ABSTRACT

*Purpose – This chapter explores the complexity and tensions inherent in the question of how story becomes research with particular attention to the use of narrative research in studying teacher education.*

*Approach – To do this, we begin each section with a narrative fragment from earlier published research in which we collaborated (Hamilton, 1995). Then, we use narrative research analysis tools to explore the meaning of each fragment, lay that understanding alongside research accounts and wonderings about research in and by teacher educators, and consider the fragment in terms of specific understandings of narrative inquiry as research methodology for studying teacher education.*

*Findings – This chapter examines when story moves to research while probing the tensions between knowledge and living as teachers, teacher educators, and teacher educator researchers. Using the first fragment, we explore fulfilling roles as a teacher educator by using a narrative analysis tool that teases apart the author's role of narrator, actor, and character.*

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*In the second fragment, we consider the contexts that influence a teacher educator researcher by examining the fragment to determine the levels of narrative. In the third fragment, we utilize the tools of plotlines and tensions to unpack the competing plotlines of epistemology (modernist vs. narrative) ending with an examination of the importance of ontology in narrative work. In our fourth fragment, we unpack nine approaches to narrative by examining the essential role of story for each element of the research process.*

*Research implications – As teacher educator researchers, we always stand in the midst – in the midst of the story where we may be simultaneously narrator, character, and actor, in the midst of living the research we are most interested in studying. Within a single moment, we can act as teacher, teacher educator, and teacher educator researcher when our research focuses on our own practice. Our experience as we live it represents the tension between arrival and arriving.*

*Value – The value of this chapter is the way in which it demonstrates narrative analysis and distinguishes among various approaches to narrative research.*

**Keywords:** Narrative inquiry; personal practical knowledge; teacher education; teacher education research; teacher educator researcher; narrative analysis; narrative commonplaces; Bahktin; ontology.

This chapter explores the complexity and tension inherent in the question of how story becomes research with particular attention the use of narrative research in studying teacher education. We probe tensions surrounding modernist epistemology, approaches to narrative, complexity in being teachers (Ts), teacher educators (TEs), and teacher educator researchers (TEdRs) and reconsider narratives in relationship to the role of narrative inquiry in being and becoming teacher educators. To do this, we begin each section with a narrative fragment from earlier published research in which we collaborated (Hamilton, 1995) as members of the Arizona Group (AG), a writing collective of four scholars working at different universities, but prepared as teacher educators at the same institution. In our writings, we refer to ourselves as “one of us” rather than by name identification in the hope that readers might see the ways in which our experiences relate to their own. We then use narrative research analysis tools to explore the meaning of the fragment, lay that understanding alongside research accounts and wonderings about research in and by TEs, and consider the fragment in

terms of specific understandings of narrative inquiry as research methodology for studying teacher education.

## TEACHER EDUCATORS IN THE MIDST

Living as TEds takes place in the midst of life surrounded by our partners, our children, our friends, our colleagues, our students, and more. We tell stories to understand our experience or to soothe our troubles or to position ourselves within our world. But when does story move to research? This chapter examines that question while probing the tensions between knowledge and living as teachers, teacher educators, and teacher educator researchers. Here, we make a deliberate connection among teachers (Ts)–teacher educators (TEds)–teacher educator researchers (TEdRs) because for us the tensions and connections are ever-present and the position and power of those roles are never static. Our first story fragment finds one of the AG, recorded in a letter, juggling to understand the whole life of a T–TEd–TEdR.

I have bronchitis and have spent the afternoon trying to grade papers. I am half through and have no business or right to stop mid papers and write this letter since I also need to construct a test, but I wanted to explain some thinking that I have developed this afternoon. As I struggled with doctors and pain this year, I realized that the clearest sign that something is wrong with a patient is pain yet that is the one thing that doctors cannot see. they cannot feel it from their patients. The corollary for teachers is to understand. The surest sign of whether students have learned or where their problems or progress is understanding, and I as a teacher can never know for sure if students understand. The work of academics never ends and the work of being wife and mother never ends and the spaces between where I define self are not many. ([Arizona Group, 1994](#), November 25, p. 79)

Within this quotation, the insight about understanding as the shadowy, not quite accessible indicator of learning is embedded in an experience of grading student work. The writer framed this in the closing sentence as part of the unending work of being an academic – a TEd – which is part of a whole life where conflicting demands among roles, responsibilities, and obligations must be sorted. We extracted this narrative fragment from a published peer-reviewed article ([Arizona Group, 1994](#)). Thus, through the process of peer review and publication what others might have labeled as merely story becomes research. The story, now labeled research, is important in making this point because the experience chronicled is an example of a curriculum of lives ([Clandinin et al., 2006](#)) – the knowledge this

TEd, because of experience, brings to curriculum making in teacher education. The thinking about the relationship between pain and medicine and understanding and teaching emerged as a teacher of a teacher education course grades papers and thinks about a letter received from a colleague. In this way, it illustrates how a reflection on life experience moves to personal knowledge as a TEd and then through inquiry and publication to research and becomes knowledge that can inform the lives of other TEds.

The layers of framing or levels of narrative, as Bal (1997) labels them in her explication of elements of narrative, make immediately present in this text the tensions inherent in narrative inquiry for TEds. In this fragment, we see evidence of *living* a life captured in the detail about bronchitis, *telling* of that life in the reference to stopping to explain, *retelling* in the story of pain and its link to learning based both in experience as T and TEd and, finally, a hint of *reliving* in the explanation of the endless aspects of balancing the elements of self inherent in living a life as a TEdR. As Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggest,

Living, telling, retelling, and reliving mark the qualities of a life. A book on narrative inquiry, one reflective of this ongoing quality of life, simply stops at some point or moment when the authors, and their most intimate readers, say enough is enough, at least for now. (p. 187)

In this quote, Clandinin and Connelly capture how narrative inquiry takes up an examination of the elements in experience. Recognizing that life happens now and continues to happen after the research moment, they situate the tensions between a research methodology founded in an idea of experience that is always in flux and one constructed from a more static, traditional scientific epistemological perspective.

In Bal's (1997) discussion of layers of narrative, she refers to the *Arabian Nights*, reminding the reader that every story told by Scheherazade to the King (under threat of death) is framed within a larger narrative wherein she saves herself because of the superiority, interest, and intrigue of her story. In addition, many of the stories told are framed within other stories. Bal (1997) argues that almost all narratives or aspects of the *Arabian Nights'* narratives involve this kind of framing. Attention to the inter-relationships of these frames is an important aspect of interpreting narrative meanings not only in reading the Scheherazade stories but in reading other narratives as well, including the narratives of TEdRs. By being wakeful to Bal's (1997) idea about levels of narrative, we recognize that the layers that frame the narrative, and the interaction and tensions they introduce, are as central to developing narrative understanding as is any meaning inherent in them.

As TEDRs who understand the language of research, we recognize that our narrative fragment could be framed by an approach to narrative research different from this one (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2006).

The selected fragment, with its tension between illness and a desire to educate novice teachers, resonates with conceptions of complexity of relationship between teaching and teacher education. This fragment captures a TED in the midst of both being and becoming a TED (Feldman, 2006) and yet through the APA mechanisms of quotation presents itself as something more than journal writing or storytelling. It clearly presents experience and, as readers, we know following somewhere in the text must be interpretation, although that is not readily apparent here.

Bal's (1997) levels of narrative remind us to notice the nesting of stories. In this fragment, we see an insight about understanding and learning held in tension with an insight about pain and treatment presented in an act of writing. This act nests in the midst of a grading episode framed in competing stories of illness and work. In turn, these stories are layered within a whole life where boundaries between daily living and professional life bump constantly against each other to give us a sense of the status and difficulty in a life of being simultaneously T, TED, and TEDR. The tension of the illness that pushes on the TEDR against healing (the personal and familial obligation) and grading (the obligation a T and TED has to preservice teachers) are the details that create this sense of bumping up against that constantly exists in the life of TEDR.

## **TENSIONS SURROUNDING MODERNIST EPISTEMOLOGY**

In academia, tensions flourish as scholars compete for ways to best articulate ideas. Modernist visions of either/or press against postmodern expressions of both/and. The quote below, when one attends to Bal's layers, is an example of the way modernist and postmodernist research plotlines conflict in the lives of TEDRs. The modernist plotline seems more centered on how we know and is most often in the foreground of methodological discussions. A more postmodern focus centers, instead, on the ontological frame, the nature of knowledge, and the questions we attempt to address. As Ts and TEDs enacting a plotline of learning to teach, we stand always in a space of possibility and indeterminacy because our orientation focuses clearly on our students – public school or future teachers – and the potential



that learning what we teach opens for them in their lives. In this section, we prod these issues along by demonstrating a way that story can become research.

I ask some people why they're proposing to do a study and they just look at me – to write an article – how could you be so naïve. The new guy is hustling like that. The last time I met him in the hall, he wanted to know if I knew any Indian people I could introduce him too. He had been reading stuff on the right/left brain and how Indian people were supposed to be right brained. He wanted to go in with this test and find out if that was true. He has no idea about Indian culture, no investment in their problems, and no idea about what in the hell he is doing. (Arizona Group, 1994, November 8, p. 77)

Within this narrative fragment, alternative plotlines for knowing and research bump against each other as competing and conflicting stories of research (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The assertion here, that colleagues propose studies merely to write articles, captures the *publish or perish* plotline in the academy. According to this plotline, publications are capital and can be exchanged to gain respect and attain permanence (tenure). Here, knowledge and knowing are beside the point and important in this story only as they translate not into meaning-making but into published articles that can then be exchanged as a form of academic capital.

The author's account is a critique of her colleague's living of the academic-as-researcher plotline. This is evident in her assertion that her colleagues find her way of knowing and being as a researcher, whose fundamental concern is with praxis (teaching and being a TEd), naïve. This assertion emerges in the use of the words "Indian people" and the expressed concern that scholarship would be done "on" her friends, not out of a genuine interest in who they are as humans. This assertion is also implicitly present in the unspoken insult the author feels when asked to introduce her friends to this colleague whose research intentions focus on building capital as a researcher not on understanding or doing work that would honor the indigenous community with which she is connected or be integrated into his teaching practices. Two competing plotlines of epistemology are evident here. The plotline of knowing grounded in modernist epistemology as the *use of quantitative technology to assert truth* lies in tension with a plotline of knowing grounded more firmly in concern with exploring ontology (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2006; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009) as *living alongside to make meaning*.

In this narrative fragment, story as research holds competing and conflicting plotlines for knowing and being-as-knowers in tension with each other. Although not directly referenced in the aforementioned narrative fragment shared, research understandings of new scholarship that honors

the scholarship inherent in blending of roles captured in the label TEdR (e.g., Boyer, 1990; Lieberman, 1992), paradigm wars (e.g. Day, 2008; Gage, 1989; Johnson, 2004), or narrative in contrast with paradigmatic ways of knowing (Bruner, 1987) immediately populate this narrative. As Bahktin (1981) suggests, our encounter with this text containing allusions to competing plotlines of research and scholarship and holding these allusions in tension with each other calls forth knowledge about research that circulates in the discourse of teacher education particularly among TEdRs.

Our background knowledge about these competing discourses interrupts the story and thrusts us into the zone of maximum contact. It pulls us into a zone of inconclusivity – into a space where regardless of our own plotline of TEdR, the circulating discourses about the role of story in educational research (an insistent and on-going part of the research conversation in both the more distant educational research horizon and the nearer and more situational horizon of discourse in teacher education research) bump up against each other.

This tension in the teacher education research community exists sometimes as sub-text when we pursue specific plotlines of knowledge such as the development of Ts or TEd's personal practical knowledge (Clandinin, 1992; Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) or as text when our attention is more directly focused on research methodology. Narrative knowing is evident in this section's fragment and substantiated as knowledge both through its status as published peer-reviewed research and through scholars' enactment of research strategies such as their use of the three-dimensional narrative space, their text negotiation (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) that establishes researchers' trustworthiness (e.g., Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Miles & Huberman, 1984; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009), or their provision of exemplar validation (Mishler, 1990) to assert narrative authority (Olson & Craig, 2001).

Story as research allows literary elements of meaning-making such as point of view, allusion, and metaphor to overtly and covertly infiltrate our reading of the text to disrupt and inform our sense of meaning-making (Coulter & Smith, 2009). When Huber and Clandinin (2005) use poetry to imagistically capture the life histories of three children, they trigger our imagination and make us more open to metaphoric ways of meaning-making. Furthermore, at this exact place in their text, they engage our imagination through the use of wondering and, as a result, they immediately populate the research text with our understandings of critical pedagogy, hegemony, and other propositional knowledge about poverty, abuse, second language learning, struggling readers, and school reform.

In our fragment, story as research moves our knowing from the abstract, propositional knowing of academic research to the intimacy of knowing as a human concerned about human conditions and calls forth from us an ethical response (Putnam, 2005). When research becomes about a human concerned about human conditions, it is no longer abstract but must attend to relationships and thus to the ethical. As researchers for whom dialogue (Arizona Group, 2004) rather than the scientific method forms a foundation for knowing, the examination of the particular provides a basis for understanding and responding to the intractable issues that surround educating teachers. For us, ontology orients epistemology rather than the other way around (see Clandinin & Rosiek, 2006; Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009).

When we, as TEdRs, employ story as research, we regularly bump up against plotlines of academic or scholar that are competing plotlines to the one that we as TEdRs are living out. Bruner (1987) argues that these two forms of scholarship, narrative and paradigmatic models of knowing, within the human sciences are fundamental and exist in competition with each other. He asserts neither is superior but that both are indeed essential ways for knowledge production in the social sciences. Narrative knowing as a competing story of scholarship can be maintained in tension with what Bruner labels as paradigmatic knowing, which is more concerned with making truth claims about knowledge and exists within a modernist plotline for scholarship and one that Polkinghorne (1988) blames for the failure of modernist research in the human sciences to inform the practitioners in psychology, social work, or education.

As part of that group who embrace narrative knowing, we are ever aware of the ways in which our story might become a conflicting story (Clandinin, Murphy, Huber & Orr, 2010) one that is forced off the academic landscape if promotion policies and practices define our plotline as “not really research or scholarship.” We label ourselves as TEdRs intentionally because the tensions we experience in our life as academics is captured in the plotlines we hold together in that label – not teacher, educator, researcher, but T-Ted-TEdR. Our label names us as always in the midst concerned about issues from each plotline in the moment we enact another.

Embedded in the fragment and implicit in the author’s response to being asked if she knew Indian people is a critique of modernist epistemology and particular kinds of research and ways of developing knowledge based on the paradigm of science as dictated by physics with distance and a desire for objectivity. Modernist practices of research require that we treat what we are studying as an object, a thing that we can know completely. The language of the fragment simultaneously communicates the author’s lived

experience in negotiating the tensions between these competing narratives of scholarship, research, and knowledge production. We see evidence of this awareness in this fragment with words like “hustling,” “naïve,” “test,” “true,” and “no investment.”

Putnam (2005) argues that traditional notions of science applied to the human sciences have not been helpful in resolving social issues because human problems always exist in a context. When we successfully respond to the human issues of hunger, violence, and poverty in one situation, the “truths” guiding our response may shift when we attempt to use our solution in other situations and at other times in history. Obligations as scholars form the bulwark on which academics enact the plotline of scholarship. As TEdRs, the three elements in the naming carry implicit obligations, responsibilities, and duties, that may often be in tension with one another, and yet, these obligations held in tension with each other form the bulwark on which we live our story of research (albeit more open and indeterminate than the plotline that underlies a modernist plotline of scholarship).

Modernist science searches for universal principles that can be applied without regard for context. In contrast, narrative knowing values the particular and the contingent. Paradigmatic ways of knowing assert principles, axioms, and theories, whereas those who live a plotline of narrative knowing use exemplar validation (Mishler, 1990) and provide stories as a way to capture and communicate understandings about being human that they uncover in their research.

Modernist claims about knowledge are somewhat parodied in the story fragment presented here. In this text, the colleague would find a “test” of right versus left brained-ness, administer it to indigenous and non-indigenous peoples and determine the “truth” of this fact. The author labels this kind of scholarship as “hustling” because absent from such “scientific explorations” of humans is an ethical concern with the culture, the life, and the situation of the other. These ethical concerns are embedded in the TEdR plotline we espouse.

Because of the ways in which modernist plotlines of knowing have attempted to decontextualize experience, Polkinghorne (1988) argues that modernist scientific epistemology fails the social sciences generally and psychology specifically. Polkinghorne asserts that embracing story as a way of developing knowledge within the human sciences has greater potential for providing knowledge that can guide human action in these contexts because narrative brings together the conflicting, congruent, and paradoxical elements that exist in any life experience. Because it has the power to do

this, exploring stories to develop understanding about human experience has potential as an avenue for both uncovering meaning of experience and value in guiding those responding in a situation to improve the human condition.

What we suggest here is that as scholars in teacher education – TEDRs – we have come to understand that becoming a teacher and being a teacher exist in a zone of inconclusivity. [Bahktin \(1981\)](#) has labeled this a space of maximum contact where past, present, and future come together in ways that destabilize our understanding and yet provide a site for further development of it. As [Clandinin and Connelly \(2000\)](#) demonstrate, story is a way in which we can take up an exploration of research puzzles because story can capture the multidimensional and nuanced nature of experience, which can be laid alongside our understanding as we develop knowledge within a curriculum of lives ([Clandinin & Connelly, 1996](#)). Narrative allows us to take up and explore the entailed understandings that are part of this endeavor.

## APPROACHES TO THE USE OF NARRATIVE

Scholars engage story as research in many ways. In this section of our chapter, we present another narrative fragment to name and explain nine possible approaches to the use of narrative by TEDRs. We selected a fragment from an article where an AG member nests her experience as a beginning TED, researcher, T, and scholar within a metaphor that has national, if not international, recognition.

Having confronted myself, examined my beliefs, and explored my knowledge in a multitude of ways, I seem to have uncovered the passion and the promise in my acts of teaching. Oh, yes, I also looked at practice. And, in retrospect, as I deconstruct the reconstruction of my constructed experience, I find that my journey resembles Dorothy's search for Kansas. So for fun, and to help develop my ideas, I present a story about my own Oz-dacious journey to Kansas. As a consequence, this is a personal tale, which means that I have not stopped to grammatically check my language or appropriately cite my colleagues. Hopefully, though, the power of the story will outweigh the bumpy ride. ([Hamilton, 1995, p. 29](#))

As we read this fragment, which is the introduction to an exploration of being a beginning professor on the road to tenure, we immediately notice the obvious allusion to [Frank Baum's \*Wizard of Oz\* \(1983\)](#), a children's story some remember from childhood if only because of the Judy Garland film. The beat of the prose is evident in the patterns of alliteration in the text found in the plosives of passion and promise, the sibilance of the s's in the text (self, beliefs, search, etc.) and the cacophony of the k's in confronted,

uncovered, constructed, and Kansas. This beat implicitly beckons from memory the song “We’re off to see the Wizard.” Thus, the lightheartedness of tone and language and our labeling of this as a children’s story leads us to initially engage the story as playful.

At the same time, our memory that the Wizard of the story exploits Dorothy’s talents for his own ends sends her off into danger and abandons her once his needs are met, causes us to anticipate not a smooth narrative but a “bumpy ride.” Even if we are unaware of the allusion, the ways in which the alliteration in the text links ideas together such as the worrisome coupling of passion and promise and the stringing together of the k sounds in confronted, uncovered, construct, consequence, and check, introduce tension and unease. As *Wizard of Oz* aficionados who might have read all of the Oz series or who might also be aware of the films, *Return to Oz* or *The Wiz*, we might be more wakeful to the images in words like confronted, looked, examined, resembles, and search that suggest this is not a journey that will be as playful as the tone initially implied. Intuitively, the literary allusions and language position us in a paradox where the surface story presented is undercut by the language being used to present it and our past experience with stories of the wizard. The playful coupled with potentially sinister makes it an appropriate frame tale for a TEdR.

In many ways, narrative as a way of knowing and the metanarrative of story as research positions us, as TEdRs in a similar paradox. What we have already articulated as the promise of story for bringing into relationship and holding in tension conflicting and competing ideas concerning a research puzzle exists in a state of paradox. Not only does that plotline of story of TEdR live in uneasy tension with the plotline of scholarship as modernist science, the diverse plotlines or approaches to story as research exist in tension with each other. This fragment in many ways references and holds in tension these competing plotlines of story as research.

We take up a consideration of these approaches either clearly evident or, in some cases, only hinted at in this narrative fragment. In concert with the images of journey embedded in this fragment referenced in phrases like “confronted myself,” “examined my beliefs,” “explored my knowledge,” and “bumpy ride”, we take up an examination of nine variations on the plotline of story as research followed by the presentation of a heuristic for considering the ways in which story appears in research. This heuristic allows for the presentation of narrative inquiry as a story of narrative research that exists in tension. In contrast to every other approach to narrative or story as research, narrative inquiry requires the use of story in every phase of the research from the puzzle we take up through the data we

collect and the analysis we use and most assuredly in the way we represent the research account.

The use of the heuristic provides evidence of the way in which narrative inquiry is more fundamentally about story as research than other approaches to narrative research because it more fully utilizes story in every aspect of the research process. As you see in our discussion that follows, all forms of narrative research share a concern with the study of stories, narratives or depictions of a series of events. The various forms of narrative research developed or even continue to develop based on the assumption common to all approaches to narrative research that the story is a fundamental unit that accounts for human experience.

*Approach One: Use of a Familiar Narrative  
to Frame Data or Scholarly Analysis*

The first approach to narrative is the one most clearly evident in this text that overtly alludes to the story of the *Wizard of Oz*. In this approach, TEDRs use story to frame and unpack research findings. Having conducted either a review of the literature or a research study within a particular area, the TEDRs uses an allusion to a shared and culturally familiar narrative or parable to make more accessible a story of research in a particular area. In this approach, the TEDRs may or may not conduct an empirical study. Having done a literature review, scholars might use the familiar story as a plotline for organizing and presenting a synthesis of research findings. If the TEDRs are presenting a cautionary tale, the use of a parable like “the boy who cried wolf” might be the vehicle for exploring a review of research that brings together scholarship on school reform with research on teacher resistance to change. Familiarity with the narrative being alluded to allows the researcher to signal to the research audience the form of the story to be told. In the same way, our understanding of the unhelpfulness of the *Wizard of Oz* to Dorothy and the series of trials she confronts on her journey belies the hopeful tone presented in the initial story fragment presented.

This approach can also be used to support TEDRs in interpreting the findings of any kind of research even one conducted from a quantitative orientation. The familiar story frame supports the TEDR in presenting findings because it can both hold competing and conflicting plotlines in tension with each other and capitalize on the background knowledge of the elements in the story to guide readers’ interpretations of those findings. When story becomes research from this approach, researchers must be

careful to make certain that the narrative selected is culturally shared and that the details needed to carry the research plotline are also commonly held within the larger research community.

*Approach Two: Construction of a Prototypic Story*

The story fragment with which we began this section is a narrative of beginning as a TE<sub>d</sub>. Implicit in the fragment is the representation of a TE<sub>d</sub>'s experience as prototypic. Under this approach to narrative, TE<sub>d</sub>s might engage in interviewing participants from a population of interest (such as preservice or inservice teachers) about particular kinds of experiences or they might engage in a qualitative study of the concept of "learning." They may never consider the data they collect to be stories and they may code the data using various qualitative data analytic techniques such as those recommended by Miles and Huberman (1984) or they may use specific techniques like grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) or phenomenological analysis (van Manen, 1990). Once they uncover the themes of what it means to "learn" something, TE<sub>d</sub>s decide to present their themes by constructing one or more prototypic narratives of what people generally mean when they claim to have learned something. The prototypic story may contain elements or evidence drawn from multiple interview protocols or data sources and the entire story may or may not be evident in any single text, but the story of what it means to learn is presented in one or more prototypic story pieced together from the data. If the TE<sub>d</sub> who wrote the fragment presented here had determined to tell her story in that way, she might have presented a story of her day or week as a TE<sub>d</sub> rather than as a metaphoric account referenced by the allusion to Oz.

*Approach Three: Analysis of Narratives Presented as Themes*

The plotline of the Oz story contains important elements like the tornado that the TE<sub>d</sub> used metaphorically to support the readers' understandings of her experience of being a beginning professor. This hints at another approach to narrative research. Under this approach, the researcher collects narratives about a particular experience but using typical qualitative data analysis techniques analyzes the stories for common themes and patterns. These themes and patterns are then presented not as a story or even as narratives, but as themes and patterns like other findings from various forms



of qualitative research. Within this approach, the themes might be illustrated or exemplified by narratives drawn from the data, but the audience to the research is directed not so much to the narrative but to the capturing and communicating of the narratives as themes.

*Approach Four: Codification and Correlation of Narrative Data*

The approach to narrative that is least congruent or reminiscent of the selected narrative fragment is the one that turns word data to number data. Within this approach, there appears to be two variations. Under one variation, researchers collect narratives, analyze the narratives for themes, and code the data by themes identified. The researcher then creates a rubric or scoring guide and uses this guide to change the word data to number data. Here, the TEdR enters and quantitatively analyzes the numbers and correlates them with each other or other information. The TEdR might analyze the reflections or field notes preservice teachers kept during an early field experience for themes, code them, and score those themes in some way, giving each preservice teacher a score concerning the theme of interest. The TEdR might examine the relationship between age and theme scores driven by a research question that asks whether nontraditional and traditional students see classrooms differently. Or preservice teachers might complete a survey about their beliefs about teacher self-efficacy and the TEdR might explore the relationship between the scores on coding themes in field notes and preservice teacher beliefs about self-efficacy.

In another variation, TEdRs collect narratives about the variable of interest through video or other means and then they use quantitative measurement tool to measure participants' responses to or understanding of the narratives presented. For example, the TEdR might video preservice teacher mini-lessons taught on their first day in a teacher education program and then have these preservice teachers and their TEds use a measurement tool to respond to the videos. The TEdRs might explore the differences in how TEds and preservice teachers analyze teaching events.

In this approach, the TEdR collects narratives but transforms the narratives into numeric data ultimately enacting a paradigmatic research plotline rather than a narrative one. Its connection to our story fragment is best captured through the Oz image of the yellow brick road. The yellow brick road is the physical representation of the plotline for the *Wizard of Oz*. It not only connects Dorothy's adventures together, it also predicts and controls them; ultimately, it leads her to the Emerald City and the wizard.

The yellow brick road is emblematic in the novel of modernist technology and ways of knowing. In this way, the image of the yellow brick road which is only evident in the text for those who have a deep understanding of the whole of the story draws together with other narrative approaches this almost conflicting plotline of narrative as research.

*Approach Five: Metaphor of Story*

Almost as distant from the use of the *Wizard of Oz* as the coding of narratives to be used in quantitative analysis is an approach to narrative research that uses metaphor of story generally to present or understand research. This approach is distinct from *Approach one*, because it does not try to frame the research within a particular familiar story, but simply uses the general idea of “story” and “plotline” as a metaphor for research, scholarship, or the research process. For example, such research might uncover the scholarship on teacher education reform by explaining the “plotline of reform” or the “narrative of reform.” It references no specific story line but simply storylines or plotlines generally or even merely the general conception of story.

*Approach Six: Taxonomic Sorting of Narratives*

The selected narrative fragment provides only one plotline for the story of the TEdR as beginning professor. Oriented toward tenure and constructed out of the cultural landscape of the middle United States, it represents only one kind of narrative of a beginning TEdR. Scholars may encounter other beginning professor narratives; thus, another approach to narrative is a taxonomic one. Under this approach, a TEdR might collect stories about the process of a beginning TEdR either across the United States or India or China or Brazil or across international boundaries and continents. The TEdR would then develop a taxonomy of these stories, sorting and labeling the stories as particular types of stories. In naming these categories, the TEdR might label them with names like congruent, disruptive, abortive, or even might utilize literary allusions like *Wizard of Oz*, *King Lear*, or *Catcher in the rye*.

*Approach Seven: Presentation of Biography/Autobiography*

Using the story of the *Wizard of Oz* to unpack an individual’s experience of her journey toward tenure echoes a seventh approach to narrative that we

explore. Implicit in the selected narrative fragment is the understanding that the journey being explored is the life story of an individual – a TEdR. In this approach to narrative that includes biography, autobiography, autoethnography, or life history methods, scholarly investigation of an individual's experience is conducted. The story of that life is used to understand particular kinds of experiences. The researcher may gather stories, documents, interviews, or various kinds of data and analysis and may proceed through a careful consideration of story, but it might also be guided by methods of analysis from history or life-writing as well.

#### *Approach Eight: Story and Cognition*

Bruner's (1987) assertion of two fundamental ways of knowing, paradigmatic and narrative, was part of a conversation in cognitive science concerning the fundamental nature of story and memory. As a result, cognitive scientists became interested in studying story to determine the structure of story, acquisition, and control of narrative structures in discourse and the study of story in relationship to memory and remembering. The story of the *Wizard of Oz* might appear in such research where it might be told to people representing various cultures. Across time, the researchers would return and ask participants to retell the story charting how story features disappeared or shifted.

Under this approach, TEdRs collect stories from participants to determine how they understand various kinds of experience, the relationship of culture to the ways in which we remember stories, and the ways in which we story experiences within a culture. Using this tradition, TEdRs might ask preservice teachers to tell stories of their intensive field experiences, then as a student teacher and then during each of their first three years of teaching. The TEdR would chart which elements in the story changes. Within this tradition, TEdRs might use both qualitative and quantitative measures to explore or chart changes in story structure or memory.

#### *Approach Nine: Narrative Inquiry*

The last approach to narrative is the most central to the use of story as research within this book. Within narrative approaches, TEdRs move toward narrative when they embrace narrative inquiry not just as a methodology but as central in their research puzzle, in their strategies as well as the ways in which they represent understandings within their research (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2006).

The playful tone and the invitation to live alongside the TEdR on the “bumpy ride” as the story of unfolds are elements of the selected story fragment. They are also suggestive of narrative inquiry. The decision to represent the author’s stories of experience within a larger story and inviting the reader of the research to live alongside and to explore the bumps between her experience and theirs to live, tell, retell, and relive are elements central in narrative inquiry. Where this actual project diverges is that the research behind the *Oz* study is based more in general qualitative research data collection and analysis methods. The fragment emerges from a self-study of teacher education practices (SSTEP). Although a TEdR doing SSTEP research might decide to use the methodology of narrative inquiry, SSTEP research is not necessarily conducted either as narrative research in general or as narrative inquiry in particular. Indeed, a TEdR may do a SSTEP and decide to engage a research question using any of the approaches to narrative outlined here. Although SSTEP research is a methodology, it is not also a method. Those methods and strategies are qualitative in nature and used to support the answering of the research question posed (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009).

Both SSTEP research and narrative inquiry are oriented toward ontology more than epistemology because both are about developing understanding of experience. Neither SSTEP researchers nor narrative inquirers insist on inserting distance between self and other participating in the study. SSTEP research is improvement aimed in some way (LaBoskey, 2004). Narrative inquirers do not hesitate to interact in ways that shape their sites of study in positive ways, but they may or may not see improvement as fundamental to research in the ways SSTEP researchers do. Interpretation in SSTEP research is based in dialog. Interaction is central for assertions for understanding and action to develop and establish trustworthiness. Understanding an experiential phenomenon through living alongside is central to narrative inquiry.

SSTEP research always focuses on the practice of the TEdR, whereas narrative inquirers, who might also be TEdRs, take up narrative inquiry puzzles that are not always or even mostly focused on their own personal practice. Data in SSTEP research can come from any number of sources and are not necessarily story or even about capturing experience as experience. The justification for the SSTEP project is always about developing assertions for understanding or action and about contributing the research in teacher education. If a TEdR takes up a narrative inquiry, the justification for the study is situated in the personal, the practical, and the social (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). The study begins in a research puzzle, which usually emerges from the lived experience of the researcher. Field notes are

usually a data source for the study, and they are developed from and capture experiences the TED has while living alongside participants in the research. Analysis involves the use of the three-dimensional narrative space to unpack the meaning of the TED's experience. Story is central in the way in which the final research report is written. Narrative inquiries always move forward understanding of the phenomena being studied as well as the methods and methodology of narrative inquiry.

### HEURISTIC FOR CONSIDERING STORY AS AND WITHIN RESEARCH

In the presentation of *The Wizard of Oz* as a frame for exploring her experiences as a beginning professor metaphorically pursuing the yellow brick road toward the Emerald City of tenure, the author lays her own story of being a beginning TEEdR and struggling toward tenure alongside the culturally shared story framework and plotline. Implicit within the use of this framework for unpacking her tenure story is the familiar process of research: research puzzle, data collection, data analysis, and representation of findings. If we interrogate each of the approaches explained aforementioned to determine how and whether story is central in which of those elements, we begin to see variations that underlie these various narrative approaches (Table 1).

Although there are many approaches to narrative research generally, in narrative inquiry, experience is the fundamental target of the inquiry. Story is seen as the essential way to understand experience, and thus, story and an understanding of story are critical in every part of the research process. As we consider the various approaches to narrative research, it is only in narrative inquiry that story is metaphor for knowing, phenomenon to be explored, direction for the process for analysis of experience, and guide in determining how to represent understandings and meaning-making from the inquiry. Story and research become inextricably linked within this research methodology, or as this fragment suggests, "the power of the story will outweigh the bumpy ride."

#### *Characteristics of Research in Teacher Education – The Role of Story in Capturing Complexity*

Research on TEDs and teacher education has received more attention recently. This section of our chapter, using another narrative fragment,

**Table 1.** Interrogating the Use of Story in Nine Approaches to Narrative.

Approach	Question: Is Story Necessary in This Element Under This Approach?			
	Research puzzle	Data collection	Data analysis	Representing findings
1. Familiar narrative as frame	No	No	No	Yes
2. Prototypic story	No/yes	No	No	Yes
3. Themes & patterns	No/yes	Yes	No	No
4. Numeric coding & Correlation	No/yes	Yes	No	No
5. Story as metaphor	No	No	No	No
6. Taxonomic categorizing	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
7. Autobiography/biography	No/yes	Yes	No/yes	Yes
8. Narrative & cognition	No/yes	Yes	No/yes	No
9. Narrative inquiry	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

explores the characteristics of research in TED and the ways story can represent complexity.

As a beginning teacher my major concerns were day-to-day planning and survival in a new environment. While I was politically aware, concerned about the war in Vietnam and civil rights, I was not aware of the deep political meanings of my work for the Head Start program. I was not aware, for example, that the program was based on a 'cultural deficit model' of 'compensatory education'. I was not fully aware that it was part of a grand liberal strategy, a War on Poverty. I was not aware of myself as an agent of the federal government intervening, for better or worse, in the lives of children and families. I was just a teacher of children, worried about what to do the next week, day, or (in the case of Bernie) minute. (Arizona Group, 1994, p. 43)

Bal's (1997) invitation to unpack the meaning of narrative by considering the integration and segregation of the roles of narrator, character, and actor helps us develop narrative understandings of this story fragment. The narrator, a mature and experienced TEd, introduces us to herself as actor – a beginning T, a character in the meta-narrative of teacher education. In presenting herself to us as narrator and actor/character, she alludes to the narrative understanding she has about preservice teachers in her school and society class. In the role of narrator, now an informed professional, she introduces us to her "preservice teacher" self and in doing so presents the curriculum of lives (Clandinin et al., 2006) that she brings to knowing as a preservice teacher. She uses the account of what she, as a teacher in a "Head

Start program,” did not really understand about the relationship between her lived experience as a teacher and herself as character in the political plotline of her time and place. She narrates herself as politically aware about Vietnam and the civil rights program (indeed such awareness may have been part of the reason why she was working in head start). But she asserts the ways in which as a teacher she was concerned more about responding minute by minute, day by day, and week by week to the learning of children individually and collectively.

In this narrative, the TEdR is narrator who presents head start as a compensatory education program based in a cultural deficit model nested in the liberal war on poverty strategy. The narrator describes herself as character as an agent of the federal government – the political character in education that the preservice/in-service teachers we teach seldom if ever understand. As narrator, she juxtaposes herself as an actor/teacher enacting her personal practical knowledge in relationship to her students’ curriculum against the agent/character of politics. In this way, she makes us wakeful to our narrative understanding and pushes us toward exploring the question, “What is it about the lived-experience of our curriculum of lives as teachers/actors that blinds us to the political character we play?”. Our role as agent in the political plotline of school is entangled but hidden in our lived experience of schools in our role of teacher as curriculum maker (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988).

The potential for confronting preservice/in-service teachers’ lack of understanding about this entanglement is presented to us in a new light and as TEds we gain tools for crafting new curriculums of lives as TEds (Clandinin et al., 2006). Thus, we are provided with new ways of living alongside students in our classrooms and being wakeful to the bifurcation of meaning in their lives and the ways in which the political is hidden in the cultural context of their lived experiences. Analysis of the roles of narrator, character, and actor evident in this text open new ways for living, telling, retelling, and reliving the story of the political with our students and in relationship to our own lives that is vital for teacher education. This disentanglement also makes clear the ways in which story is centrally research.

This story fragment uncovers a fundamental and on-going disjunct in the practice and scholarship in teacher education. Those of us who take up exploration of experience within teacher education and target our concern on understanding being TEds, doing teacher education and developing Ts and TEds to improve the teaching and learning of students in schools are often blind to how to connect our work to the larger discourses of teacher

education as a research enterprise or the discourse of policy and teacher education. Immersed in and attending carefully to the daily aspects of conducting teacher education either in our teaching or in scholarship, we may undervalue and not access often enough teacher education research that enacts a different plotline. Although we are clearly valuing story as research, we may not, like the TED as T presented to us in the selected fragment, be aware enough of ourselves as “agents” of politics or larger understandings about teacher reform being presented through other research forms. As [Maxine Greene \(1995\)](#) argues, we may not see the need to see both big (the storied research we are doing) and small (larger studies that provide a vision of the entire landscape of teacher education). We may lament the ways our understandings based in a search to understand the storied nature of our lives within the context of our individual and particular settings are undervalued rather than integrating as Greene has suggested seeing big and seeing small.

Although the late 1980s and 1990s marked a time when concern with the knowledge development of Ts and TEDs was being intensely explored (see [Richardson, 2001](#)), the value of knowing that emerges from narrative inquiry has always been under suspicion and often considered less valuable than propositional forms of knowing that more readily emerge from research based in a modernist epistemology ([Fenstermacher, 1994](#)). We believe that the reason for the suspicion that is often extended toward research based in knowing from experience emerges because when story is research it does not make claims to knowing, it makes claims to being and understanding the particular of persons in a place and time. Such research usually focuses most centrally on an attempt to understand what is and in this attention, as [Putnam \(2005\)](#) argues, has a fundamental ethical orientation. This is so because, as [Clandinin and Rosiek \(2006\)](#) and [Pinnegar and Hamilton \(2009\)](#) clearly articulate, such research is oriented to ontology – to an understanding of what is – rather than on epistemology – a claim to know.

Research oriented toward epistemology and the assertion of claims to truth (without a capital t) take up epistemology – the project of turning true belief into knowledge – first. To use the technology of the scientific method as a vehicle for knowing, researchers must stand apart from their experience and, at least momentarily, cut themselves off from it. They do this by employing strategies that can allow them to meet assumptions of objectivity, reliability, and generalizability necessary for and fundamental to that method for knowing.

In contrast, researchers who use story as research, particularly within narrative inquiry and SSTEP methodologies, ground their research in



ontology. These ways of knowing are captured by two related metaphors, the three-dimensional narrative space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) and dialog (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009). Both of these accounts of the process of coming-to-know position experience and discourse as central in that process and establish story as clearly research within developing understandings of teaching and teacher education. Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (1999) divisions of knowledge in of and for teaching and teacher education mirror and, in some ways unfortunately, highlight the split between these orientations to knowing.

For narrative inquiry, the fundamental orientation toward understanding what we experience and understand of that experience is a narrative understanding of that experience; however, for SSTEP research, this may or may not be (Pinnegar & Hamilton, 2009). In this orientation toward ontology and attention to our story of experience and that of others, we are also oriented to the living of that experience and the ways to improve the living of experience of teacher education – developing stronger curriculum that better supports our students and colleagues as they construct understanding through their own curriculum of lives (Clandinin et al., 2006).

## BEING AND BECOMING

As TEdRs, we always stand in the midst – in the midst of the story where we may be simultaneously narrator, character, and actor, in the midst of living the research we are most interested in studying. Within a single moment, we can act as T, TEd, and TEdR when our research focuses on our own practice. Our experience as we live it represents the tension between arrival and arriving. In the midst, our ground seems less solid and secure. Indeed, it is not a ground upon which foundational claims about what we know can be made, because what we know changes and evolves as we act upon it. As Marion (2003) argues, according to Cartesian notions of being, knowledge comes into being because, through our attention, we bring it into being (Marion, 2003). When attending to being and becoming, our research stance is essentially an ontological one. In this section of the chapter, we explore the ways we, as TEdRs, can use story as research to convey these tensions.

In order for this description to have the proper impact you have to imagine the scene. Here we are, my class and I, in an oversized room with too many school desks. It is the end of the football season, we are playing our serious rivals. My students mostly look like Barbie and Ken dolls ... So there they are, arriving in class precisely on time. In the

front of the room is their teacher. Me, I look like I have studied the conservative republic book of dress ... Today is our first whole group meeting in weeks ... I begin by asking if anyone has any management miracles from their observations ... Quickly the issues turn to human dignity ... just as quickly I begin to talk about revolution in the schools. But, I did not begin the discussion before I, unconsciously, walked over and closed the classroom door ... you would have been proud. There I was professing revolution. Their little eyes wide, there was a lot of whispering. I used my favorite quote from the Mohawks in Quebec ... today is a good day to die ... I asked them to consider the issues for which they were willing to take a stand. They were mesmerized. I personally, was scared. (Arizona Group, 1994, November 14, p. 78)

As we take up this narrative fragment, we are reminded of Campbell's (1949) and Frye's (1957) accounting of the hero's journey. An archetypal interrogation of the text supports the development of the text as well as being and becoming as TEds. The description of place can be read as *wasteland*, a sterile setting with too much space and too much furniture. The naming of the students as "Barbie & Ken dolls" is an illusion to shared understanding of a cultural stereotype and calls forth images of manicured, perfumed, every-hair-in-place, blonde, fad-mad, consumer-orientated, unidimensional, sterile robotic characters who would be more oriented to engagement with the social dimensions of college life like the final football game of the season rather than learning to be Ts. Their arrival, "precisely on time," highlights the sterile robotic and wasteland images. The TEdR's favorite quote, which appears at the end of the text, provides an allusion to a call to the quest – the first stage in the hero cycle. The quote from the "Mohawks in Quebec" and the text of the quote "today is a good day to die" lie in tension with the final football game of the season against the school's "serious rivals." The quote also represents the boon, the hero (the TEdR) is presenting to students and simultaneously a call to them to leave behind the sterility of their lives and engage deeply in the call to teach.

Whereas the TEdR is clearly positioned as hero, the text leaves us uncertain about what kind of hero she will emerge as or what kind of hero-cycles her own students will live out in their lives. She is hopeful that she will emerge as either a comedic hero (one who causes a reintegration of society) or romantic hero (one who through providing a boon to society causes healing and transcendence). The closing of the door and the TEdR's statement of being "personally scared" suggest the potential for the author to become a tragic hero through a separation of the hero from society (teacher education) or an ironic hero by failing. The higher prize here is the need to engage these Barbie and Ken's not with the football game that afternoon but the more real conflicts surrounding issues of human dignity

and human flourishing and the role of the T in giving his or her life to education that lifts the human spirit – education that does not reproduce the hegemonic society represented in the presentation of these students as “Barbie and Ken dolls.” This occurs on the day of what has been heretofore the most important tournament in their lives the rituals of “college sports.”

The inconclusive nature of the fragment’s ending positions us squarely in the space that includes being and becoming as a TEdR. The narrative feels familiar to us as TEds, for each semester we take up similar quests. This story, when framed as research brings into the narrative all we know about the resistance of teacher thinking to considering teaching as political, the typicality of particular kinds of preservice teacher populations (white, middle-class, females), and the pervasiveness of cultural deficit orientations toward particular students (echoed in the text with the Mohawk quote). It also calls forth what TEdRs know about preservice/inservice teachers valuing of field experience over teacher education coursework and the need to begin with experience to push development as a T. The juxtaposition of TEdR as hero with the allusions that call forth our research understandings about teacher education and the inconclusivity of the ending position the TEdR and the reader in the space of being a TEdR while simultaneously attending to becoming (a better) one. The resonance with our own experience and the research understandings we have coupled with the careful attention in analysis to trustworthiness position story as research and orient us to possibility in being and becoming.

When story is research, the TEdR is fundamentally concerned with both being and becoming (Feldman, 2006), with understanding experience as lived and living. Through engagement with the three-dimension narrative space and the process of living, telling, retelling, and reliving (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), the TEdR develops new ways of being and identifies new avenues for becoming through exploration of understandings of teacher education and teaching that emerge in each aspect of the research process of living, telling, retelling, and reliving. Careful consideration of story, at each stage in the process, opens and reopens engagement with experience and allows the TEdR to conceptualize new possibilities for living as a TED alongside beginning and practicing Ts. Through inquiring into experience using story as the vehicle for exploration, analysis, and production of knowledge, the TEdR reimagines and recreates new ways of being T, TED, and TEdR within a plotline of a curriculum of lives (Clandinin et al., 2006) and establishes story as research.

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**PART II**  
**NARRATIVE HISTORIES/  
NARRATIVE BEGINNINGS**



# TEACHING FOR THE LOVE OF IT: AN EDUCATION PROFESSOR'S NARRATIVE AT THE CROSSROAD OF LANGUAGE, CULTURE, AND IDENTITY

Grace Feuerverger

## ABSTRACT

*Purpose – The purpose of this chapter is to explore issues of language, culture, and identity within the context of diversity in educational settings, specifically among teachers and professors of education.*

*Approach – This chapter explores issues of language, culture and identity through an account of the author's stories of experience as the child of immigrants who survived the Holocaust, a teacher in multicultural classrooms and, particularly, a professor of education.*

*Findings – This chapter highlights the importance of sharing stories of lived experiences – particularly as they relate to language, culture and identity – as a crucial step in engaging empathetically with the experiences of students from diverse backgrounds. The importance of engaging holistically, emotionally and aesthetically are highlighted.*

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Research implications – *This narrative inquiry makes visible how a professor of education can live out a curriculum alongside her graduate students in education as a way of helping them as teachers live alongside their students.*

Value – *The value of this chapter is its use of personal narratives and incidents in the university classroom to highlight the importance of caring relationship in the promotion of equity and diversity, especially in relation to language, culture and identity.*

**Keywords:** equity; diversity; multiculturalism; curriculum; narrative inquiry; teacher education.

## INTRODUCTION

As a professor of education, I explore issues of language, culture, and identity within a context of diversity and difference in educational settings. My professional intention is to broaden the conversation about how teachers can prepare themselves for the multicultural micro-society of their classrooms, schools, and communities in more compassionate ways. In my courses, graduate students and I puzzle over what a pluralistic, equitable, culturally responsive education really is and how it can provide pedagogical opportunities for diverse students within interactive spaces that encourage a sense of social action, agency, dignity, and hope.

As teachers, we discuss what it means to be truly present in our work; teaching is work of the soul and we need to approach it with awe and with wonder. The poet and novelist Anne Michaels (1996) says that “the best teacher lodges an intent not in the mind but in the heart” (p. 121), a view consistent with Paulo Freire’s notion (1970) that transformative pedagogy involves the teachable heart as much as the teachable mind. This sense of ethical action in education symbolizes for me the profound links between the personal and practical in the formation of teachers’ *personal practical knowledge* (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) in the teaching profession.

Although schools are increasingly bent toward narrow accountability agendas, my message is that, for teaching to be truly meaningful, we must talk with our students of the moral dilemmas involved in learning to live together peacefully. I always pose this overarching question at the beginning of all my courses: *Why does one go into teaching in the first place?* Indeed,

what *is* teaching? What *is* learning? What *is* curriculum? How do you teach children about hope and freedom and civic responsibility when they have experienced tyranny in their lives – from gangs and poverty in North America to bloody wars in other parts of the world?

Perhaps it is a matter of acknowledging our struggle to make sense of our own lives as we confront the lives of students in classrooms every day. Carol Witherell (1991) states that we “as educators are inescapably involved in the formation of moral communities as well as the shaping of persons” (p. 239). Within this educational discourse of civic responsibility and social justice lies Nel Noddings’ (2003) notion that happiness in education must be based on caring relationships.

This chapter dares to suggest that teaching and learning is about sharing stories of our lived experiences. I came to narrative with a deep respect for the power of literature in classrooms, which then led to a desire to share meaningful stories about my life and the lives of my elementary students. Two things became synonymous: a great teacher is a great storyteller in one way or another. Tom Barone (2000) writes that “a [good] teacher invites students to explore aesthetic experiences that, the teacher hopes, will provide wondrous avenues toward the future” (p. ix).

Teachers play important roles in making these engagements more likely to occur. They must engage in the aesthetic project of empathic understanding, which may become the *learning event*, the kind of experience Dewey (1938) called *educational*, a growth-inducing experience that grants the capacity for having even richer experiences in the future. As storytelling is key to this capacity, is it any wonder then that I as a new teacher chose to share fairy tales and myths with vulnerable low-literacy students in my Grade 5 class in an inner-city school in Toronto? This excerpt from *Teaching, Learning and Other Miracles* (Feuerverger, 2007) conveys what I shared with my pupils so many years ago and what I still discuss today as a professor of education with practicing teachers:

“Books should be full of stories that catch your attention,” I said. “Those are the kind of stories I want to read with you in this class. Have any of you ever heard of Greek myths? I adore them. They are stories about ancient gods and goddesses and about all sorts of things that happen to them.” I saw the wonder that began to envelop the children. I don’t know whether theirs was wonder at the anticipation of reading things called Greek myths or at the prospect of spending a year with such a strange new teacher! But whatever the reason, this became a sacred moment. It was as if some angel had come down to rescue this very ordinary classroom on a very ordinary first day of school in a large urban center in North America.

There were white faces, brown faces, black faces, yellow faces and red faces staring at me and they all seemed to be transformed by the exciting invitation that had just been offered: "We will read interesting stories and they will have meaning for all of us." It was a promise. Nobody in school had ever really made such a promise to them before. Suddenly "the thing with feathers, that intangible sense of hope" pervaded our classroom. That, I mused to myself, is what has been missing for them. I had found children's versions of the Greek myths in a bookstore a year earlier and I brought these little treasures with me into class the following day. These children were all well below their reading grade level and some of them had no reading skills at all. So I began to read the stories to them. I wanted this to be a shared love. I tried to create what Bruno Bettelheim called "an interpersonal event in which adult and child enter as equal partners ...

And so began a year of sharing stories during Language Arts classes: the Greek myths, fairy tales, and yes, stories about my own childhood. They listened to me and soon they began telling me their stories. And I listened to them. It was an organic grassroots process: building, story by story, a bridge to understanding one another a little better. Of course there were more than a few tough moments, trying discipline problems. There were days when I came home exhausted, feeling like I wasn't getting anywhere with these children. But through it all, I always felt affection for them and I respected their struggles. (pp. 54-55)

## NARRATIVE INQUIRY IN TEACHING

In my university teaching I also strive give students a voice and to construct meaning for their emotionally and intellectually vulnerable texts. I am concerned with the interaction between personal life histories and the shaping of moral assumptions about the teaching-learning experience. I encourage students to construct new meaning for their texts while searching for professional identity in their educational landscapes and journal writing becomes a shared enterprise within the classroom every week.

In order to make sense of the complex cultural worlds we inhabit in schools and society in general, my graduate students and I focus on autobiographical and biographical narratives within the context of our professional lives. Narrative becomes a process of making meaning of curriculum by telling our stories of personal and social relevance (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990), by understanding that "we gather other people's experiences because they allow us to become more experienced ourselves" (Van Manen, 1990, p. 62). We search for the patterns and narrative threads that weave together our lived experiences into a collective story of curriculum making. We reflect on the sacred force that lies behind the profession of teaching and on the personal contact which connects with this force to create an interactive environment for

learning. We explore the unsettled and unfolding existence of our own personal and professional stories as teachers at the borders of cultures and languages, and we discuss how we experience the incongruity of cultures in classrooms, the uncertainty of self, the desire to belong, and the formation of hybrid identities that are neither here nor there but “in-between.” Our stories are touched by those of our students and together they shape us to become curriculum planners (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988). Clandinin & Connelly (2004) offer the image of a teacher as implementing a curriculum that is alive with storied experience to convey this understanding of the educational process.

As a professor of education, my own teaching is based on a strong interactive relationship with graduate students through dialogue and conversation. The intention is to search for the patterns and narrative threads that will weave together our lived experiences as a communal approach to teaching and learning. Our tacit cultural and historical life experiences have a tremendous impact on our teaching and learning experiences. As Clandinin (1986) writes, “These culturally and socially embedded metaphors have a powerful shaping influence on the way in which teachers come to know teaching” (p. 9).

My classes follow the experiential learning model derived from the work of Freire (1970) who envisaged the teacher/researcher as facilitator and partner in the teaching–learning experience. One question that guides me in my teaching is, “How do teachers’ past and present lives intersect?” We explore the dynamics of power and identity ‘borders’ and of cultural and linguistic difference within the zones of diversity found in multicultural classrooms through journal writing, one of the most important pedagogical tools during my lessons. Teaching through the lens of narrative is therefore seen as a social, conversational process not only as an intellectual one. These conversations also bring forth the complex tensions between in-class and out-of-class experiential teacher knowledge (Huber & Clandinin, 2002; Craig & Huber, 2006).

Indeed the teaching–learning relationship can be seen through the metaphor of these storytelling conversations about my students’ personal and practical knowledge as teachers in classrooms of great diversity. As Mishler (1986) explains, “telling stories is a significant way for individuals to give meaning to and express their understandings of their experiences” (p. 75). Our intent is to, in Greene’s (1988) words, “communicate a sense of [their] lived worlds”(p. 123). Taken together, these conversations offer an exploration of a collective story about my graduate students teaching in the complex landscape of an urban, multicultural Toronto.

## EDUCATIONAL BEGINNINGS: MY OWN NARRATIVE

The immigrant/refugee landscape – specifically, my being a child of Holocaust survivors – has informed every aspect of my life story and forced me to enter the multicultural and multilingual educational discourse long before it became a “fashionable” topic of research inquiry. This legacy continues to be a significant guiding motif in my professional life. Through my own childhood education in Montreal, which was [and still is] a large, culturally and linguistically cosmopolitan centre heavily influenced by the “French-English Fact” of Canada, I was well aware that I was not part of the either majority culture.

I vividly recall my humiliation as my kindergarten teacher mumbled my family name. I wanted to disappear into thin air when she imperiously asked why my parents had not considered shortening that unwieldy (immigrant) name in order to make life easier for everyone! What saved me was that I was not the only immigrant child in school. In fact, most student were children of displaced persons from World War II. Playing in the streets of my childhood meant being immersed in a cacophony of languages and cultures from Central Europe. Multiculturalism was as natural as breathing the air around me. My own home was linguistically and culturally diverse. My teachers, however well meaning most of them were, did not recognize the value of our backgrounds. They made us feel that we had an unfortunate burden to carry and that the quicker we rid ourselves of it the better.

Below is a brief excerpt from my personal journal on minority language education, which demonstrates a particular minority child’s vivid awareness of the devaluing of her home language:

My minority language educational experiences in childhood were a very dismal affair. I was sent to a Yiddish language program after regular school hours (twice a week from 4-6 p.m.) which took place in the basement of a dilapidated community center. The teacher didn’t know how to engage her pupils and so our main activity in class was to gaze out the window at the other children who were playing in the street. There might as well have been bars on those windows. It was clear that nobody wanted to be in that classroom. The books were old, torn and grey. That is what I remember. No pretty pictures. The stories held no meaning and certainly no excitement. The only fun in class was when the more “creative” boys would “slingshot” erasers through the air. Suddenly the room would be transformed into a carnival of rubber snowballs. At least then we could imagine that we were outside. Once an eraser hit the teacher in the face. Dead silence. She sat down at her desk and began to cry out of sheer desperation. Poor woman. I felt sorry for her and disgusted. I compared her to the exciting French teacher at (regular) school. And I remember saying adamantly to myself that I would not be a party to such a sham. Indeed, I had more respect for language learning than that. I knew it didn’t have to be that way. I had seen the dregs of “minority language education” and

I wanted out of there. I raised such a tantrum at home that my parents finally took me out. But at night I secretly felt guilty for having abandoned my Yiddish schooling. I would try to hold on to the spelling of the words in my mind. As the months went by, the letters became fainter and fainter. It was a slow miserable death. I felt like a criminal ... (Personal Journal, 2001)

The pedagogical experience I am narrating in this chapter is grounded in the metaphor of myself as “cultural orphan” who, while feeling dislocated, is also healing herself through a process of relational “storytelling” within a professional context. It was within the context of my university teaching that I began, for the first time in my public life, to share reflections of myself growing up in a multicultural and multilingual home in Montreal, psychologically scarred and tormented by the events of the Holocaust. For me, this was a way to open a textual space for understanding and honouring the struggle of “otherness” both locally and globally.

### *Searching for Home*

As a child, I always longed to live in a world of harmony, of joy and peace. This is still my driving force. Deborah Britzman (1998) says that one's own telling is informed by the discourses of one's time and place. In fact, my professional life is dominated by my sense of being a *border-dweller*, someone still searching for *home*. In all my graduate courses students and I acknowledge the *foreigner* whose language, culture, values, and traditions are different from our own. We become involved in a transformative process toward a collective consciousness of teachers as curriculum planners (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) in order to create a more nuanced, more reflective pedagogical discourse of intercultural understanding and peaceful coexistence. Our inquiry leads us to new insights into our personal and professional lives and to a more compassionate understanding of the teaching-learning experience within diversity, and to moral and ethical dilemmas in education. Within this discourse lies Nel Noddings' (1991) notion that a good education must be based on caring relationships in terms of “how to meet the other morally” (p. 165).

My graduate students and I focus on the necessity that classroom teachers and students find common ground in the midst of seemingly insurmountable differences. We realize that teachers need to be border crossers who create bridges filled with genuine dialogue. We try to find ways in which to use our classrooms as safe places to learn, to become friends with the other, as

Kristeva (1991) puts it, “urging us to welcome others to that uncanny strangeness” (p. 142).

We hear the voices of the *other* within our lived experiences and, as a result of this influence, our own stories become reconstructed and retold from a fresh perspective. We explore the life histories of those living within and between various cultural worlds, struggling to find voice, meaning, and balance. We become involved in a *reflection-in-action* (Schon, 1991) on our own philosophy of teaching and learning within multicultural, multiracial, multifaith contexts. Our individual voices emerge within a developing dialectical relationship between personal and professional reflections, between theory and practice as a means to our understanding of the self in relation to the other.

Through teaching, I attempt to incorporate Freire’s notion that all critical educators are also learners. How do we reconceptualize education so that it responds to the lived realities of today’s youth? Teachers’ personal and cultural stories influence their professional lives all the time, and their perceptions of the world interact with the lived experiences of the students in their classrooms. Teaching and learning is in fact a relational act, and therefore a discourse of empowerment needs to be created out of the historical, social, linguistic, and cultural realities that are the bedrock of the forms of knowledge and meaning that teachers and students bring to school. Reciprocity is important. Reclaiming voice is important. Retelling and comparing stories are important. These activities, however, are in themselves not enough; they need to be positioned within a larger social and intellectual perspective. A curriculum infused with egalitarianism and mutual understanding must be located within both formal and informal school activities. So how do we teach this?

### ***A PEDAGOGICAL STORY: CURRICULUM FOUNDATIONS: FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE***

In this section I share with the reader the story of my return to my university teaching after a half-year study leave. I had not taught for nine months and felt as though I had lead boots on as I walked toward the subway heading to campus to teach my first class of the new academic year.

I was filled with nervous energy as I made photocopies of the syllabus I had carefully crafted over the summer. It had been some years since I had taught an entirely new course, so it felt like a special occasion for me.

*Curriculum Foundations: From Theory to Practice*, a mandatory course for graduate students in my department, had gained a reputation as “dry” and “a waste of time.” I saw this as an opportunity to engage in a reflective dialogue where we could speak with one another in personal and practical ways about the BIG issues in education.

We are living now in a time when, perhaps more than ever before, young people yearn for meaning and purpose and connectedness in their lives. How can we help them? What is the purpose of education? How can transformative education be made to happen? What kind of curriculum will help open a dialogue in classrooms about justice, and peace, and caring and love? One cannot legislate such a curriculum. To make a curriculum meaningful for students today we need to focus on soul, love, and wisdom. Examining who young people idealize as their heroes may give indications about how we should teach them. Are their role models only sports figures or celebrities or rap singers? Is the internet becoming the principal source of “meaningful” social interaction for our students as well as for ourselves?

The sun shone brightly on that Tuesday afternoon of the first class. There was not a trace of a cloud in the sky as I walked to the subway station from my house. A voice within whispered: *Every time is the first time and that is the mystery of teaching.* When I arrived on campus, I passed the assigned classroom on the way to my office. No one had arrived there yet; still several more hours to go. I did e-mail, spoke with colleagues and students, and made a cup of tea. When I walked into the classroom at precisely 5:30 pm, there were 22 souls all wondering what it was that was about to “go down.” I noticed looks of apprehension and fatigue. And then suddenly my lead boots vanished. There was no way I was going to let these students down. I had planned a dynamite syllabus for them and knew exactly what had to be done, just as I have known ever since I walked into my first classroom as an elementary schoolteacher some three decades ago. *Give them a sense of dignity and meaning and joy.*

My personal professional knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) in schools has taught me that at the very end all that truly counts is to share the sanctity of our mission as teachers: to communicate that we have a precious opportunity to make a difference in our students' lives. And, if we are very lucky, we may even change someone's life for the better in a profound way. In fact this message is really all that I need to share with my graduate students. I love teaching teachers and I try to encourage them to go forward, to not give up however difficult the times. I want them to appreciate that teaching will always be a sacred act, no matter how brutalizing any political “policies” of the day may seem. In *The Reinvention of Work* Matthew Fox



(1996) writes that “our work must make way for the heart, i.e., for truth and justice to play an ever-increasing role in our professional lives” (p. 16). Now more than ever his words carried urgency!

Referring to the global uncertainties of our times, I told students on that first evening of the course: “This is a strange moment in history, but we as teachers will endure. In our own way we will not despair nor be defeated. We will soldier on because we are in it for love and for the long haul. And in the final analysis there is no greater gift – and no greater weapon – than love and compassion.” And I continued: “This is a tough time and we are being tested. What’s new about that? We cannot begin to fathom the kind of power that we as teachers have on our charges. Sometimes we are rewarded, many years later, by finding out that what we did in a classroom saved somebody.” I then shared the following quote with them whose origin I am no longer able to recall: “A teacher affects all of eternity; s/he can never tell where his or her influence stops.” And I said to them: “Don’t let anyone rob you of your dreams, of your innocent desire to do good in the world.” I also told students: “It will always be a struggle but can anything possibly be more worthwhile? What choice is there but to keep going on and to fight the good fight?” Such is the sanctity that emanates from the hopes and dreams of true teachers, and indeed from the eternal history of human endurance.

In *Curriculum Foundations*, my goal is to incorporate Freire’s (1970) notion that all critical educators are also learners. As this excerpt from the syllabus illustrates, curriculum was to form the basis for creating a spirit of community within the classroom and a vehicle toward intercultural understanding:

This course intends to open a critical and reflective dialogue of curriculum development both locally and internationally. We examine the scholarly literature in order to document the construction and reconstruction of the meaning of teaching and learning from a variety of perspectives for ourselves as educators in our particular settings. As participant-observers in our own everyday classroom activities, we explore the dynamics of power and identity and of cultural and linguistic difference and equality within the context of diversity. We discuss various methods of research in order to focus on how the curriculum and pedagogical strategies in schools can be reconstituted in such a way that they allow students to become critical thinkers in dialogue with their teachers.

One of the aims of this graduate course to give voice to the moral/equitable/creative initiatives that teachers are creating in their respective classrooms/schools. I encourage you to share your personal and professional stories about teaching and learning within the context of the survey of curriculum theory that is the cornerstone of this course. It is very much a ‘hands-on’ course in which we become reflective theorists and “curriculum planners” as we respond to the scholarly literature both in the form of journal entry writing and oral discussion. This course is exploratory in the sense that it is hoped that we may produce a reflective space around pedagogical, curricular and social issues in education.

Evaluations are based on collaborative oral presentations and of the writing of a final essay. In this regard, I suggest that you respond to the texts you read and create something of a “pas de deux” in which you become engaged with the authors of the articles and books that are discussed throughout the term. Your own professional stories become vehicles in which to shape the meaning of these texts that you read. What we try to achieve is an aesthetic piece of inquiry in educational research within a context of curriculum development.

How do we reconceptualize education so that it responds to the lived realities of today's youth? This BIG question opened a space for us to explore how our actions and lives dwell within a larger context and allowed us to acknowledge that teachers' lives are deeply influenced by what happens to them outside of the classroom. Teachers' personal and cultural stories influence their professional lives all the time, and their perceptions of the world interact with the lived experiences of the students in their classrooms. The construction of curriculum is in fact a relational act, and therefore a discourse of empowerment needs to be created out of the historical, social, linguistic, and cultural realities that are the bedrock of the forms of knowledge and meaning that teachers and students bring to school. I witnessed throughout the term the dialectical relationship that was nurtured in class between imagination and social responsibility allowing us to come together and engage what [Greene \(1988\)](#) describes as “significant and impassioned dialogue” (p. 128). We began to dig deep and to connect to [Freire's \(1970\)](#) call for action to create a more nuanced way of seeing the world through personal history.

Throughout the term, we also reflected on our own educational and personal experiences as these related to the articles we read for the course. We sought to create a common public culture within which pluralism can be created, and thus offer a culturally responsive curriculum in schools. As educators we uncovered, theoretically and practically, the social, psychological and cultural dilemmas and struggles confronting students of diverse backgrounds in an urban, multicultural setting. This helped us to make better sense of the pedagogical needs of all students in terms of curriculum building. And our classroom conversations led us to build a bridge between traditional understandings of curriculum development with emotional and spiritual reinforcements.

## **TEACHING FOR PEACE, TEACHING FOR JUSTICE, TEACHING FOR LOVE**

On the first evening of *Curriculum Foundations*, I told my class about a keynote speech I had heard by Satish Kumar, author of *Path without Destination*, who observed, “We have become slaves of quantifiable

measurement.” On that first evening, I conveyed Kumar’s argument about the need to reconnect with the *enchantedness* of our world and of our universe.

To be sure, this certainly was a different way of “kicking off” this course. I scanned my students’ faces. I did not even know their names, but already I could feel that a light had turned on for many. After we introduced ourselves, I asked everyone to reflect on the one overarching question that I believe forever guides the professional journey of true educators: “Why did you go into education in the first place?” I shared with them a little about my own reasons for having gone into education. I told them of the first drafts of *Teaching, Learning and Other Miracles*. One student asked, “Why are you writing that book?” I told my class about when a high school student asked the same question. “Because I want to inspire teachers” was my reply. And I remember later reflecting that a follow-up to his question could well have been: “But why do you want to inspire teachers?” And I would have answered, “Because some teachers inspired me when I was young and it changed my life.” This is the realm of spiritual practice and therein lies potential for transformation. I also quoted Mahatma Gandhi: *Be the change you want to see in the world*.

I felt gratified on that first evening of class by the confused and wide-eyed look in the eyes of many of the students, a look which seemed to say “What is going on? This seems too interesting to be the course *Curriculum Foundations*! I wanted students to know that I was going to be real and honest with them to the best of my ability because, for me as a teacher, the classroom is first and always a place of possibility and connection – no matter what the level of learning or the subject matter.

As that first evening of the course progressed, we discussed the syllabus in detail. I also gave out several articles to be read for the following week. And I hoped that the wheels had been set in motion for my version of *Curriculum Foundations*. In the ensuing weeks we discussed a vision of the educational enterprise as an exchange, a relationship that involves giving and receiving. We examined conventional ways of knowing and realized that these are not always enough. Our conversations about the teaching–learning experience were situated within the context of collaborative relationships among teachers, students, and parents. Dewey’s (1938) concept of “teaching and learning as a continuous process of reconstruction of experience” (p. 111) epitomizes the quest for meaning and authenticity in curriculum development. We were beginning to build an atmosphere of commitment to a Freirian notion of schooling – as a moral and political project linking the production of meaning to the possibility for human agency, democratic

community, language reform, and transformative social action. I was encouraging students to dig deep to find their own story – a psychological transformation through narrative for changing their world. Story stirs us to action; as Maxine Greene (1995) puts it, “The narratives we shape out of the materials of our lived lives must somehow take account of our original landscapes” (p. 75).

One evening in early October a student mentioned that she had taped a show which featured excerpts of the speeches given by Dr. Martin Luther King from 1964 to 1968. On the day of the class for which the student had promised to bring in the video, I woke up energized by the thought of watching Dr. King again – so many years after I had seen him on television as an adolescent. I had also planned to spend the first half of that class discussing parts of my first book *Oasis of Dreams: Teaching and Learning Peace in a Jewish-Palestinian Village in Israel* (Feuerverger, 2001) in order to explore issues of war and violence, social justice and human rights, and their implications for curriculum development in culturally diverse classrooms. The plan was to devote the other half of the class to viewing the Martin Luther King video to be followed by discussion.

I walked into the class that evening a few minutes early. Some students had already arrived and we chatted informally as we waited for the others. You could sense the anticipation as everyone took their seats and our class began. And then something unplanned occurred. One student who was usually a rather quiet individual rushed into class and told of an incident that had occurred that day at her school. She had been sitting in the staff room holding a copy of my book and the new vice principal of her school had noticed it and inquired about it. But before my student could respond, the vice principal asked: “Could this be about the village *Neve Shalom/Wahat Al-Salam*?” My student had looked incredulously at her: “How did you know?”

It turned out that this vice principal had been to this village when it was only a dream in the mind of Father Bruno Hussar in 1977. Upon graduating from university, during a six-month stay on an Israeli kibbutz, she had journeyed to this hilltop. She spent several weeks there with Father Bruno living in a tent and dreaming about turning that place into a viable community of Jewish-Arab peaceful coexistence. She subsequently returned to Toronto to become an educator. She had lost track of Father Bruno and his dream until that day when she caught sight of the book in my student's hand.

We pondered the serendipity of the situation. Over the past few weeks we had started to discuss the power of the educational dream of the teachers in

this cooperative village – their imaginings and longings for a school and a society offering something genuinely different, aesthetically and morally appealing. I told them how fortunate I felt to have learned about this cooperative Jewish-Palestinian village. I explained that the villagers invite us all to become fellow dreamers of peace just as they themselves were seeking to break down barriers of fear and mistrust that have saturated their lives. “But most of all,” I told them, “the reason that I kept on going back to conduct my research there and write that book was because these villagers offered me a sense of hope and I wanted to share that sense of hope with as many people as possible. To visit that village is to witness a miracle, especially for someone like myself who as a child of Holocaust survivors has been searching all her life for a place of hope and reconciliation”.

We opened a discussion about these village teachers as artful “curriculum planners” in search of peace in ways that exemplify by Kumar’s keynote address. I said: “We have turned schools into knowledge factories. This is not the way. Every person is a special kind of artist. Real education is when we are walking together on a journey of self-realization: the teacher, the student, the parent. The universe is a communion of subjects not a collection of objects. We are all capable of a great energy which sows the seeds of Divine inspiration.” Neve Shalom/Wahat Al-Salam is an excellent model of such a transformative curriculum:

These teachers are not afraid to face their relationship to the “other”, to their own experience and hence to negotiate the interplay between identity, language and cultural differences. They look within their own village school and within themselves for strategies of negotiation as well as seek conceptual guidance from professional and academic sources from outside. All face the issues of desire and loss as they develop curriculum. It is a question of belonging – to retrieve that which has been expropriated emotionally. Thus they continue to push the limits in their dynamic interaction and to struggle for greater voice as they reach higher and higher and dig deeper and deeper in their community building and social transformation. (Feuerverger, 2001, p. 179)

We explored how artful teachers are cognizant of the unconscious myths that shape their emotional and intellectual landscape and become motivated to apply these to curriculum planning. Such teachers become border crossers in being able to listen critically to the voices of their students. Neve Shalom/Wahat Al-Salam, which exemplifies this kind of emancipatory education, has become a global role model of intercultural harmony, of teaching and learning to live together in peace.

We considered the implications for schools in multicultural Toronto. We thought about the many immigrant and refugee students who arrive in our classrooms overwhelmed by forces of economic deprivation, political

oppression, violence, and war. In this context of demographic shift and diversity, issues of cultural difference, conflict resolution, and peace education become central to schooling. School, as the meeting place, becomes the borderland where cultures collide and intersect in complicated ways. We discussed how important it is for teachers to focus on the *other* in their curriculum planning. We adjourned for a 10-min break energized by the discussions in that first half of the class. It seemed like a perfect segue listening to the words of Dr. Martin Luther King.

### *Watching Martin Luther King*

Wind had swept many leaves off the trees that day; but in spite of the changing weather, the sun was still strong, providing remembrance of softer summer days. The power of the wind was nothing however compared to what lay in store as we listened to Martin Luther King's "I have a dream ..." speech. We then watched his assassination and funeral.

As lights came back on, the sense of emotion in the room was high. Eyes looked to me for direction. I shared my experience of watching Dr. King speak on television at the time. I told them of the civil rights movement, efforts to end the Vietnam War, political activism, engagement, and ENERGY. We believed that we were a new generation on the verge of finally bringing justice to the world. We believed that we would truly change the course of history. I still believe it.

Our class then sat in silence for some moments, transfixed by the enormity of King's vision and the tragedy of his death. After a time our conversation flowed back to *Oasis of Dreams*, which had become a beacon of hope for my students. I told them that I wrote it in order to share the sense of hope that I was offered by these villagers. My graduate students joined the ranks of those of us who are fellow dreamers of peace. One student, in a contemplative moment, said that Dr. Martin Luther King would have been proud of these villagers who embody the belief that we can each make a difference on this earth. We had been given the gift of hope by Dr. King and the villagers of Neve Shalom/Wahat Al-Salam.

"When will the violence and hatred amongst people end?" asked a young teacher. "I already see it in some of my Grade Two students and know it comes from their parents." And from their parents' parents, and all the way back through endless generations. A discussion ensued about the intergenerational aspects of such age-old afflictions of prejudice and hatred, and how teachers can draw on their lived experiences to overcome them.

One student remarked that we now seem to live in times that are more cynical than what I had described for them about the 1960s. I replied, “Maybe these are our years in the wilderness, maybe we are in the desert now, but we are given the opportunity to offer our students a sense of hope.”

My students and I recognized the desire of new and veteran teachers to (re)connect with why they had gone into teaching in the first place: to make a difference in the lives of their students. The necessity to recover that passion emerged as an all-important theme in their professional lives. And if that meant becoming *subversive*, then so be it. The classroom was quiet that windy evening as we came to understand that effecting change requires both theory lived through daily practice. We felt as if we had been on this professional path all our lives waiting for a still, small voice to guide us out of the years in the wilderness. Memory, imagination and hope intersected to create images of courage and survival. One student wrote, “I feel uplifted because we discussed the really ‘messy stuff’ and didn’t just spout rhetoric. We wove theory and practice together in an honest way.” In the ensuing silence – the kind that cleanses and heals wounds – my students slipped into the darkness of the night.

I wanted the stories emerging in my course to be transgressive (Foucault, 1984) by offering radical alternatives for thinking and acting in the world. Narratives, whether in school or university, allows people new possibilities for living in the world (Barone, 2000). Teachers play a valuable role in making such a learning event happen through their “empathic understanding” (Barone, 2000) of students’ experiences. And I would add, vice versa.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

That evening I stayed behind for a while and sat in the classroom silently giving thanks to whatever cosmic forces were offering me sustenance, and allowing me to feel that I was doing something that might strengthen these teachers and give them a larger sense of life and purpose in the classroom – perhaps even a sense of adventure and *joy*. This is my understanding of the enterprise that we call education: a process toward recovery and renewal. Inside a good classroom students are always allowed to think and feel with impunity.

Throughout the course I encouraged students to construct new meaning for their texts while searching for professional identity. We became fellow

travelers in our narrative landscapes and journal writing became a shared enterprise. We heard the voices of the “other” within our lived experiences and, as a result of this, our own stories became reconstructed and retold from a fresh perspective. A story of collective professional identity within curriculum development evolved as we shared our individual teaching narratives, illuminating our capacity to understand ourselves and to nourish our souls. We explored our life histories of living within and between various cultural worlds, struggling to find voice, meaning, and balance. We became involved in a reflection-in-action (Schon, 1991) on our own philosophy of teaching and learning and on the search for our personal and collective Canadian identity both locally and globally.

Our individual voices began to emerge within a developing dialectical relationship between personal and professional reflections, between theory and practice as a means to our understanding of the “self” in relation to the “other”. It was in these painful and yet hopeful pedagogical musings that we felt summoned to the tasks of knowledge and action (Greene, 1988). We realized, from the telling of our own stories, that many of us came from very different places in the world and that for some there was less available light in their lives than for others. We all began to know that the dichotomy between mind and body was an artifice. We had conversations about the well-known debates over objectivity versus subjectivity and of how this directly affects the teaching process in classrooms. What is teaching? What is learning? How do you teach children about freedom when they have lived inside of tyranny all their lives?

We discussed the power of narrative as a declaration of freedom. Some students spoke with confidence, others more hesitantly, as we became present to one another. As the course took shape it also gained soul and an aesthetic of improvisation. Each class was intense and fresh as authentic voices and stories were heard. At times it was dizzying as we danced on high wires without a safety net.

I know now that for me teaching represents, in part, my never-ending search for *home* in the classroom. Although cultural and linguistic diversity shaped my personal life, it also became my work. Indeed, multicultural and multilingual education underscores discussion in all my courses as I address the need to focus on issues of diversity and cross-cultural understanding at all levels of schooling.

Finally, as I reflected on that last evening of *Curriculum Foundations*, a profound realization struck me: My search for home is over. The classroom has always been my true home. I had found it long ago as a child of Holocaust survivors in need of safety, and later on as a classroom teacher



offering hope to others who needed it. Education was my second chance at life, and in my personal as well as professional worlds I seek out others who want to teach and learn in wholeness and genuine commitment. I choose to reach out to my students because long ago when I was clinging between life and death of spirit, *School* reached out to me and offered me shelter. Some of my own teachers during my childhood became my witnesses embodying the true meaning of *in loco parentis*. In quiet ways they acknowledged my suffering. The words of Kahlil Gibran which I saw on a plaque in Boston Commons many years ago embody my feelings about the teaching and learning process: “It was in my heart to help a little because I was helped much.”

I believe that good teachers are always ready to share of their souls abundantly with the students in their classrooms. Surely good education is about building trust, safety, and community, just as much as it is about building knowledge. It offers a road to redemption through freedom and joy. Every so often, after a class, when you are gathering up your books in silence or riding on the subway to go home, an angel appears and says to you, “That was a well-taught lesson. Did you see the looks of wonder in their eyes? Did you see that you gave them something greater than simple knowledge; you gave them your soul. And they *felt* it.” And then, no matter what else happens, you know that you have the strength to go on because you have tasted the miracle of teaching for the love of it.

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# STORYING CURRICULUM MAKING IN A COLLABORATIVE RESEARCH AND TEACHING LANDSCAPE

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## ABSTRACT

*Purpose – This chapter examines the complexity and contextuality of storying curriculum making in a collaborative landscape of teaching and research, as it moves from telling stories of collaborative curriculum making toward exploring curriculum within a collaborative landscape. This work is based on our lived experience of 9 years of collaborating as a team of teacher educators.*

*Methodology and Findings – Three stories are at the focus of our study – the unfolding story of the collaborative writing of this chapter and two stories that relate to our curriculum planning in the more traditional sense, illustrating almost opposing sides of a collaboration continuum: A story of creating and preserving contrasted with a story of creating and changing. Together, these examples present a picture of the way we*

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*experience the making of curriculum in a collaborative landscape: building and teaching a program of learning for our students in tandem with team learning of our own.*

Value of paper – *The collaborative landscape revealed in this chapter, with its tensions and opportunities, serves as basis for discussing the issue of territory as an overarching concept for the redefinition of questions regarding ownership, authorship and identities. These issues become crucial in a collaborative situation, in which one has to compromise on definition of clear cut working space.*

**Keywords:** Collaborative research; teacher education; collaborative landscape; territory; authorship; ownership; curriculum.

My dear friends,

So you thought we were finished writing for now????? Then please read the following invitation!!!!

Yours, Ariela (Email, July 15, 2009)

This email sent to the entire ACE team by Ariella was the beginning of our adventure with this chapter. Three stories are used in this chapter to represent two parallel processes of collaborative curriculum creation. The first tells the story of our curriculum as a team that studies its stories of practice and creates knowledge. The other two stories relate to our curriculum planning in the more traditional sense. Together, these examples present a picture of the way we experience the making of curriculum in a collaborative landscape: building and teaching a program of learning for our students in tandem with team learning of our own. We propose that these are two complementary processes that must co-exist in collaborative landscapes.

Looking at our stories and trying to conceptualize their meaning helped us realize that the kind of learning we are referring to in both team and student learning derives from the lived interactions of the participants. This notion is similar to the ideas proposed by Goodson (2008) who suggests looking at curriculum as “life management” and “identity narration” processes. This perspective is consistent with the view of learning as situated within complex social contexts and its being part of both the community’s and the individual’s way of life. Curriculum, which grows out of interactions with others, and their narratives, leads to the individual’s narrative knowledge being constructed and reconstructed (Olson, 2000). It captures curriculum as both a process and a product in a constant state of emergence

and change. Curriculum, as articulated in [Craig's \(2011\)](#) chapter in this volume, is dynamic and negotiated rather than a set of pre-ordained scripts to follow. It is discussed in terms of "living by" rather than terms of performance, and can be understood as networked environments in which participants are engaged in creating meanings ([Barab & Roth, 2006](#)).

Collaboration, within this framework, can be thought of as dynamic nodes: connections between people, ideas, practice, knowledge creation, spaces, and opportunities for learning ([Turniansky, Barak, Tuval, Gidron, & Mansur, in press](#)). Collaboration allows us to create and recreate a generative landscape of interactions and serves as a catalytic mechanism for developing productive communities of learning and sustaining the creative processes within them ([Clandinin & Connelly, 2004](#); [Craig & Olson, 2002](#); [Paavola, Lipponen, & Hakkarainen, 2004](#); [Wenger, 1998](#)). The collaborative landscape is complex and vibrant with synergistic as well as contradicting interactions and processes. It creates a holistic experience of professional life that celebrates the wealth of the interacting narratives, whereas acknowledging the contradictions and tensions that emerge when taken for granted norms and beliefs are opened for negotiations ([Barak, Gidron & Turniansky, 2010](#)).

The complexity of collaborative teams can be conceptualized in terms of self-organizing systems. As [Wheatley \(1999\)](#) puts it, such a system is "... not locked into any one structure; it is capable of organizing into whatever form it determines best suits the present situation" (p. 82). This complexity demands redefining boundaries and identities. One of the central tensions inherent in this context relates to territorial questions. Territory, for us, serves as an overarching concept for the redefinition of questions regarding ownership, authorship and identities ([Turniansky et al., in press](#)). If being territorial means a clear definition of borders, reluctance to open them to others, and fear of leaving the territory unguarded, non-territorial behavior means permeability, and co-existence with others. Boundary crossing is inevitable in collaborative life: as [Decuyper, Dochy, and Van den Bossche, \(2010\)](#) note, "Teams can neither learn nor work effectively if they cease to share knowledge, competency, opinions or creative ideas across their boundaries" (p. 118). Boundary crossing as a characteristic of team life relates to the wider context of negotiating participation and navigating between the private and the public spaces. The professional knowledge landscape ([Clandinin & Connelly, 2004](#)) thus becomes a more complex system of co-authored stories in which the personal and shared narratives network interchangeably. The stories that emerge in the collaborative landscape are not bits and pieces created out of the individual narratives.

Instead, they reflect a “narrative capital” (Goodson, 2008) of the community which is compounded by its participants backgrounds, their actions and interactions and their reflections. This narrative capital might be viewed as the narrative authority (Olson & Craig, 2001) of the community which expresses its shared knowledge and is “carved from [its] experience” (Craig, 2011). Storying curriculum in a collaborative landscape is learning to share authorship and ownership and creating a narrative capital within a common territory. As Minnis, John-Steiner and Weber clearly state:

in a true collaboration, there is a commitment to shared resources, power, and talent: no individual’s point of view dominates, authority for decisions and actions resides in the group, and work products reflect a blending of all participants’ contributions. (Minnis, John-Steiner, & Weber, 1994, p. C-2, cited in John-Steiner, Weber, & Minnis, 1998, p. 776)

The stories we explore in this chapter reveal the complexity of this landscape including its dilemmas, opportunities, and significance in teacher education.

## **BACKGROUND: OUR COLLABORATIVE LANDSCAPE**

Emerging from a mandate to develop a new teacher education program, Active Collaborative Education (ACE), a two-year, post-graduate teacher education program in Israel, took its first steps in 2001. Our 10-member team of teacher educators is a group that has worked collaboratively since then. Four of the current teams have been members since the first year. Two more joined in the second year, three in the fourth year, and our newest member joined in 2009. Overall, we are a stable group that shares a long history during which we developed both our program and our collaborative way of being within it.

Our team of teacher educators is a very heterogeneous group in terms of academic education and experience in educational settings. We have professional backgrounds in philosophy, educational counseling, biology, literature, psychology, biblical literature, and education. Some of us have taught only in higher education settings, while others have taught in kindergarten, primary, and secondary schools and were principals and vice principals. Nevertheless we do not define ourselves by our subjects of expertise although our individual subjects of expertise are called upon when they can help in understanding a situation from different points of view, or

as we consult each other when our specialty is relevant. Our subject expertise is always there, but it usually informs us from the background rather than the foreground.

The conceptual framework of ACE goes back to the Aristotelian notion of “practical wisdom” (*phronesis*) that regards teaching as an independent type of knowledge that emerges through the unique dialectic discourse between action and interpretation. The program offers an environment in which learning is based on the living school experiences of the participants and their cultural and social backgrounds. These experiences become multifaceted narrative texts that invite the students to explore new arenas of learning and knowledge creation and to expand their professional landscape. As teacher educators leading these learning processes we work as a collaborative community. Program decisions are made jointly during scheduled full team meetings, sub-group meetings or informal consultations around our large round table; the table that has taken on a major symbolic function as an expression of our collaboration (Turniansky & Friling, 2009).

Sharing a holistic approach to teacher education in which “teaching is teaching,” we all serve as pedagogical counselors in addition to teaching other workshops. Although we each wear different hats at various times, we have no permanent division of roles. A pedagogical counselor working with first-year students for several years might move to working with second year students depending on personal preferences and program schedules. We co-teach most workshops and our syllabi are co-authored. We also engage in studying our practice in teams that coalesce around topics of interest, with many of us working on more than one research team at a time (Barak & Gidron, 2009).

## STUDYING OUR COLLABORATIVE LANDSCAPE

We consider our efforts in writing this chapter as a narrative inquiry in which the phenomena of our simultaneous involvement in various collaborative cycles are our lived stories (Li, Conle, & Elbaz-Luwisch, 2009). These co-authored stories, products of reaching consensus among us, are stories of collaboration narrated through team conversations. Our narrative consists of describing, collecting, telling, and studying these stories and of working within the holistic environment of ACE. In this way, this chapter aims to capture the complexity and contextuality of this experience as it moves from telling stories of collaborative curriculum making toward exploring curriculum within a collaborative landscape.



The stories we present and analyze in this work were chosen by the group during conversations we had while negotiating the meaning of “creating a curriculum within a collaborative landscape.” We first realized that we cannot speak about our curriculum solely in the traditional sense of program planning. Much of our research centers around narrative inquiries of our personal stories of being involved in this collaborative community and the ways the personal and group experiences intertwine and weave the story of our collaborative experience in ACE. We understand our research as an inherent part of the curriculum and thus we chose to tell the unfolding story of collaboratively writing this chapter. The other two stories of our program planning and teaching represent two very different scenes in our collaborative landscape.

## COLLABORATIVE WRITING OF THIS CHAPTER

### *Who's In?*

Ariela received an invitation for “her and her colleagues” to contribute a chapter to this book. She immediately forwarded it to the entire team of 10 who were scattered across the country and the globe, trying to enjoy the beginning of our summer vacation (July 15, 2009). Narrative inquiry and self-study—these are things we do, and responses of “I’m in” started circulating in the mail. Ariela sent a positive reply. (August 5, 2009)

At this point we were not yet sure who would definitely be part of the writing team, or how we would organize ourselves to write, so on the same day another e-mail asking for definite commitments was sent to the whole team. The five authors of this chapter confirmed their interest. Chapter outlines by October 30—no problem!

One more check from Ariela follows—who’s in (Personal communication, September 27, 2009)? Time is passing and although the first ideas we had still seemed relevant Bobbie is starting to get anxious. She doesn’t like to leave things until the last minute and knows how this group works. October 1, 2009 she emails a reminder to the others that “**we have to start working on this!!**”

This open invitation went to all members of the ACE “family.” In the spirit of a Sunday barbeque, everyone was invited to respond and to let the others know what they would bring. We each have a special dish we usually bring but sometimes there are wonderful surprises. The one potential problem is that we are not sure who is hosting the event.

Actually, we do not know who is doing what at all. There is a request for a general commitment but not to any specific task. There is no division of roles. “Declare your commitment to being a part of it” is what we ask.

The open invitation to participate in the writing team was like a grain around which a new collaborative engagement is evolving. It reflects our work as a self-designing work team (Hackman, 1987). It also addresses the functional complexity of collaborative relations as it raises questions about the levels of engagement and commitment expected from each team member. Collaboration is necessary for addressing complex real-world issues (Azevedo, 1997) but it can also lead to tensions between the common and the private if private needs and expectations are put aside in favor of public, communal ones.

### *Messing About – The Birth of a Proposal*

We have to start working, we have a deadline. But we know that not all of us will physically be at the college. Ariela will be in Germany for a semester. How can we exploit the Internet to let us work together more effectively?

Finally a first version of the chapter outline gets sent out—four short paragraphs written by Smadar and Judith (October 26, 2009). Now the fun starts. Files in the mail inbox are up for grabs. Whoever reads it and has something to say, makes changes, writes comments, and sends it back out. There is no mechanism for deciding a rotation schedule for making changes. In the best case, two of us aren't unknowingly working on the same file at the same time.

Should we ask for an extension? Ruthi, busy caring for her mother, takes herself out of the picture for an extended period. It's the weekend and everyone else has other commitments. Only Bobbie stays home with her computer. She sends out her version to anyone who still hasn't walked out the door. During a back-and forth of at least 14 emails over the next five days, her co-authors give her "power of attorney" to decide what to send and finally, the proposal is on its way to the editors

In this part of the story we see an example of members floating in and out of the process—some for a day or two, others, like Ruthi, for longer. When team membership is voluntary, affective bonds among the members are important: if potential group members do not like each other, they may not form a team, or it may fall apart because departure is easy. Our open, flowing approach to collaboration is made possible by our long-term, ongoing network of interactions. Our relationships are based on affection and trust rather than mere utility. We depend on each other and interact with the openness of "professional intimacy" (Fitzgerald, East, Heston, & Miller, 2002). As a result, our relationships are longer lasting and withstand the transitory ups and downs and changing levels of commitment that are the result of temporary personal circumstances. Ruthi's presence is sorely missed—not because of the labor but because of the temporary absence of her

unique contribution. Yet, as a team, we can allow people to pull back when they have to and know that they will allow us, sometimes encourage us, to do the same. Ruthi will be back, and then her voice will be heard again.

Working with this degree of collaboration and a holistic approach demands building a common language, a space of shared meaning, to help us understand our form of life. Although our writing process might seem like total chaos, the insider knows that behind the scenes there are unspoken routines guiding much of our actions. In classic organizational theory terms, we typify organic coordination or coordination by mutual adjustment, as opposed to mechanistic coordination (Burns & Stalker, 1961). In an organic organization, coordination is achieved by informal and unstructured communication whereby individuals exchange information about their current states and adjust their behavior to others' goals and actions. In a mechanistic one, coordination consists of relatively static techniques such as division of labor, regulations or standard operating procedures that align individual actions through structure or directive.

### *The Story Goes On ... and On ... and On ...*

At the beginning of February, Bobbie sends out a “gems” file, a file with different thoughts, references and quotes that might be relevant to our chapter. At the end of the month, along with a “loud” reminder that we have to get back to work, another invitation is sent out to the whole team, not only the five people who have been working on it up to now, with the date of a face-to-face meeting. As a result, Talia joins the writers and Ruthi is back with us also.

After this five hour meeting on March 3, 2010, written files start circulating again. That doesn't work and we meet again with the feeling that the concept of the chapter is still unclear. We need to spend more time sitting together and talking about it. It's time to ask for an extension.

Through conversation we talk our curriculum into existence and give shape to our program, interactions and professional way of life. Our conversations build our collaborative understanding. They lead us to see different perspectives, reframe concepts already familiar to us, and develop new understandings. During these conversations we remind ourselves that we rely on the capital of our professional stories, which are in fact our common, collaborative curriculum. Conversations have an important role in renewal processes and in creating a coherent curriculum (Borko, Liston, & Whitcomb, 2007; Weick, Sutcliffe, & Ostfeld, 2005). As Perkins (2002, p. 18) claims, Conversations are the virtual neurons of a collaborative mind.” However, conversation is an open ended generative process that is

not task-oriented. Not being able to meet a given deadline is an inherent toll we pay for an authentic collaborative writing process.

With one month extension granted, the chapter kept going back and forth among its active authors.

On April 16 Ariela sends a desperate email: “I suggest that whoever makes any progress shares it in real time with all the others so that we can join our printing fingers and thinking heads together and do it!!!!”

And finally, this mail is sent out: “Hi Julian, Well, we finally made it. Attached is our chapter.” (Email, April 18, 2010)

So, with our chapter rest assured, we can look now at the wider picture of our collaborative curriculum making from two different viewpoints.

## **TWO VIEWS OF COLLABORATIVE CURRICULUM MAKING**

The following two stories concern our curricula making for the student’s learning. In them we present the development of the curriculum of a workshop called “Cultural Identity: Personal and Professional” and the learning gatherings we call “Learning Community.” These stories are told and examined from a historical perspective that emphasizes the issue of preserving learning landscapes vs. changing them.

### *Story #1: “Cultural Identity: Personal and Professional” A Story of Creating and Preserving*

Thursday noon, I am stepping with confidence knowing exactly what I am going to do in this following hour of our workshop. I am curious to see what stories the students will tell today regarding their schooling days and what topics will come up for discussion. This is one of the few workshops I am excited about although I have been doing the same for nine years. (Ruthi, Personal Diary, November 12, 2008)

“Cultural Identity: Personal and Professional” is the name of a workshop we developed in light of our understanding that personal and professional identity develops within social-cultural contexts and is influenced by those contexts (Lurie, 2000; Mansur, 2009). This mandatory workshop for all first year students in ACE was created to help our students understand their own cultural identities and its influence on their professional practice (Turniansky, Tuval, Mansur, Barak, & Gidron, 2009).

In the workshop participants are invited to research their personal culture stories within a community of learners that enables a safe space for intercultural dialogue. Based on an exercise developed by Jane Zeni (undated, personal communication), the workshop revolves around students' personal stories relating to universal cultural dimensions such as gender, race, generation, place of residence, religion, ethnic heritage, education, class, and family. Each multicultural workshop group is composed of 15–20 students and one teacher.

The idea for the workshop was introduced by Ariela, who had previously worked with a similar process in other settings. During ACE's first year there was much apprehension and resistance to the idea. The concept was unclear to most of the team and there were several attempts to strip it of its more personal aspects. In the second and third years there were some changes in team membership and the discussions about the workshop took a more positive turn.

Through our discussions we started solidifying the workshop into the form that has varied very little to this day. The workshop plays a central role in the program and the team knows that the students experience it as very meaningful. The way the workshop runs is clearly formulated. Although the meetings are dynamic and change in response to the needs of the moment, in general, they can be described as a series of "spirals" that emerge from each other:

- Story writing – 10 min of writing personal stories relating to the specific dimension.
- Story sharing – Students tell their stories and others in the group respond by mirroring or asking clarifying questions.
- Conceptualizing – After hearing several stories the groups tries to conceptualize their learning about the specific cultural dimension.

#### *Authorship and Ownership*

As opposed to other ACE workshops, "Identity" is taught only by a subset of team members. Although they teach separately, the three teachers who lead the workshops work together as a planning team and after the first few years, the custom developed that discussions about the workshop take place only among the workshop teachers and not the whole team. Other members have often expressed a wish to "join the club" and teach the workshop but membership comes with a price; there has to be a learning period. It seems that the workshop is very precious to its present leaders who try to preserve it as it is-guarding it like a treasure. There are two issues regarding this workshop that create tensions. The first regards the level of

“professionalism” in dealing with personal content brought up by the students. The second issue regards the ability of creating and maintaining a safe space for the developmental processes to take place. The tension builds around a message; “there are some members of the team that know better how to do this than others. You will get your chance if you are ready to learn from them”. The clear authorship and ownership in this case apparently prevented others from “having a voice” and making changes.

*Story #2: “The Learning Community” A Story of Creating and Changing*

The Learning Community (LC) is an overall framework for a variety of learning events, rather than a specific course, and its different learning formations range from independent learning to meetings of the entire community, depending on the specific learning agenda. It includes reading club meetings in which students and staff read and discuss a variety of books and articles; learning conferences in which students present their work; group learning focused on a subject of interest, and more. Behind the LC is a desire to design an environment where the entire ACE community, students, and staff, can learn together and share responsibility and ownership of the learning process. In theory we hoped that this framework would encourage collaboration between students and teachers in the deepest sense of the word. In practice, we are never satisfied and for several years now the question of “what shall we do with the LC” is an annual item on the team agenda. Its continued existence is not taken for granted.

After several other plans to increase shared student responsibility and ownership of the LC, in 2008, Bobbie and Smadar prepared a proposal intended to initiate a process of independent study where students could choose to study different subjects of interest to them. The idea was brought to the group, and the ensuing discussion raised many questions. We decided to adopt the proposal but it was not clear how it would be put into practice. As the next step, Marga, Ariela and Judith built the operative proposal.

The following short email exchange offers a condensed story of how we continued the work and reflects its diffuse nature.

Hello everyone

I took upon myself to finalize the wording of the work done by Marga and Duda on how to run the LC this year, in line with the general framework designed by Bobbie and Smadar, and the discussions in our summer meeting. I mention the long history of our discussion in order to suggest that we relate to this document as an operational proposal

for the coming year, keep examining it as we go along and give it another critical look by the end of this year.

Within the next few days we look forward to reading your comments, responses and any questions about issues that remained unclear so that we can go ahead and integrate this plan into the work of our teams.

Yours,

Marga, Ariela and Judith [written by Ariela] (Email, September 10, 2008)

Hello everyone,

I just remembered that I didn't respond yet to the learning community proposal. In general the proposal seems worth a try. You took a few more steps toward putting the idea into practice.

I have a comment and a question:

Comment: It seems to me that the rate of formal meetings is too high. It's almost like another regular lesson. My proposal is to reduce them to no more than once every two weeks, maybe less. According to the schedule you proposed, they have only four Tuesdays free for activities.

Question: What logistics are required? Or in our workshop language, all the w-h questions: who does what, when, with whom, where and why?

I'm sure there will be issues when we discuss it.

Am I the only one with questions and comments? Why the silence?

See you,

Smadar (Email, September 11, 2008)

Hi Smadar

I'm glad that the continuation of our work on the learning community looks okay to you. Your questions are very relevant. We have to leave the rest of the work for the teams, especially our second year team. It's possible that we'll have to space out the pace of the meetings a little more or maybe leave that for the groups themselves to decide while keeping at least a minimal number.

Ariela (Email, September 11, 2008)

....

Hi,

From your responses I understand that the two letters I sent didn't reach their destination. I sent one to Adiba (did anyone get it?), the second one was about the learning community. There I asked the question that Smadar already asked-who accompanies who and why? And the second question is if we are limiting the student suggestions to only one subject or opening it up to any proposals they may have? I'm asking because from the wording of the proposal it seems as if the students and the staff will develop one more possibility together.

Have a good day,

Ruthi (Email, September 11, 2008)

Good morning and thanks for the responses. We need them in order to sharpen our thinking and the framework we're proposing.

Specifically in relation to your questions, Smadar:

About the number of meetings, like Ariela, I think that we can leave it up to the groups but I think that's what we did. It's possible that the timetable is a little misleading

and each line that has something written on it was understood as a formal meeting at the college but this isn't the case. Actually, there are only five defined work meetings at the college and the rest of it is individual work ...

The more important question is the question of logistics and team involvement. We haven't thought about it enough—we could either follow a past tradition and let each team member accompany a group, or have each student write a personal blog, in which case Marga, Ariela and myself will take responsibility for reading and responding to them.

What do you think?

Judith (Email, September 11, 2008)

Hi Ruthi,

As I understand the LC, the learning tracks we proposed are possibilities and as such are open for different activities. We left one additional option for thinking about the second year cohort if we feel that there is a place for an additional track more suited for them than those of the first year cohort. In principle, any other proposal from a group of students about the nature of learning that will enrich them will be welcomed. We'll have to talk about this with the students at the meeting when we present the subject.

The file we sent the team is not necessarily the final wording for the students so if you feel that something is too closed or misleading, let us know how you would improve it.

Ariela (Email, September 11, 2008)

### *Authorship and Ownership*

Unlike our experience with the cultural identity workshop related in the previous story, authorship and ownership in the LC environment cannot be granted to specific people. Rather, they are distributed among both team members and students. This correspondence also reflects the role of email conversations in constructing our collaborative curriculum. The amorphous way we work on an article is similar to the way we work in LC. Although not everyone takes advantage of it, there is an open invitation to take an active part in the planning process within the limits that are placed on the amount and type of acceptable intervention. In other words—make suggestions within the proposed framework and please do not turn everything on its head. These letters also reflect the pace at which some members expect the team to work. For example, Smadar's question about "silence" came about 24 h after the original mail at a time when we were still on our summer break, at least a month before the beginning of the school year.

Although the whole group was involved in planning and organizing the LC, collaboration worked differently here, with alternative subgroups working on the different phases of the process, sharing with the group their end product only. Thus, the final product was neither faithful to the original plan of its authors, nor fully accepted by the team. Nevertheless, our default



decision was to go ahead with it, not because we were satisfied with the outcome but because of shortage of time. Some of us felt they were “taking their business somewhere else” letting others take responsibility for something they didn’t feel as their own.

There were many questions about how far we could go in letting the students loose in such an unstructured learning environment. In that particular year, we had the feeling of throwing something into the air and not seeing it land, yet the LC conference showed evidence of surprisingly rich and diverse learning.

### *Closed and Open Ends*

These previous two stories that concern our ongoing curriculum making present only two out of a number of possible stories we could tell. We selected these examples since they illustrate almost opposing sides of a collaboration continuum.

When looking at our field of practice and the stories told about it, “Cultural Identity: Personal and Professional” represents the more closed end of the continuum. It is an example of collaborative processes that led to what we now call “curriculum preservation,” with ownership, authorship, and territory quite clear and unchanging. The “Learning Community,” an example of a constantly changing curriculum, represents the other end of the continuum and more closely resembles our work in writing this chapter. For example, the LC relies heavily on volunteerism since only the LC coordinators are paid for their time although everyone participates in activities such as internal conferences or reading club groups. This open end of the scale is also characterized by fluid, ever-changing ownership. Although not all the team members are the authors and the owners and there are no clear boundaries defining whose territory it is and who is leading it. Therefore, it is marked by yearly upheavals and diffused division of roles. It is also distinguished by real participation and engagement of all of the team members.

## **EPILOGUE**

The three narratives discussed in this chapter demonstrate the complexity of collaborative curriculum making and the parallel and interwoven processes that we engage in as collaborative researchers and teacher educators and researchers of collaboration. The collaborative narrative that emerges out of these stories resonates with paradox; it is simultaneously structured and

unstructured, productive and reproductive, conflictual and consensual, changing, and constant. We can envision it as a generative landscape of interactions that also raises questions, conflicts, and tensions that are often invisible in other situations such as the issues of territory, authorship, and ownership discussed in this chapter.

Collaboration does not come in one size or style. Within our collaborative team, we find variations on the collaboration theme. In practice, everyone on the team is equally engaged with teaching and performing tasks on the practical, day-to-day level but when it comes to learning and inquiring into our own experience, participation is voluntary and, often, the same five to seven members of the team are more involved than the others. So, whose story is it? Who is entitled to engage in studying it? Since, like in this chapter, the processes go from stories of collaboration toward exploring curriculum in collaborative landscapes, negotiating these questions surfaces the issue of “where is the ‘self’ in a collaborative landscape?” We present these stories to suggest different ways of thinking about how to productively work with professional diversity in a collaborative landscape and overcome some of the difficulties it causes.

Curriculum making in a collaborative teaching and research landscape is a vibrant and dynamic story in which different forms of collaboration co-exist and influence each other. As forms of existence within a common landscape, our multi-faceted collaboration has an added value in regard to educating future teachers. Our collaborative landscape allows us to create and recreate curricula that both respond to and enact a constantly changing environment. We believe that when students experience variability within a coherent program, they will begin to view themselves as having more possibilities as future teachers. We hope that by surrounding our students with this experience and making it transparent by discussing it, our graduates will begin to see themselves as curriculum makers and question the narrative of teachers as curriculum transmitters. Living curriculum, as negotiated, creates an alternative narrative which is flexible and open to different voices. Making our research part of our curriculum also has the symbolic power of modeling an inquiry stance as a way of life inherent in the professional narrative we encourage our students to build.

These are three stories of the curriculum making of one group of teacher educators in a given time and place. Although the details are specific to our context, many of the concepts and paradoxes that emerged in our conversations and collaboration may resonate with the threads and plotlines of other teams of teacher educators weaving stories of collaboration.

## NOTE

1. Author order is random

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# IMAGINING AND RE-IMAGINING OUR STUDENTS AND OURSELVES: USING METAPHOR TO STORY THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHER CANDIDATES AND TEACHER EDUCATORS

Julian Kitchen

## ABSTRACT

*Purpose – The purpose of this chapter is to examine how the exploration of metaphors of learning and teaching can contribute to the professional development of teacher candidates and teacher educators.*

*Approach – The chapter draws on the author’s experiences as a teacher and teacher educator to illustrate ways in which metaphors of teaching offer deeper understandings of the personal and social dimensions of teaching and teacher education practices.*

*Findings – Metaphors and other artifacts by the author and teacher candidates are examined to illustrate how metaphors have been used to story experience in teacher education.*

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Research implications – *Imagining and re-imagining metaphors provide a solid foundation for the preparation and development of teachers. Engaging teacher candidates in the identification and development of their metaphors of learning and teaching contributes to their development into teachers able to understand the experiences of their students and adapt their teaching to enhance student learning. The exploration of metaphor can also help teacher educators to better understand their professional identities and practices.*

Value – *Teacher educators are uniquely positioned to help teachers explore how their teacher images inform practice and to analyze these images to enhance personal professional knowledge and teaching practices.*

**Keywords:** Narrative inquiry; teacher education; metaphor; image; personal practical knowledge; teacher identity.

[M]etaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature. (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 3)

Metaphor is recognized as a powerful system for organizing human thought processes. Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) *Metaphors We Live By* has had a profound influence on scholars interested in understanding practitioner knowledge (e.g., Schon, 1979/1993; Fenstermacher, 1994) and teacher educators interested in transforming teacher education and development practices (e.g., Munby & Russell, 1990; Bullough & Gitlin, 1995). More recently, in the *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education*, Rosaen and Florio-Ruane (2008) stressed the importance of recognizing that metaphors "deeply rooted in our culture and profession" both "structure and guide our work as educators" (p. 726).

Although the initial focus was on metaphor as a means of understanding the knowledge of teachers, education professors soon began to apply these insights in their teacher education classes. Calderhead (1991) observes that teacher candidates possess "a great deal of classroom experience on which to draw from their lives as students at school. The knowledge gained from this experience may be highly influential for teacher candidates, providing a rich repertoire of models, images and taken for granted practices about teaching" (Calderhead, 1991, p. 3). Munby and Russell (1990) puzzle over ways in which working with metaphor could help teacher candidates better know themselves and their practices. Rosaen and Florio-Ruane (2008) highlight the importance of teachers' metaphors in helping understand their conceptual frameworks and "as a heuristic to get preservice teachers to be

more reflective” (p. 706). Tobin (1990) argues that re-imagining metaphors of teaching can help practitioners break free of traditional thinking.

This connection between metaphor and conceptual systems has also informed the narrative inquiry into teachers’ *personal practical knowledge* (e.g., Connelly & Clandinin, 1988; Clandinin & Connelly, 1994). Elbaz and Clandinin inquired into teacher knowledge with thesis advisor Michael Connelly. Elbaz (1983), working with Michael Connelly, identified rules of practice, practical principles, and images as central to how teachers organize practical knowledge. In *Classroom Practice: Teacher Images in Action*, Clandinin (1986) extended our understanding of teacher images through her study of two teachers. Clandinin describes her study as “a conceptualization of a teacher’s experiences as they can be seen to crystallize in the form of images” (p. 4). Through her analysis of the images that consciously and unconsciously guide the practice of her two participants, Clandinin both recognizes that “teachers are autonomous, active agents in their classrooms” (p. 3) and illustrates how the conceptual systems expressed in metaphor are key dimensions of teacher knowledge. This work increasingly moved Connelly and Clandinin toward narrative inquiry as “a multi-dimensional exploration of experience involving temporality (past, present and future), interaction (personal and social), and location (place)” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004, p. 576). For them, the study of metaphor is a personal experience method that helps develop a better understanding of teachers’ *personal practical knowledge* (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) as lived out in stories of experience.

Imagining and re-imagining images and metaphors can provide a solid foundation for the preparation and development of teachers. Engaging teacher candidates in the identification and development of their metaphors of learning and teaching can contribute to their development into teachers able to understand the experiences of their students and adapt their teaching to enhance student learning. Teacher educators are uniquely positioned to help teachers explore how their teacher images inform practice and to analyze these images to enhance personal professional knowledge and teaching practices. The exploration of metaphor can also help teacher educators to better understand our professional identities and practices.

In this chapter, I reflect on my teacher images in action over 25 years as a teacher and teacher educator to illustrate ways in which the personal experience methods of studying images and metaphors of teaching offer deeper understandings of the personal and social dimensions of teaching and teacher education practices. In doing so, I also address many of the theoretical and practical issues that teacher educators may wish to consider



in employing metaphor as a personal experience method for helping teacher candidates imagine and re-imagine their experiences and conceptions of teaching and learning.

## METAPHOR AND NARRATIVE INQUIRY IN TEACHER EDUCATION

### *Metaphor*

Before teacher educators can begin to understand metaphor as a personal experience method for enhancing practice, it is important that we understand that “human *thought processes* are largely metaphorical” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 6). Conceptual systems organized in this manner “govern our everyday functioning, down to the most mundane details” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 3). We automatically apply our conceptual systems, often unconsciously, to our thoughts and actions. An individual metaphor is often part of “a coherent system of metaphorical concepts” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 9). The metaphor of teacher as parent, for example, also may entail understanding students as dependent children and the classroom as a home run by the parent. Although metaphors form conceptual systems, individuals may simultaneously hold metaphorical concepts that are not entirely consistent. Tobin (1990) uses the example of a teacher who views himself mainly as the captain of a ship, yet switches to the teacher as entertainer metaphor when he deems appropriate.

Although our metaphors and conceptual systems may have developed early and may be deeply held, we have the capacity for self-understanding and the ability to change our ways of imagining the world. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) write,

Self-understanding seems prior to mutual understanding, and in some ways it is. But any really deep understanding of why we do what we do, feel what we feel, change what we change, and even believe what we believe, takes us beyond ourselves. (p. 232)

Exploring the metaphors by which we live and teach can help us better understand ourselves and how we view the world. One way that self-understanding can lead to improved teaching practice is by modifying existing schema to accommodate more complex understandings of education. For example, Cohen and Lotan (1990) propose re-imagining the metaphor of “teacher as supervisor,” which often evokes images of repetitive assembly-line; if one re-imagines the metaphor in terms of knowledge

workers (e.g., scientists or engineers), then very different conceptions of teaching, learning, and school emerge. Tobin's (1990) example of the captain who can flick a master switch to become an entertainer illustrates that multiple metaphors can form coherent systems of thinking adapted to the teaching context. Tobin (1990), thinking as a teacher education reformer, then wonders if this teacher could be encouraged to adopt the metaphor of the gardener to nurture and individualize more.

It is also important to understand that, while personal metaphors matter greatly, there are also powerful and robust systemic metaphors that undergird our thinking as a culture. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) uses the systemic metaphor "argument is war" to illustrate that such an image both describes the dynamics of argument and causes people to view discussion in an adversarial manner. "The mind as computer," another systemic metaphor, is one that remains prevalent even though leading cognitive scientists (e.g., Bruner, 1983) now dismiss this conception of how the mind works. An awareness of both personal and systemic metaphors is vital if teachers are to think critically about their classroom practices and the field of education. Indeed, many of the tensions in education can be traced back to differences in conceptions and their attendant images. For example, mechanistic metaphors (e.g., machines and outputs) are increasingly challenged by organic metaphors (e.g., trees and fruits).

### *Narrative Inquiry and Metaphor*

Narrative inquiry is "a multi-dimensional exploration of experience involving temporality (past, present and future), interaction (personal and social), and location (place)" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004, p. 576), which helps develop "understandings about the knowledge of participant knowledge" (p. 575). Engagement in narrative inquiry can enhance our understanding of ourselves as teacher educators, our contexts, and our practices. Understanding ourselves is a crucial step toward improving our practices and better serving the students in our classrooms (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004). Appreciation of narrative inquiry as a methodology and a means of interpreting phenomena can lead to deeper understandings of teacher education practices.

Narrative inquiry emerged as a response to the technical rational assumption that research knowledge can be applied to practical problems with little reference to people or context (Schwab, 1971). Drawing on John Dewey's view that educative experiences that lead to growth emerge when teachers are responsive to "the situations in which interaction takes place"

(Dewey, 1938, p. 45), narrative inquiry explores how individual practitioners can make sense of the “complexity, uncertainty, instability, uniqueness and value-conflict” (p. 39) within a particular professional situation. Connelly and Clandinin (1988) stress the importance of knowing oneself to understand and effectively teach students in classrooms. As narrative inquiry is the study of how people make meaning from experience, teachers and teacher educators are encouraged to draw on their own experiences as learners to adapt their practices to the needs of students and communities. Telling or collecting stories is the beginning of the process, but it is through the multidimensional exploration of these stories that narrative knowledge emerges. Narrative inquiries into teachers as knowers and curriculum makers (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992) should also be embedded in the social contexts of classrooms and schools and in the longer term historical narratives within which teachers work and live (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995, 2000). We also need to recognize that the interpretation of experience takes place in the present moment and anticipates plans for the future. Similarly, narrative inquiry situates the teacher within classrooms, schools, and a range of other social spaces that influence their professional knowledge and practice (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995).

Personal experience methods, such as examining metaphors, were promoted as means to teachers developing deeper understandings of students, the curriculum, and educational contexts. *Teachers as Curriculum Planners: Narratives of Experience* (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) offers a wide range of methods teacher educators can use to systematically study their experiences of learning and teaching. The results of these inquiries into the personal dimension of experience can then inform our individual and collective teacher education practices in the future.

Imagining and re-imagining learning and teaching experiences through metaphor is one method I have found particularly valuable in my personal and professional development. Explorations of metaphor can be an integral part of a larger process of exploring one’s personal professional knowledge (e.g., identifying principles of practice, developing a personal philosophy of education, writing educational narratives, and reflecting on critical teaching incidents) and the teaching context (e.g., studies of classrooms, schools, curriculum, and the social context).

From the beginning, Connelly and Clandinin focused on teacher knowledge and images as means to developing an experiential understanding that does not separate the knower from the knowledge. *Classroom Practice: Teacher Images in Action* is a significant study because Clandinin (1986) disrupted the dominant social narrative that characterized teachers as

mere transmitters of external knowledge. Instead, the teacher images in action reveal that teachers are autonomous agents in their classrooms. Although acknowledging the importance of social metaphor, [Clandinin \(1986\)](#) emphasized “the private experience invested in an image” (p. 18) and that it is only one of several ways in which personal practical knowledge is expressed. Although [Clandinin and Connelly \(2000\)](#) “foreground individual teachers’ knowledge” (p. 3), it is important to recognize that narrative inquiry has always situated the personal in a larger social context. Practitioner knowledge is situated within the four commonplaces identified by Schwab (1971): teacher, learner, subject matter, and milieu.

## EXPLORING METAPHORS WE TEACH BY

Exploring the metaphors that inform our understandings of teaching, learning, and classrooms can help educators develop deeper understandings of our conceptual frameworks and of our classroom practices. Too often, however, educators are asked to craft metaphors without being taught effective methods for personal and professional inquiry. The personal experience methods contained in *Teachers as Curriculum Planners: Narratives of Experience* ([Connelly & Clandinin, 1988](#)) equip teachers and teacher educators to record, interrogate, and interpret experience in an intentional and deliberate manner.

In this section, I illustrate how a narrative approach to the study of metaphor has helped me develop a deeper understanding of myself and my practices as a teacher and teacher educator. The temporal, social, and spatial dimensions of experience, while in the background, remain critical aspects of my experience as teacher and teacher educator.

### *Beginning with Myself: Imagining and Re-Imagining My Images in Action as a Teacher*

I first explored my metaphor of teaching in a curriculum course taught by Michael Connelly at the University of Toronto. At first, I struggled to find a metaphor that encapsulated my conception of teaching and learning. I became exasperated before discovering the metaphor of teacher as tour guide.

As a Teacher I am a Tour Guide

Learning is a journey of discovery. When we embark on such a journey, we are eager to see and appreciate many of the wonders of the world.

We begin life outside the womb as travellers transported into an alien land. The first years are spent identifying the landmarks in our immediate environment and adapting to the customs of the locals, particularly our parents. Everything is new and we soak up knowledge like sponges eager to make sense of the world's many delights. When students enter into the classroom, they generally come with an explorer's sense of wonder and discovery.

As a teacher, I see myself as a tour guide for my students. The tour guide, like the good teacher in Dewey's work, constructs events so that the educative potential of the experiences is maximized for his charges. Indeed, both spend a great deal of time researching and preparing tours so that they are rewarding and flow smoothly. Each must practice their craft to become more effective. Each must engage the group as a whole and have it work as a unit. Each must also get to know the individuals and try to connect the new discoveries back to the knowledge and interests of the followers. Also, both are servants who seek to maximize the benefits to the clients.

Both the guide and the teacher, however, also have a commitment to the territory being explored. They both seek to make their clients aware of the landmarks of the communities visited. A teacher teaches Shakespeare because it is important to our heritage, even if it is less accessible to many. He then tries to make it more interesting for the students. So too, the tour guide sometimes tells us things we should know, even if we are not keenly interested in those facts or experiences. Some may find the Rembrandt museum dull, but a visit to Amsterdam is not complete without it; some anecdotes, however, may spice it up.

The guide and teacher are also experts eager to share their knowledge with the group and should be eager to answer questions or suggest other sights to see. After all, both would be pleased if the client spent a free day looking at more paintings or reading another Shakespeare play. Even better, they would both be pleased if the desire to travel further along the path was enhanced by their guidance. Will the tourist want to see more of Holland or want to travel again soon? Will the student become a lifelong reader of literature? Both hope so.

Being a guide or a teacher is not without its drawbacks. First, while both try to make the journey rewarding for each individual, the nature of the group limits opportunities to individualize activities, although both may create options, such as giving them free time in different galleries in a museum. Also, in the case of a tour guide or teacher of students, the parent and the public are paying for the trip, so one is accountable to them and must adapt to their agendas too. Also, in a classroom or on a class trip, the teacher or guide has power over the explorers we are leading. We tell them what to do or take them in directions they do not want to go. Also, as teachers, we evaluate what they learn from the trip, using our criteria not theirs. Holidays would not be fun if there was a quiz after a visit to each sight or—even worse—a comprehensive examination upon returning home! (Kitchen, 1994, 2005a)

When I initially discovered this metaphor, of which this version is a further elaboration, it resonated with the ways in which I often spoke about life and learning as a journey. It also seemed consistent with many of the

ways in which I engaged with students and curriculum as a secondary school teacher.

In this course, personal experience methods were used as tools to encourage graduate students to view themselves as “knowledgeable and knowing persons” whose knowledge “resides in their past experiences ... present mind and body, and ... future plans and actions” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, p. 25). This way of understanding our lived experience helped me recognize that “many of the most important educational experiences in our narratives occur outside of school” (p. 27). By addressing my present concerns, I was able to notice how my previous experiences informed my present practice; this self-awareness then led to me telling and re-telling stories of experience that influenced my future intentions and actions as an educator.

One of the reasons that the exploration of metaphor proved particularly powerful for me was that it revealed an image of teaching of which I was not entirely proud. Although my rules of practice and personal philosophy revealed the teacher I sought to be – one who builds safe places for individual and group learning – my image of teaching seemed to convey a more detached understanding of teaching and learning in which I was the mediator between knowledge and the knower in a traditional conduit model of education. This image of teaching related well to my vision of life as a quest. The nature of a tour – highly structured yet of casual importance – was, however, inconsistent with my view that life is a quest for *meaning*. As tour guide, my image revealed an underlying conception of teaching that was true to my practice, I re-imagined my work as a tour guide by thinking in terms of the transformative educative potential of the experiences. Understanding how this image informed my practice, while inquiring into my educational stories and philosophy of education, helped me become a guide with a deeper commitment to student growth and understanding. Awareness of the limits of this metaphor helped me develop compensatory strategies to ensure that my students had rich experiences while on tour. In addition, I was aware of the contextual limits on both tour guide and teachers, as both only mediate a small part of the experiences of those they serve.

The study of the metaphors that inform our teaching is both a personal and a cultural journey. As Rosaen and Florio-Ruane (2008) write, “Metaphors that are pervasive in our culture and profession have the potential to influence how preservice teachers make sense of their experiences” (p. 707). It is important that we as teacher educators are aware of the conceptions of teaching embodied in our metaphors and that we help teacher candidates to become aware of the implications of their

conceptions. Noyes (2006) asked teacher candidates to describe their starting positions as teachers of mathematics. A grounded theory analysis of their written responses identified four root metaphors: structure, language, toolkit, and journey. Each of these had different implications for the teaching of mathematics, and each had different strengths and limitations. Noyes (2006), by sharing his findings with candidates, helped them become more aware and, as a result, better able to address the limitations of their conceptualizations. Martinez, Sauleda, and Huber (2001) stress the importance of teacher candidates considering metaphors of both individual and communal learning in developing their “blueprints of thinking about teaching and learning” (p. 965). By doing so, they are better able to make their own conscious choices as educators.

*Beginning with Myself: Re-Imagining My Images in Action  
as an Education Professor*

After “discovering” my metaphor, I was confident this image would not alter significantly over time. A few years later, however, living alongside a veteran teacher while researching for my doctoral dissertation led me to re-imagine myself as a guide helping teachers identify and attain their personal professional goals. In “Relational teacher development: A quest for meaning in the garden of teacher experience” (Kitchen, 1994, 2005a, 2010), I identified seven characteristics that proved helpful in working relationally to help a teacher face a problem and grow professionally. As Carl Rogers (1961) stated, “I have found it of enormous value when I permit myself to understand another person” (p. 18). I continue to this day to think of life as a quest for understanding; yet, I became increasingly uncomfortable with the underlying conceptualization centered on curriculum. A deeper “respect for teachers as curriculum makers who draw on their own personal practical knowledge to inform their professional practices” (Kitchen, 2009, p. 49) led me to place the relationship of teacher and learner at the center of the educational experience.

As I puzzled over these experiences, I was hired as a teacher educator. This led me to develop an image in action of personal professional guide to teacher candidates and my conceptualization of relational teacher education (Kitchen, 2005b, 2005c). In “Looking Backward, Moving Forward: Understanding my Narrative as a Teacher Educator,” I wrote,

Underlying this work is a belief that teacher educators play a crucial role in fostering “experiences that lead to growth” (Dewey, 1938, p. 40) for preservice teachers.

Relational teacher education is a reciprocal approach to enabling teacher growth that builds from the realization that we know in relationship to others. Relational teacher education is sensitive to the role that each participant plays as teacher and learner in the relationship, the milieus in which each lives and works; it stresses the need to present one's authentic self in relationships which are open, non-judgmental and trusting. Fundamental to such an approach is respect for preservice teachers as curriculum makers (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992) who draw on their personal practical knowledge to inform their classroom practices and who recognize that "knowing through relationship to self and others is central to teaching" (Hollingsworth, Dybdahl, & Minarik, 1993, p. 8). I identify seven characteristics as important to relational teacher education:

1. Understanding one's personal practical knowledge
2. Improving one's own practice in teacher education
3. Understanding the landscape of teacher education
4. Respecting and empathizing with preservice teachers
5. Conveying respect and empathy
6. Helping preservice teachers face problems
7. Receptivity to growing in relationship.

(Kitchen, 2005b, pp. 17–18)

Another image emerged in my conversations about education. This is evident in the title of my doctoral dissertation, "Relational teacher development: A quest for meaning in the garden of teacher experience" (Kitchen, 2005c, 2010). Although the learning quest motif of a journey outward to meaning and a return with new understandings remains, it is combined with "a symbol of nature under control and the human soul which, like the garden, must be cared for and cultivated" (Fontana, 1993, p. 105). As I view teachers as individuals drawing on their personal practical knowledge to create educative experiences for students in particular classroom contexts, the garden metaphor and Burnett's *The Secret Garden* (1911) helps me to live alongside teachers and teacher candidates as a mentor.

This re-imagining of my image of teaching due to the emergence of a second metaphor has provided me with three new understandings of teaching metaphors. First, I learned that these containers for conceptions of teaching can outlive their usefulness; they either need to be modified significantly, combined with other metaphors, or replaced entirely. East (2009), in her frank exploration of her changing metaphorical representations of her work as a teacher educator, effectively conveys the importance of recognizing the limits of metaphors. She moves from soil and weaver metaphors to an Earth Mother image that better conveys her nurturing ideal. Similarly, I adapted and ultimately changed my tour guide image when it could no longer be stretched to accommodate my developing understandings. I also added the



garden as a second metaphor that represented my deepening understanding of education as collaborative and communal.

Second, I learned that it is important to revisit our educational conceptions as expressed through metaphor after significant career changes such as becoming a principal or a teacher educator. East (2009) continuously reviewed her metaphor of teaching, as she remained troubled by her conception of herself as a teacher educator. Each reconceptualization was a further stage in her development into a teacher educator more attentive to teacher candidate needs and, as a result, more aware of her responsibility to nurture their experiences. I have revisited my metaphor when I switched universities (which involved new curriculum areas and an increased emphasis on research). I found that my conceptualization needed little adjustment, although I did need to adjust my teaching at the end of the first year at Brock University to better align my practices with my beliefs and the needs of teacher candidates (Kitchen, 2008a).

Third, I learned the importance of seeing how my conceptions of teacher education align with broader social metaphors and cultural stories about teaching and teacher education. Clandinin and Connelly (1995) adopted the term *professional knowledge landscape* because the landscape metaphor conveyed a sense of time and space “composed of relationships among people, places, and things” (p. 5) within “an intellectual and a moral landscape” (p. 5). Understanding this landscape and the tensions teachers and teacher educators experience navigating between different professional and out-of-classroom spaces helps me guide teacher candidates to re-imagine their own experiences while meeting the challenges of field experiences and the early years of teaching. As an instructor and textbook author in the area of professionalism and law (Kitchen, 2010), I try to help teacher candidates be curriculum makers who are ever mindful of their responsibilities as they live and work on a complex professional landscape.

*Guiding Others: Helping Teacher Candidates Imagine and Re-Imagine  
Their Metaphors in Action as Teachers*

Although teacher educators are free to explore their own metaphors and stories of experience, it is often more difficult to help teachers candidates explore their personal professional knowledge in a meaningful way. It is possible to introduce activities such as examining metaphors or writing reflectively into an existing course but, in the absence of institutional support for such methods, efforts are often piecemeal in nature. As someone

who has worked in a number of contexts, I have employed metaphor writing as a single activity, as part of a broader consideration of personal professional reflection on experience, and as a more comprehensive exploration of self and school context. Although regarding comprehensive approaches as preferable, I also recognize that teacher educators generally do not teach in programs that encourage systematic explorations of the self and school context. Therefore, this section of the chapter offers a range of ways teacher educators can help teacher candidates imagine and re-imagine their images and stories.

#### *Examining Metaphors as a Stand-Alone Activity*

One approach, if the program structure does not provide sufficient space for personal experience methods, is to have teacher candidates examine their metaphors as a stand-alone activity in a single course. In my current institution, this is all my colleagues and I are able to do in our two-hour per week practicum course.

We begin by outlining the nature and purpose of metaphors. We then engage teacher candidates in a number of activities to help them develop a metaphor. For example, if your classroom was a restaurant, what kind would it be? They then think about their images of learning, teaching, and the classroom by completing statements such as “Learning is (like) ...” before discussing a possible metaphor with a partner.

Over the next couple of weeks, they think more deeply about their metaphor and the language they typically use when talking about teaching and learning. They are invited to think about various aspects of their metaphors. For example, if teaching is like flying a kite, they may wish to consider factors such as structure, materials, balance, flying skills, weather, and safety. They are also provided with prompts to help them link their metaphors to teaching. They are asked to make explicit links between their metaphors and aspects of teaching. For example, they might consider lesson planning, classroom environment, students with special needs, diversity and social justice, assessment and evaluation, and professional ethics.

They are then asked to design a book jacket using the metaphor as a title and as a visual image. Inside the cover, each writes a description of the metaphor and an explanation of how this might apply to teaching. Some teacher candidates may begin with the description followed by explanations, whereas others combine the two. They then orally share their metaphors with other teacher candidates. At intervals during the course, they are invited to review the conceptions of teaching revealed in their metaphors as they reflect on their goals for the next practicum.

Teacher candidates already open to examining their conceptions of teaching and learning thought deeply and critically about their experiences and underlying conceptions. Written feedback from other students suggested that this stand-alone activity had limited impact on their images of teaching and did little to help them re-imagine their experiences. To develop a heightened understanding, teacher candidates benefit from exploring metaphor as part of a course or program that encourages deeper engagement in the difficult, rewarding work of “constructing a narrative account of oneself” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, p. 25).

### *Metaphor and Personal Practical Knowledge*

Teacher candidates are more likely to re-imagine themselves as teachers when the exploration of metaphor is integrated with other personal experience methods in a more systematic approach to exploring and developing the personal practical knowledge of teacher candidates.

During my seven years as a teacher educator at University of Toronto, I was better able to help teacher candidates explore their metaphors in the context of examining their personal practical knowledge. As the coordinator of a program for 30 teacher candidates and the instructor for a year-long full course (4 hours a week) in their program, I was able to make personal experience methods central to most aspects of their program. A narrative inquiry portfolio and a critical incident portfolio were important course components each year. In the narrative inquiry portfolios, teacher candidates developed a metaphor for teaching or learning and wrote five stories concerning formative experiences in their development as learners and teachers. The critical incident portfolio encouraged them to reflect on five specific events in their teacher education program; while most critical incidents involved field experiences, some incidents involved experiences in university classes. All entries were intended to be polished pieces in which teacher candidates described in detail and engaged in reflections and analysis of their thoughts, feelings, and actions. Partial portfolios were submitted at the end of the first term for initial feedback and response; these generally consisted of a metaphor, two to three stories and two to three critical incidents. Teacher candidates were also expected to articulate a personal philosophy of education as part of their professional portfolio.

I primarily responded to these portfolios in writing, a process that helped me to respond reflectively. My responses tended to be layered and multidimensional as I joined with them in the struggle to make meaning from experience. Typically, in responding to these portfolios, I validated their personal experiences, echoed back what I noticed in individual entries

and across a portfolio, posed questions, analyzed their stories and interpretations, offered cautions about potential pitfalls, explored possibilities, shared my experiences, and offered suggestions for improving reflective practice (Kitchen, 2008b).

In this course, teacher candidates were engaged in a rigorous examination of themselves as teachers. The metaphor and the philosophy of teaching encouraged them to examine their conceptions of teaching. The stories of experience assisted them in storying and restorying significant past educational experiences from the context of their present situation as aspiring teachers. The critical incident portfolio helped them to situate their developing identity as teachers in their teaching in their present. Working on all of these together, while also working in schools on a regular basis, provided them with increased opportunities to understand themselves and how the curriculum of their lives informed their practice as teacher. Teacher candidates often made connections across these writing activities and, in my feedback, I often highlighted resonances across the portfolio and tensions between different passages (see Kitchen, 2008b).

Collaboration with the instructors of the “School and Society” and “Psychological Foundations” heightened connections between teacher candidates’ personal curriculum, the curriculum of student lives, and the educational contexts in which they learned. Mary Beattie (2001), who taught “School and Society” to my cohort for several years, wrote,

Good teachers help students identify their purposes, to respect themselves and others, to show compassion and tolerance, and to develop the qualities and habits necessary for full participation in life inside the classroom and out in the community. (p. 3)

In her course, teacher candidates reflected on their experiences to make sense of the experiences of the diverse range of students in their classes. At the same time, the educational psychology instructor required teacher candidates to reflect on psychological and learning processes to better understand how students make sense of the world. Together, we were able to emphasize the importance of studying oneself to understand the experiences of others.

Overall, I was pleased with the connections teacher candidates made between personal experience and professional practice within my course and through the interdisciplinary activities. At the same time, despite our efforts to encourage connections between reflection and action, I was aware that the required curriculum limited the time we could devote to this important work and that our work was not reinforced in other courses or during field experiences. As knowledge is found in our bodies and practices and is often

dependent on the situation (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988), it is important that teacher candidates be given opportunities to engage as curriculum makers. In the next section, I highlight the efforts of others to build program-wide connections between personal experiences and professional practice.

*Bringing Metaphor and Personal Practical Knowledge to Life on the Professional Knowledge Landscape*

Teaching and learning are complex processes that take place in specific contexts and communities. Bullough and Gitlin (1995) identify the negotiation of these roles as “the center of professional development” (p. 49). As metaphor “plays a significant part in the formation of beginning teacher ideals” (p. 50), Bullough and Gitlin believe that teacher candidates benefit from acquiring “knowledge of self and of the context” (p. 50) to understand how experience as embodied in personal and social metaphors informs professional practice.

Bullough and Gitlin developed a comprehensive teacher education program designed to help connect their conceptions and experiences to the realities of classrooms and schools. They combined methodologies for exploring the self (i.e., life histories and teaching metaphors) with methodologies for exploring school context (i.e., school histories, classroom studies, and textbook analysis) and integrative methodologies (i.e., action research projects and personal teaching portfolios). In their program, there was a shared commitment to “the exploration and reconstruction not only of self, when deemed necessary, but also of context, in particular the school context” (p. xvi). The organization of teacher candidates into cohort groups of about 25 and partnerships with several schools reinforced these core principles and helped build a learning community based on them. The process of generating and analyzing metaphors played a crucial role in identifying implicit theories of learning and teaching which were then revisited as part of a complex interweaving of Schwab’s (1971) four curricular commonplaces (citation) in an integrated program.

During my final three years at University of Toronto, inspired by the work of Bullough and Gitlin, the instructors of the cohort’s core courses employed integrated action research as a means to provide practical opportunities for teacher candidates to examine their conceptions of learning in relation to authentic teacher situations (Kitchen & Stevens, 2008). One teacher candidate wrote, “I think that the process of reflection and investigation that accompanies an action research project forces a teacher to examine alternative ways of teaching and learning – both of

which are important in the process of life-long learning” (p. 20). Siow-Wang, who sought to reconcile the tensions between her traditional academic education and her attraction to cooperative learning, indicated that she had become more reflective, committed to authentic learning, and receptive to practitioner research as a result of this engagement as a curriculum planner. Maureen enjoyed “working on the intersection between theory and practice” (p. 25), and her conception of teaching and learning widened from the dissemination of knowledge to one which honored teachers and students as inquirers. Although these comments do not address metaphor directly, they do point to the importance of having teacher candidates begin by exploring their experiences and underlying conceptions as a basis for making meaningful curricular decisions for students in particular contexts. They also point to the importance of continuously reflecting on one’s conceptions in the context of practice.

Imagining and re-imagining metaphors helps teacher candidates examine and deepen their conceptions of teaching. When integrated with inquiry into narratives of experience and classroom practices, it can help teachers develop identities as curriculum makers able to enhance their practices to meet the needs of students and society. When combined with inquiry into curriculum, classrooms, and schools, as done by Bullough and Gitlin (1995), it can help teachers develop a deeper awareness of professional knowledge landscapes. Although we as individual teacher educators generally cannot integrate personal experiences into teacher education programs in such a comprehensive manner, the work of Bullough and Gitlin can help us imagine ways in which we can systematically link the study of metaphor to the study of personal experiences and the study of professional practice in schools.

### *Conclusion*

Inquiry into metaphors as a means to understanding our conceptions of teaching and learning is a personal experience method that can help teachers and teacher educators’ understandings of ourselves as professionals. Understanding these conscious and unconscious conceptions is critical to re-imagining ourselves, our practices, and our students so that we can provide a better education to students.

Metaphors can be powerful expressions of our conceptions of teaching and learning. In re-imagining teacher education, I think of myself as a gardener who is not content to simply maintain the garden as it exists.

I dream of helping each teacher grow to her potential and of designing programs that enhance the development of many teachers and, even, of creating entire new gardens of teacher education innovation. I do not know if I will have the opportunity to fulfill my grandest dreams but I visit and read about other gardens in the hope that I might one day be able to apply this knowledge to the plants and flower beds within my responsibility. I also dream of new opportunities, in the form of new courses and specialty programs. More broadly, I imagine working in a college of education that is guided by a conception of teacher education reflective of my own. As more of us share such visions, the likelihood will become greater that we will one day develop innovative teacher education programs that build on personal experiences to prepare teachers to meet the authentic learning needs of children. As Frankl (1962) wisely put it, “So try to be courageous and patient: Courageous in leaving the problems unresolved for the time being, and patient in not giving up the struggle for their final solution (p. 95).

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**PART III**  
**TEACHER EDUCATORS WORKING**  
**NARRATIVELY ALONGSIDE**  
**TEACHER CANDIDATES**



# RELATED LITERACY NARRATIVES: LETTERS AS A NARRATIVE INQUIRY METHOD IN TEACHER EDUCATION

Darlene Ciuffetelli Parker

## ABSTRACT

*Purpose – This chapter explores letter writing as a narrative inquiry method in a teacher education course. The written dialogue in letters by teacher candidates provided the author with deep and long-term reflection on teacher candidates' narratives of experience. In particular, the chapter examines how related literacy narratives combine critical written dialogue with the written responses and counter-narratives of peers and a teacher educator.*

*Methodology and findings – The chapter focuses on letter correspondences from three teacher candidate participants in a longitudinal study as well as response letters to those candidates from the teacher educator. Transactional inquiry and relational knowing are conceptualizations that are employed to explore how the teacher candidates and the teacher educator are curriculum makers.*

*Value – The chapter discusses the impact of letter writing-related literacy narratives as a narrative inquiry method in teacher education programs as*

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*well as possible extensions for their use in graduate courses/research and for teacher development programs.*

**Keywords:** Narrative inquiry; related literacy narratives; letters; transactional inquiry; relational knowing; curriculum maker; teacher education.

## PRELUDE

I have been an educator for 20 years. During the first six years, I was an elementary teacher in Toronto, Canada, during the hype and buzz of holistic language approaches and integrated curriculum design. It was a delightful time of discovery and insight for me as a beginning teacher who embraced constructivist approaches and learning from experience (Dewey, 1938). In the next nine years, I became “a teacher of teachers” in my position as literacy consultant for the same district school board. I was a member of a team of consultants who pioneered new “balanced” literacy approaches, wrote curriculum documents, trained teachers in the field, and liaised with ministry policy stakeholders. I believed then that, by imparting a top-down model to classroom teachers, I was making a difference in bringing about a new generation of teaching methodology. The transition from teaching elementary students to teaching teachers was a bumpy ride for me in the beginning. Although I was trained in the “best practices and methodology of the day,” I was not trained in how to teach adult learners. Initially, I relied and slipped into transmission models of professional development, both because this was the norm in many professional development models and it was a way of asserting my professional knowledge as a new consultant. During this time period, my pedagogy of teacher education practices was, at best, on the margins of discovery. I assumed a default teaching style (Russell, 2000). The approach I was using was in tension with the understanding I had as a doctoral student who viewed teachers as curriculum planners (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988). Throughout my graduate studies, I wrote about and incorporated reflective and narrative approaches to study teachers’ curriculum making through *literacy narratives* (Ciuffetelli Parker, 2004; Ciuffetelli Parker, 2010). From then, and the years between, as a consultant and administrator, *literacy narratives* helped ease my former tensions and I shifted my practice so that I relied less on transmission models of curriculum. As a professor, I have embraced *literacy*

*narratives* as a narrative method of living out and making curriculum alongside my teacher candidates as we formed and continue to form a curriculum of lives (Downey & Clandinin, 2010) that relies not on transmission models of curriculum but on teacher knowledge as lived and experienced together.

## LIVING AND EDUCATING NARRATIVELY

I have written personal professional narratives of education from the beginning of my teaching career to present day. Much of my research has entailed an in-depth examination of personal journals, dialogue letters to my elementary students, dialogue letters to my teacher candidates (Ciuffetelli, 1994), letter exchanges with teacher colleagues (Ciuffetelli Parker, 2004), university colleagues (Ciuffetelli Parker & Kitchen, 2004), letter and e-mail dialogues with present day colleagues (Ciuffetelli Parker & McQuirter Scott, 2010), and, most recent, the use of letter writing in my teacher education course as a narrative inquiry method for teacher candidates (Ciuffetelli Parker, 2010). The writings have been critical to my development as a teacher educator who understands the stories of others. The writings have helped me shape and re-shape my practices as a curriculum maker (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992) in teacher education by enabling me to connect with my teacher candidates' beliefs and personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988). Accordingly, this chapter illustrates my curriculum making alongside my teacher candidates' curriculum making, in what I term *related literacy narratives*, and suggests ways in which educators can use literacy narratives as a narrative inquiry method in teacher education.

*Related literacy narratives* is a narrative inquiry method (Ciuffetelli Parker, 2004) I incorporated into my third year concurrent education course, entitled "Introduction to Schooling, Teaching and Learning." By writing stories of practice in the form of letters, teacher candidates constructed their own narratives that "are then seen as the textual ground for people to retell their living" (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 478). This writing experience, which highlighted story and experience as told and retold through the writing of letters, became a documented form of curriculum making for teacher candidates and their peers. I, too, as their teacher educator, responded to their letters and lived alongside their curriculum making while reshaping my own curriculum making.

Although my course focused on narrative form to explore educational theory and practice, course discussion and exemplars of reflective practice and narrative inquiry were provided before the commencement of the year-long letter writing assignment. Teacher candidates were given the tools through readings and my own writing models of narrative work, to learn “how to” engage in shared reflective practice through storied writing while also building on and connecting their narratives to theory learned in class. By this method, beginning teacher knowledge could be traced in a manner that was organic in nature, that came from the experiences of teacher candidates themselves, rather than as imposed by me as their professor (Ciuffetelli Parker, 2010). The writing assignment called for letter responses to peers regarding the theory of the course as reflected on through their own educative and lived experiences. To illustrate further, a portion of the assignment description read as follows:

Students will form a triad with peers and will engage in writing letters to their group members about course readings, discussions and personal stories and narratives as they relate to the course. Each student will take their turn, respectively, to write and respond to ongoing weekly letters in the triad. These exchanges of letters are meant to build a reflective foundation to the development of students’ knowledge of the commonplaces of teaching, to the Standards of Practice and to instructional strategies/theories of teaching methods. We term this methodology “related literacy narratives,” where writing letters is used to develop a personal and practical development and collaboration amongst student teachers in the form of writing as a literacy professional practice. (Course Assignment, September, 2005)

My role as professor was to respond to the literacy narrative assignments that were submitted in three installments throughout the year. I responded as a fourth writer to the triads to consolidate and further consider issues related to the course theory through the lived personal experiences that the candidates revealed in their letters (Ciuffetelli Parker, 2010). In this chapter, I explore how, as a guide, I responded, made links, and offered insights in the sets of letters of one triad. The data will illustrate how we were curriculum makers in the process of writing letters, responding to others’ letters, and, consequently, reshaping our teacher knowledge and identity.

The three teacher candidates, Kelly, Bret, and Cathy,<sup>1</sup> represented in this chapter were participants in a larger longitudinal study that continued for four years (Ciuffetelli Parker, 2010). The data in this chapter is taken from the first year of the longitudinal study during 2005 to 2006 and further includes my responses to their *related literacy narratives* as a “fourth voice” in their writing triad while I was their teacher educator for the course. Kelly, Bret, and Cathy were living in relation to one another over a significant

amount of time as they wrote letters, explored their own formed knowledge, and sought new ways of living out their reflections. Using narrative inquiry conceptualizations of *transactional inquiry* (Zeek, Foote, & Walker, 2001) and *relational knowing* (Hollingsworth, Dybdahl, & Minarik, 1993), I explore *related literacy narratives* as a narrative inquiry method for teacher education. I also draw on the letters to illustrate the importance of narrative methods in teacher education and in settings of practice that focus on relationship with others as a way of understanding curriculum as lived and experienced.

## RELATED LITERACY NARRATIVES: FROM THE PERSONAL TO THE RELATIONAL

As Connelly and Clandinin (1988) reasoned, narrative as a story of life means to move our idea of education beyond that of schooling. “Writing out” our life as teacher educators can become a mode of learning about ourselves and others. It can become a tool of thought (Staton, 1982). We can come to understand through writing that our life story is our *literacy story* and ultimately our curriculum. Connelly and Clandinin (1988) professed that there is no better way to study curriculum, and the curriculum of our students, than to study ourselves first as educators. Stories have an affective stance, sometimes with a moral and literary perspective; thus, they are both efferent and aesthetic (Zeek et al., 2001). Connelly and Clandinin (1988) argued that “narrative is the study of how human beings make meaning of experience by endlessly telling and retelling stories about themselves that both refigure the past and create purpose in the future” (p. 24). It is in our affective, emotive feelings recovered from our personal stories that can help us know our teacher candidates better: how they think, live, and feel. Holly (1989) in *Writing to Grow, Keeping a Personal-Professional Journal*, explains why we write,

We write in order to create and to mark our special experiences. We write in order to come to know our thoughts, to sort out thought and feelings, to plan, and to explore our problems. In doing so, writing promotes confidence in personal and professional spheres. It enables us to see and feel humanness, vulnerability, strength, and development. (p. 28)

Teacher educators can move their personal educative narratives to *relational narratives* if they consider that they indeed can live alongside their teacher candidates and, thus, document a living curriculum together. *Related literacy narratives*, which gave account to the writing relationship



among my teacher candidates and with me as their teacher educator, was an important narrative method that promoted intense reflective teacher communication while building on key relational principles of education: community, care, commitment, compromise, trust, respect, and affirmation (Ciuffetelli Parker, 2004). Dewey (1926) wrote, “An ounce of experience is better than a ton of theory simply because it is only in experience that any theory has vital and verifiable significance” (p. 169). Hunt (1987) wrote of abstract theories that “cut us off from our direct experience, thereby removing us from the realities of the practice we were trying to improve” (p. 2). This chapter illustrates that our *related literacy narratives* are our curriculum making stories.

Through the use of letters as a narrative inquiry method, teacher candidates saw themselves as curriculum makers (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992) as they mutually and relationally constructed and co-constructed teacher knowledge with their peers and teacher educator. The letters show our reflections in our own writing and in the writing of others. As we continued to reflect, share, and collaborate with one another, we came to better understand and identify ourselves in our own narratives and in our place on the professional knowledge landscapes (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995) where we lived and learned. As time passed, we came to better understand our place on the landscape in relation to other agendas of other outside landscapes, like home, work, and other personal professional places. In doing so, we continuously changed and reformed our thinking about curriculum, our lives as curriculum, and our potential role as curriculum makers in the 21st century.

## **CURRICULUM MAKERS: TRANSACTIONAL INQUIRY AND RELATIONAL KNOWING**

Transactional inquiry and relational knowing are narrative inquiry conceptualizations that I use to illustrate how teacher candidates, and me as their teacher educator in the course, were curriculum makers through the letter writing, in *related literacy narratives*.

Transactional inquiry is a method which Zeek et al. (2001) used to engage teachers to share, reflect on, and respond to their own and others' stories of practice while also encouraging teachers to take ownership of their professional growth. Transactional inquiry is a term that I use in this chapter to help convey my own narrative practice and use of *related literacy*

*narratives* with teacher candidates. The *related literacy narratives* were interpreted as a teacher development approach in the course, to provide opportunities for growth in teacher knowledge. I explored teacher candidates' lived experiences to make visible teacher knowledge and growth expressed in the letter dialogues and, especially, as an inquiry that illustrated the personal practice knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) of teacher candidates. Thus, just as Clandinin and Connelly (1995) suggested that teacher knowledge is shaped by context and past experiences, the *related literacy narratives* became a vehicle to uncover teacher knowledge and identity through the letter transactions between teacher candidates, with an added layer of inquiry from me as their educator. And, as Zeek et al. (2001) claim, "Hearing the stories of teachers at many levels of expertise in different situations can provide insight into the events that form their professional knowledge" (p. 379).

Relational knowing is a method first termed by Hollingsworth et al. (1993) to describe relationship as a critical component for making meaning of the storied lives of teachers and students. Later, Hollingsworth and Dybdahl (2007) recounted their 18-year conversational relationship with teachers as a narrative inquiry method to investigate talk as a critical role of conversation in narrative inquiry. This chapter re-familiarizes readers with the concept of relational knowing through the written conversations explicit in the *related literacy narratives* as both method and phenomenon (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) of narrative inquiry. Much like Conle's (1996) term *narrative resonance*, relational knowing describes how teacher candidates both echoed each other's narratives and then moved beyond to deeper understanding of their own lived experiences through the knowing of another's storied life. The mirrored experiences provided teacher candidates a screen by which to view their own teacher identity as it was formed, developed, and reformed through written transactional reflection with peers and a teacher educator.

What follows are the *related literacy narratives* of one triad (Kelly, Bret, and Cathy) with my responses to the teacher candidates, divided into the two conceptual themes: (a) the learner and teacher: Transactional inquiry and (b) teacher identity development through relational knowing. Within each theme is an inter-woven discussion of the letters. The *related literacy narratives* purposely are presented in chronological order to provide the reader with an unfolding and living inquiry (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006), that is, a sense of time passing (temporality), a context (of place), and relationships that are formed (sociality). In this manner, the three-dimensional commonplaces of temporality, place, and sociality in narrative

inquiry (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006) are viewed as organically lived and experienced through the *related literacy narratives*. The *related literacy narratives* below are examples of the simultaneous interplay of all three commonplaces of narrative inquiry as explored through the conceptual themes of transactional inquiry and relational knowing.

## RELATED LITERACY NARRATIVES

### *The Learner and Teacher: Transactional Inquiry*

In September, 2005, the teacher candidates began their letter writing assignment. Kelly was the first to write to her triad members, Bret and Cathy, about a math teacher she had in high school and her reflection on the kind of teaching and learning she had experienced in his classes:

Mr. S. was my Grade 10 Math teacher. He was my Grade 11 Math teacher. He was also my Grade 12 Math teacher, and OAC Algebra teacher. As you can probably imagine, by the time I graduated, he knew me very well. He was one of my favourite teachers: he was clear, concise, and clever. He did not try to impress the class by acting “cool”. However, he was still able to somehow connect with the students. Yet, he connected in a way that was almost parental. I realize that sometimes I would complete my homework simply as a way to avoid his guilt-inducing glare. I was more concerned with pleasing my teacher than with the actual work itself. People often ask me why I did not go to school to become a Math teacher. My Math marks were always the highest marks on my transcript (probably from those looks of disappointment from Mr. S.). Just as surely, my English marks were the lowest. Yet, I chose English to be my teachable, not Math. Somehow, I find my choice of study is directly related to Dewey’s view on curriculum, but I cannot put it into words. Perhaps I will be able to clarify this idea once we get deeper into the course. Or maybe, one of you will be able to help me. (Kelly, September 23, 2005)

Bret responded to Kelly, using the character trait of authenticity of teaching, which we had studied in our course, and then Bret reflected on this characterization in his own work with students:

I think this is what your math teacher was: authentic. Most of us struggle with who we are and who we want to be as we grow older, and I feel that as a teacher you need to have a grip on these ideas. If I seriously were to ask myself right now: Do I like who I am? Am I proud of who I am? Have I become who I wanted to become? I would say yes. I think this is why Mr. S. had such a great connection with his class. He taught exactly like how he was. This is important in a teacher because I feel to truly know and understand someone else, you need to know and understand yourself. This has taken me some time to really reach, and I still get into battles of who I am and who I want to be every now

and then-and I wonder if it truly affects the relationships I hold with everyone around me, including my music students. (September 30, 2005)

Cathy then responded to both Kelly and Bret and, as the transactional inquiry continues, Cathy made sense from her vantage point of the narrative experiences of both Kelly and Bret using the concept of “miseducative experiences” (Dewey, 1938) from our course readings. She then took a risk to admit that she had struggled with her own choice of becoming a teacher. This awareness stemmed from Bret’s prior knowledge making in response to Kelly’s original letter. Cathy wrote,

I really enjoyed your views on and discussion about your past teachers, Kelly. I think it is so important that you are able to recognize both the positive and negative experiences you have had and have been able to learn from them. I think that we often let our “miseducative” experiences cloud the way we view situations. It seems like such a hard cycle to break out of, but I think because you are able to ask the question “[i]s that actually learning then?” about your experiences with Mr. S., that you *have* in fact learned, because you are able to look back and critically examine the situation. I think it is also really valuable that you haven’t come away feeling negatively of Mr. S. At first glance, he appears to be like some of the teachers we have studied *not* to be like; yet, it appears that he was an effective force and had an impact on your life, and that should not be undervalued.

I’d like to write for a little bit about relationships and authenticity; it is here that you will have to have patience with me, for I am still trying to figure a lot of this out in my own head. You both discussed the need for teachers to be genuine and true to themselves in order for them to develop good relationships with their students. Yet, at this point in my life, I know that I will never be an effective teacher. I will try to give you a better idea of what I mean, and will borrow a quote from you Brett, to do so as I feel your following statement illustrates the battle I have been having with myself over my choice to be a teacher. You wrote: *“Most of us struggle with who we are and who we want to be as we grow older, and I feel that as a teacher you need to have a grip on these ideas. If I seriously were to ask myself right now: Do I like who I am? Am I proud of who I am? Have I become who I wanted to become? I would say yes”*. This part of your letter impressed me as I felt that it gave me insight into the type of person you are and I really respect the fact that you are able to claim your identity. At the same time, your statement shocked me, and even terrifies me now, because I cannot honestly answer “yes” to any of the questions you posed. I have been wondering for a while if I have made the “right” choices in my life. I’ve spent a lot of my life trying to do what I thought was expected of me by teachers, family, and friends, and becoming a teacher was definitely what everyone, including myself, felt that I was “destined” to do. I know I cannot be an effective teacher (or authentic) if I don’t even know myself. (Cathy, October 10, 2005)

Kelly quickly responded to Cathy’s dilemma:

Personally, I don’t think that this constant reflection on who we are is such a negative thing. Perhaps these battles that we have with ourselves will make us all better teachers.

By not setting our beliefs in stone, and not completely knowing who we are, we allow room for flexibility. What do you guys think? What are you truly passionate about? This is probably one question that you wished had a “black or white” answer like the ones in Math! (Kelly, October 14, 2005)

Bret responded, with serious identity-related implications of what teaching meant to him:

Realistically, I don't think that I can be that teacher who leaves a student behind. I am a firm believer in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. I can't learn if I am tired, I can't learn if I am hungry, I can't learn if I am thinking about killing myself (yes, stuff like this comes up in the classroom). Can I be a teacher in a system that does not care about the welfare of the children, but more about shoving a curriculum into their heads? Or, how are my teaching practices being influenced by my past experiences? What implications of my past are going to influence how I teach? And can I be authentic in my classroom? These are the main battles I go through every day ... I don't know if you understand how much it pains me to hear the question, “Do you have a girlfriend?” I can't tell anyone the truth; I cannot be authentic in that space. That upsets me. So, I don't think it's my identity that I battle with; it's more of how my identity applies itself to certain places and the effects it has on my authenticity that I really war with. (October 21, 2005)

Cathy assimilated the transactions that had transpired thus far in the *literacy narratives*, acknowledging the “battles” that her triad members had gone through in their educative lives, and then related her own narrative of experience, as she shared:

Both of you shared experiences that demonstrated how much personal “baggage” kids bring to school and the effect that this can have on their ability to learn and the interactions that we, as teachers, have with them. I want to tell you two a story that deals with this issue. I was assigned a grade three class and more specifically, was given the task of working with one child, Carl. Now, by the age of 10 (he was held back in grade one), Carl already had what I would consider to be a “hard” life. Carl's home was anything but stable as he was one of many siblings and his “caregivers” rotated in and out of his life on a frequent basis. Yet, school wasn't a safe haven for Carl either; he had severe learning difficulties and often had trouble relating to the other children because he was older and so far behind. Carl was truly “falling through the cracks”. My placement teacher told me during the last few days that I was there that I was one of the few people that Carl showed interest in or affection towards, yet I know I didn't contribute significantly to Carl's educational progress and probably didn't have a lasting effect on his life. So, I know that as future teachers we will strive to help and care for every student, but I ask you both if you think that sometimes it is only possible to just be “there” and can this ever be considered “enough”? (October 21, 2005)

As the teacher educator, I was impressed with the deep reflective stance the teacher candidates had taken in their first literacy narrative installment for the course assignment. I saw how the transactional inquiry had illuminated their developing teacher knowledge about various issues such as the

character traits of teachers, teacher identity, a teacher's place in their learners' lives, and the passion of teaching as a chosen profession. I heard the trepidation in their words while, at the same time, I witnessed the risk taking among the triad members as they shared intimate fears with one another, about identity of self, and the responsibility they encountered as maturing young adults. In my response, I was careful to acknowledge their narratives while at the same time probed further for insight. To Kelly I wrote,

Kelly you begin right away by describing unique teachers: Mr.S. [was one] who [was] parental in nature. [You compare two other] teachers [you have had]. All three represent various ways that relationships can have an effect on education [and] the type of teacher student relationship that is educational. I find it interesting how Kelly did not follow her subject matter with her highest marks; rather, she chose the intrigue of English – even though those marks were lower. So, why are we more interested in [some subjects and not others]? That's what you have to put in words ...

To Bret, I responded,

Brett you say something so pivotal about having a sense of “who we are” in teaching in order to be authentic. In narrative inquiry, C&C say that to be a narrative inquirer (i.e. to use story to understand curriculum and education) we need to begin by understanding ourselves first. You also say that to understand someone else, you need to know and understand yourself first. Go further with this concept! I think if we continue this discourse it will lead us into places where we can perhaps know more the students we thought we could never reach before. Brett's story of tutoring the boy who [Bret] thought came from a nuclear family ... did not. Brett caught himself in his bias. How do we continue to look deeply within ourselves to get perspective on the biases we all keep? Can relationship help here?

To Cathy, I wrote,

Cathy, you fear teaching because you feel you are still finding out who you are. Yes, we do have to know ourselves better, but that happens only through the process that you are going through right now with your peers. You're doing that, and that's what will make all the difference – whatever path you decide to take. Just as Brett continues to “battle” his daily grind, so too do the rest of us battle our own identities of who we are and who we want to be in our world. I think you are all onto something when you say that it's not really about knowing exactly who you are that makes the person you are or will become, but hopefully recognizing that you are authentic along the way.

My responses to Kelly, Bret, and Cathy offered a counter-narrative to their sensemaking thus far. In a sense, I confirmed the transactional inquiry they have established as a developmental practice that allowed them to “have a sense of who we are” in education by “understanding ourselves first.” I connected the importance of their transactional writing to the narrative

importance of coming to know one's teacher identity "through the process you are going through now with your peers." Thus, from Kelly's miseducative experience with her math teacher, to Bret and Cathy's responses about teacher student relationships, and to knowing themselves authentically as teacher candidates, the narratives are seen as continuing inquiries as they made sense of their responses as well as their respective stories of experience. In this manner, the literacy narratives became *related* because of the transactional inquiry that fluidly and organically transpired with each new writing response.

### *Teacher Identity Development through Relational Knowing*

As time passed, the *related literacy narratives* became a vehicle for the triad members to come to know each other. Before the assignment, Kelly, Bret, nor Cathy knew each other as classmates. The letter writing assignment enabled two things to mature: each teacher candidate's identity as developing teachers, the relationship between the triad members, and how they came to know more about one another's own teacher identity development. Thus, as the *related literacy narratives* continued to take form, Kelly, Bret, and Cathy also continued to probe each other, as they came to know and identify with one another's stories. I probed alongside them. Kelly wrote to Cathy,

I would like to comment on what you said about Carl, Cathy. I don't think that you should assume that you didn't have a lasting impression on him. The text reading for this week clearly states that the emotional state that a child is in directly affects how well that child will learn. By your description, it sounds as though you provided a comfortable environment for Carl and he enjoyed working with you. As a result, he probably was able to learn more effectively. His attitude toward learning may have become more positive, because his learning experiences became more positive. Even though Carl might not remember YOU specifically, YOU may have contributed to his attitude toward learning. Am I confusing you guys yet? I think that this week's reading really emphasizes the need to address the learner's emotional intelligence. (Kelly, October 28, 2005)

And, responding to Bret and Cathy, Kelly continued to wonder about issues that affected teaching, and how authenticity played a part:

I have always been concerned with marginalized groups in society. To me, this is something that teachers should address in their classrooms. Slowly, I am discovering what kind of teacher I want to be, and I know that I want to pose questions that don't have simple answers. So Brett and Cathy, to answer your question about whether or not I will bring any biases to my classroom, yes I will. My idea that social inequities need to be discussed will enter my classroom, whether in an English, Geography, or even History

lesson. And I think that by bringing something that I feel so strongly about into the classroom is keeping with the concept of authenticity. (Kelly, October 28, 2005)

I responded to Kelly, inviting the narrative to be investigated further for issues related to values, and as they related to the ethical standards which teachers are governed by in Ontario:

On the other hand, how do you remain authentic yet not impose your values onto your students? There is no doubt about it: we model values. But do we rule these values onto our students or do we instill voice within them to articulate their opinions? How can they figure out for themselves what matters in their world? This also relates to the ethics of care and how we treat our students through our curriculum of education. Take a look at the Ethical Standards of Practice (Ontario College of Teachers, 2006) just out for review. (Darlene, November 30, 2005)

Bret offered his own example of ethical dilemmas in a classroom, and further offered a solution:

As a teacher I feel it is important to critically think of how your class is going to “take” a lesson. For example, is the presentation containing the “classical” family of two parents and two kids going to affect Jonny who only has one parent? How can I present the issue of broken families to a class when I know that some students do come from these homes? To me, diversity and empathy are not there only to help a teacher think about the issues, but to address them to the class as well. This will help foster a sense of empathy and diversity in the learners, and help them develop a more accurate worldview. (Bret November 4, 2005)

Cathy responded and deconstructed how the narrative course and the *related literacy narratives* had shaped her thinking:

I wanted to bring up something that I have learned both from the course itself and from the interactions I have had with those in the class. I’m talking about communication. I think my fascination with communication (I mean within the context of our class) began with Ann’s presentation; she said that through her experiences with her grandfather, who was losing the ability to communicate verbally, she had learned that spoken words are, in fact, one of the weakest forms of communication. This stunned me, and had a profound impact on my life. Since then, I’ve been trying really hard to find other ways to connect to people. I had to laugh Kelly when I read that you aren’t a fan of writing because neither am I and yet, here we are writing weekly letters. I’ve really enjoyed this letter process because it has allowed me to learn about the two of you, and about myself, in ways that I probably never would through conversation alone. (Cathy, November 11, 2005)

I responded to Cathy’s insight on communication:

Communication is a profound theme not just in education, but in life. Consider the many relationships between partners/marriages etc that fall apart because of lack of communication. Consider politics and communication. Consider why so many youth are



turning to crime ... communication-with parents, society, etc.,-is the essence here. You are right in making this link to our course text and discussions in class, Cathy. (Darlene, November 30, 2005)

Kelly wrote to Bret with revelation:

Bret, I love your comments on empathy relating to diversity! I think that many people have a hard time grasping the concept of diversity. We, as future educators, have to deconstruct our assumptions of what is normal. This task, I think, is something that many people are afraid to do because it makes them question their own worldview. I think that this class, through our letter narratives and chronicles, is helping us do so. Why? Exactly what Cathy mentioned: communication. Our letters and chronicles provide an opportunity for each of us to explain our experiences and views without interruption. Because these two forms of communication are not like dialogue (we are not expected to reply right away) we have the opportunity to take a step back and actually consider what is said. We are listening, reflecting critically, and then responding. Our communication is so much different from conversation. How does this process relate to diversity and empathy? Do either of you find that it is helping you deconstruct assumptions you held? (Kelly, November 18, 2005)

Indeed, Kelly recognized that the *related literacy narratives* helped her deconstruct her assumptions and worldview of teaching. Her discovery was evidenced in her letter through the narrative, which aided teacher identity development through relational knowing of peers and the counter-narratives that revealed a way to know the world from the perspective of another, as she explained, “Our letters ... provide an opportunity to take a step back and actually consider what is said.” The development can be viewed as organic, fluid, and as “we are listening, reflecting critically, and then responding.”

Bret, when faced with issues of death in his life, wrote to his triad members:

I have been around so much f———— death in my life that I don't think death scares me at all any more ... If this is how I am feeling right now, how can I model an ethic of care in my class? Am I modeling a true ethic of care if I get frustrated every time death happens? What kind of message does this send to the learners? And what does this say about my character? Is this a safe environment? (Bret, November 25, 2005)

My immediate response to Bret conjured up my own past teaching story in the classroom:

As for how it relates to the classroom-I think it's okay that students know that you are sad sometimes. But set up a safe environment where your students too can feel they can contribute. For example, when I taught Grade 3 I had a beautiful student named Jill. She was losing her mother to cancer that year. I explained to my other students (when Jill was absent) that it was a very sad time for Jill and that sometimes we might see her cry in class. The students listened and we talked about what we could do to support Jill

during this time. Those students, whenever Jill cried during our lessons, just let her have her moments in safety, no judgments, nothing but support, care, and quiet listening. When we asked Jill what we could do for her when it got really bad in class, she asked if we could all stop and just pray or say something that would make it okay for her to calm down a bit. Wow. I still think of it now as the most critical learning incident in my teaching career-to learn just how to treat people ... really treat them as you would want to be treated: the Golden Rule. That's what needs to exist, in all classrooms. (Darlene, November 30, 2005)

Cathy embraced the notion of care in schools further while responding to Bret:

It seems like our society holds so many assumptions and beliefs about how people should react to or feel about death. Bret, you expressed feelings of anger, hurt, sadness, resentment, and frustration in dealing with death. These are universal feelings; as much as you have felt them in your experiences with death, so have I, and I'm sure Kelly has as well. Yet even though we know these are "normal" reactions to such a situation, there still seems to be something in us that feels "wrong" for having these emotions. The only response I can give you is that I would question your capacity to model an ethic of care if you *did not* express such feelings; showing your emotions, especially when death is concerned, demonstrates your ability to communicate openly and honestly. Now, I believe that doing this not only builds character, but also provides a great learning opportunity for students when such feelings are presented in an appropriate manner; I don't think there is a "right" way to do this, but I do think that respect and understanding need to be employed so that communication about the issue will allow for meaningful connections and knowledge to be made. I think that, if possible, we should try and view death as a learning experience; I know this is really hard to do while you are in the situation or it is occurring around you, but once there has been time to reflect, we can become better for it. (Cathy November 25, 2005)

The importance of temporality (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006), the space and time between writing responses, helped teacher candidates form the sociality (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006), the close-knit bond, which contributed to their respective teacher identity development. The context of place (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006) too was important as I, their teacher educator, provided a context of place in the course for their letters to be valued and responded to in writing, with my voice and insights alongside Kelly, Bret, and Cathy. This provided contextual grounding for their *related literacy narratives* to be highly regarded as significant, worthy, and educationally insightful. Relational knowing developed with time passing, as Kelly, Bret, Cathy, and even me as their teacher educator came to assimilate our views with one another by questioning assumptions and perspectives; as a result, the continuous writing correspondence allowed us to look deeper within our own selves, to discover new insights about

ourselves and the teaching world of the 21st century, and to foreground those insights and revelations within our teacher identity.

## RELATED LITERACY NARRATIVES AND THE CURRICULUM MAKER

The ongoing, reflective, and critical stories in this chapter are related. As the teacher candidates grappled with tensions about becoming teachers in the 21st century, I grappled with my role as teacher educator and what I could provide for their learning. With each living, telling, and retelling of the stories, a unified narrative formed, that is, we understood a new way of using our formed teacher knowledge to relive our understanding of the teaching world, by being in relation with one another through story. A pedagogy of education, formed through the writing, reflecting, and writing again in letters, is constructivist in nature, and as Dewey (1938) suggested about life and education, it is activity-oriented, with the emphasis being on reflective thinking and doing. Thus, the *related literacy narratives* can be understood as a constructivist strategy to live and understand “by doing” [the writing] together and finding new meaning through teacher knowledge experiences in unison.

For me, as a teacher educator, I have come full circle from my beginnings in narrative as a graduate student and teacher. Connelly and Clandinin (1988) argued that our personal practical knowledge is “tacit, unnamed, and, because it is embodied in our practice, difficult to make explicit” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, p. 33). The tools I used to reflect long ago, such as journal writing and autobiographical writing, helped me better understand myself in my personal professional world. Writing, as a tool of thought, helped make my personal practical knowledge explicit as I learned to view myself as a curriculum maker long ago. Now, with my teacher candidates, I have learned a new way of understanding the world as curriculum maker alongside teacher candidates. Teacher candidates personally and professionally developed, as viewed in their *related literacy narratives* through the conceptualizations of transactional inquiry and relational knowing in this chapter. I, too, re-shaped my practices as a curriculum maker (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992) by unifying their collective curriculum making stories with mine. I learned what it was like to think and learn from the perspective of the candidates and their living experiences as they learned to become teachers. Like Connelly and Clandinin (1988), who

engaged in dialogue with their students by asking “teachers to reflect on how the ongoing experiences in [their] course, in the [teachers’] classroom, and outside the classroom help them to think differently about their practice” (p. 44), I too engaged in written dialogue with the candidates. I did so to give perspective and make alive our unified personal practical knowledge and experiences about our course, our knowledge, and our identity as teachers and educators in a changing world. What marked this method as unique was that, as [Connelly and Clandinin \(1988\)](#) suggested long ago about written dialogue,

You have the control of the dialogue. You choose the topic, decide whether to respond to questions and comments made by the other person, and refocus the discussion when you want... but you must remember that it is an ongoing dialogue, a written conversation. (p. 48)

With the candidates, I was co-curriculum maker. The narrative inquiry method of *related literacy narratives* was a rich feature of my course that also has had sustainability long after the course ended, as evidenced in my longitudinal study ([Ciuffetelli Parker, 2010](#)).

*Related literacy narratives* is a narrative inquiry method that can be used not only within foundation courses in teacher education programs but also for in-service teacher development and graduate programs. For in-service teacher development, teachers can use a narrative approach in solving theory-to-practice issues of curriculum by incorporating *related literacy narratives* in their school planning and curriculum deliberations within the landscape of schools. In this manner, teachers’ personal practical knowledge and narratives of experience are foregrounded and may even take precedence over the “workshop of the day”; accordingly, *related literacy narratives* can offer a blended approach to teachers’ storied knowledge and the curricular bit of programming in schools.

*Related literacy narratives* also can provide a rich written dialogue among graduate students while they make sense of the practice-to-theory ([Connelly, He, & Phillion, 2008](#)) issues from their professional practice and while positioned alongside course readings and research projects. The use of *related literacy narratives* might even extend beyond teacher graduate students to include other graduate students representing other professions such as nursing, social work, and business. Indeed, this is the case in my own additional graduate narrative inquiry course that I teach. Graduate students are represented from various professions, and, in a shared manner, the *related literacy narratives* are inter-disciplinary in nature, from the point of

view of not only curriculum subject matter but also the *curriculum making* in the professions.

The ongoing reflection-in-action between writing correspondences in *related literacy narratives* offers a constructivist and pedagogical way of understanding education in the 21st century, not from the point of view of political stakeholders and transmissive modes of education, but from the point of view and perspective of knowledgeable curriculum makers. Albeit a swim upstream, it is time to consider seriously the importance and value of a ground-up narrative approach where “the starting point is practice and its needs” (Connelly et al., 2008, p. xii) rather than a top-down conduit of curriculum that is prescribed and may even stunt the teacher education field. The narrative approach of *related literacy narratives* values teachers’ storied practice and professional knowledge both as they are experienced and lived in teaching and learning spaces. What better way to make a difference in teaching and teacher education than to have teacher educators, teacher candidates, and practicing educators active and engaged as curriculum makers alongside their peers and students as they reflect and reconstruct their practice in an ongoing cycle of renewal through the retelling and reliving of narratives of experiences!

## NOTE

1. Pseudonyms are used to protect anonymity.

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# SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHER EDUCATORS AS CURRICULUM MAKERS: ENGAGING TEACHER CANDIDATES IN DEMOCRATIC PRACTICES

Lynnette B. Erickson and Amy B. Miner

## ABSTRACT

*Purpose – This narrative inquiry chronicles our experiences in a social studies methods course and the understandings we gained as we engaged alongside our teacher candidates in democratic practices.*

*Approach – Our narrative inquiry began as we wondered whether modeling democratic practices and establishing democratic classrooms in our social studies methods courses would enable future teachers to construct democratic classrooms. Through analysis of our field notes from several semesters, we captured and examined our process of curriculum making with our teacher candidates.*

*Findings – Through recounting and unpacking four stories of our curriculum making, we demonstrate that to prepare future teachers to prepare their students as citizens, teacher educators must do more than merely model democratic practices. While modeling, they must explicitly*

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*teach the concepts behind the practices and attend to nondemocratic and missed opportunities for engaging in democratic practices. They must create opportunities for teacher candidates to plan, practice, observe, and critique democratic practices.*

*Value – To many, social studies is limited to the study and memorization of facts about history and geography. However, the primary purpose of the K-12 social studies is citizenship education (NCSS, 1994). Social studies teacher educators are responsible to prepare future teachers to meet this purpose through social studies methods courses where democratic practices are modeled and explicitly taught, and where teacher candidates are given opportunities to engage in democratic classrooms.*

**Keywords:** Social studies; democratic practices; curriculum making; teacher education; narrative inquiry; curriculum of lives.

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a narrative inquiry that exposes our (Lynnette and Amy) learning and lived experiences as social studies teacher educators. This inquiry focuses on our experiences as we engaged in curriculum making in a social studies methods course over multiple semesters while living alongside various cohorts of teacher candidates. We chronicle the process of our curriculum making to enable our teacher candidates to have a lived experience with democratic practices within the context of a democratic classroom. In this way we hoped to align our curriculum with our goal of preparing teacher candidates for the role they would play in helping their own students develop as good citizens.

In puzzling about our experiences, we explore the value of [Clandinin and Connelly's \(2000\)](#) conception of four levels of narrative (living, telling, retelling, and reliving) for engaging our own, as well as our teacher candidates', curriculum of lives ([Clandinin et al., 2006](#)). The four levels of narrative refer to experiencing the curriculum (*living*), being able to talk about those experiences using the language of a discipline (*telling*), and being able to identify, label, and critique similar experiences beyond the classroom context (*retelling*). The last level (*reliving*) allows us to imagine and construct experiences similar to the original curriculum experiences in

new settings. These four levels of narrative allowed us to examine our practice as curriculum makers. As we lived alongside teacher candidates in our social studies methods courses, we were conscious that the levels of narrative they demonstrated were indications of how successful we had been in developing a curriculum that would move our teacher candidates toward democratic teaching practices.

Being wakeful to all four levels of narrative helped us be more successful in negotiating the curriculum of lives (Clandinin et al., 2006) in our methods course. A curriculum of lives includes the lived experiences both we, as curriculum makers, and our teacher candidates, as students, bring to our social studies methods course. Our understanding of the *curriculum of lives*, is based on the work of Clandinin et al. (2006):

as we played with this idea of curriculum as a course of life, we began to imagine how curriculum could be seen as a curriculum of life, perhaps a curriculum of lives. Thinking in this way, of course, makes the composition of life identities, stories to live by, central in the process of curriculum making. It was in this way that we began to deepen our understandings of the interactions among the teacher, the milieu, and children. And as we attended to children's lives, we attended to multiple plotlines within each life, plotlines of child as learner, as learner of subject matter, as learner of his/her life, of his/her stories to live by. (p.13)

In the same way, that Clandinin et al. talk about attending to children's lives in the process of curriculum making, we also attended to the lived background and experience that comprise the curriculum of lives of our teacher candidates. In attending to the curriculum of lives they bring to our course, we focus our curriculum making on creating mutually lived experiences that will enhance our understanding of teaching social studies methods, as well as our teacher candidates' understanding of democratic practices.

In this chapter, we first position social studies and its purpose in relation to us and to this study. We then articulate how we engage narrative inquiry to unpack our stories of curriculum making in our social studies methods courses across semesters. We report our findings by recounting and then analyzing four stories that represent critical experiences in our curriculum making; exploring them through Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) four levels of narrative. Our chapter ends as we look beyond living, telling, and retelling, to focus on reliving, wondering how we can continue to reimagine and reform our curriculum in our social studies methods course to prepare teacher candidates who can live democratic practices and create democratic classrooms with their students.

## CONTEXT

### *Positioning Social Studies Education*

In the current educational milieu of federal mandates and increased accountability for student achievement in literacy and mathematics, social studies has been seriously neglected as a component of the curriculum (e.g., Howard, 2003; Burroughs, Groce, & Webeck, 2005; Bailey, Shaw, & Hollifield, 2006; Leming, Ellington, & Schug, 2006; McGuire, 2007). Increasingly more teachers report that they do not have time to address “anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences” (National Council for the Social Studies, 1994, p. vii) in their classrooms (e.g., Guisbond, & Neill, 2005; VanFossen, 2005; Burstein, Hutton, & Curtis, 2006; Litner, 2006) while the teaching of these subject areas is important, the lack of attention to these subjects is only part of what is lost when social studies is absent from the curriculum.

As defined by the National Council for the Social Studies (1994), “the primary purpose of social studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world” (p. vii). This vision of social studies is not new. Dewey (1916) argued that schools are obligated to teach democratic values and prepare an informed citizenry for full participation in a social and political democracy. He argued for a democratic society, suggesting that public school classrooms are microcosms of society at large. Others have adopted the philosophy of Dewey (e.g., Goodlad, 1979; Bullough, 1988; Goodlad, Mantle-Bromley, & Goodlad, 2004; Apple, & Beane, 2007) and social studies as a discipline has embraced Dewey and advocates for democratic education.

As social studies teacher educators, we align with the positions of both Dewey and the National Council for the Social Studies. We believe that addressing this primary purpose with our teacher candidates is the most important aspect of our methods course. However, as we focus our curriculum making on educating our teacher candidates to take up democratic practices, we experience tension between our commitment and the curriculum of lives of our teacher candidates’ where social studies has typically been experienced as knowing and reciting important names, dates, and places. This means that our orientation toward educating democratic teachers often competes with the experience base of our teacher candidates.

Being a democratic teacher requires that teachers are able to create learning experiences and model the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required of good citizens within a community or society. Teachers who create democratic classrooms engage their students in problem-solving, debates, decision-making, choice, responsibility, stewardship, accountability, etc. These types of authentic experiences within the classroom context give students opportunities to practice the skills of citizenship and prepare them to be citizens in the larger society (Dewey, 1916). The responsibility for educating teacher candidates prepared to guide their students toward citizenship, then, falls to teacher preparation programs, specifically to both of us, as social studies teacher educators.

## **NARRATIVE INQUIRY METHODOLOGY TO EXPLORE STORIES OF CURRICULUM MAKING**

Narrative inquiry methodology allowed us to puzzle about our teaching and to uncover our personal practical knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) as teacher educators. According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000), Dewey's concept of education as experience provides the theoretical condition for narrative inquiry:

Our work is strongly influenced by John Dewey, the preeminent thinker in education. Dewey's writings on the nature of experience remained the conceptual, imaginative backdrop ... For us, Dewey transforms a commonplace term, experience, in our educators' language into an inquiry term, and gives us a term that permits better understandings of educational life. (p. 2)

Although Dewey's philosophy provides the backdrop for narrative inquiry, Schwab's (1954/1978) four curricular commonplaces – subject matter, learners, milieu, and teachers – can be used by educators “as analysis tools to develop their own narratives” and “as a heuristic to inspire teachers' self-reflection and articulation of their stances as curriculum workers” (Kridel, 2010, p. 127). We employed narrative inquiry to assist us in narrating storying and understanding our practices as we examined our efforts as social studies curriculum makers.

We developed a curriculum of democratic practices that we anticipated would influence our teacher candidates in their ability to teach in democratic ways and to establish democratic classrooms. Each semester we invited our teacher candidates to live alongside us in our social studies methods courses as we engaged in democratic practices. These mutually lived experiences include the constellation of course activities, readings, discussions, and

assignments that form the *curricular plotline* that enables our teacher candidates to develop experiential knowledge of democratic practices and classrooms within our social studies methods course (e.g., Clandinin et al., 2006).

Our field notes, student projects, assignments, reflections, and exams collected over a four-year period and multiple cohorts of teacher candidates, comprise the data for our inquiry in this chapter. In our analysis process, we identified critical turning points in our curriculum making which we represent here as four critical events. We reconstructed these events as stories from our data. We then holistically applied the narrative commonplaces of *place*, *sociality*, and *temporality* (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). Consistently throughout our process of meaning making, we systematically privileged each commonplace while holding it in relationship to the others as outlined by Clandinin and Connelly (2000). We began by attending to the dimension of place by being wakeful to the influence of our college of education, school partnerships, and the contexts where we have taught and been taught. Then we took into account the dimension of sociality by contemplating our personal relationships to each other and our teacher candidates and by taking into account the social – including our knowledge and understanding of social studies and teacher education as fields of study. The dimension of temporality was a constant thread in our analysis process as we imagined and reimagined our experiences in light of our past as classroom teachers, our present as teacher educators, and our future relationships with teacher candidates as colleagues and associates (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin, Pushor & Murray Orr, 2007).

The four stories we present in the next section of this chapter are constructed from our experiences and represent critical events for our curriculum making. Each marks a new phase as we moved our attention from living, to telling, to retelling, and to reliving across numerous semesters. In analyzing our stories, we were conscious of the ways in which the stories resonated with our memories, our experiences, and our teacher candidates' responses to the course. This resonance (Conle, 1996) helped establish the trustworthiness (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) of the understandings that surfaced from our inquiry.

## STORIES OF SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM MAKING

The four levels of narrative provide a way to accurately account for our experiences in developing social studies methods curriculum over several

semesters. We began by noticing a need to *live* democratic practices with teacher candidates in our social studies methods courses. Subsequently, our experiences with teacher candidates led us also to attend to *telling* in our curriculum making. Responding to our teacher candidates' learning, we again adjusted the curriculum of our methods course and worked to create a curricular plotline that supported teacher candidates in not only *living* and *telling*, but also in *retelling*. Ultimately, we hope that the lived experiences we shared with our teacher candidates would allow them to relive democratic practices, thus, emulating their experiences with us in their own classrooms as teachers. Our stories illustrate how curriculum making in teacher education requires that teacher educators attend to each level of narrative in order to prepare teacher candidates to take what they learn in university courses into their own curriculum making as teachers.

### *Living a Story of Curriculum Making*

Our story begins with the incident that triggered us to consider our current teaching practices, our goals for the social studies methods course that we taught, and then to create a new curriculum. For several years, Lynnette had reflected on her teacher candidates' reports of their experiences with social studies during their elementary school years. The memories they reported in class seldom, if ever, described experiences with democratic practices or classrooms, or the importance of preparing to be good citizens. She had frequently wondered if she should model democratic practices as well as teach social studies content in her social studies methods course. One afternoon, while Lynnette was contemplating these tensions, Amy stopped by her office. The following story captures the narrative account that motivated their joint venture into curriculum making.

Amy entered my office and sat down. Amy was just as energetic as I remembered her being twelve years ago as a graduate student. Amy was anxious to know if there was a spot for her to teach an undergraduate social studies methods course. "Funny you should ask," I thought, since I did need someone to teach a few sections for the coming fall semester.

During our conversation I mentioned that I had been thinking about the past semester and making plans for next semester's class. I had been reviewing my assignments, assessments, discussions, and the students' course and instructor ratings. In my opinion, they were all good. Yet, I struggled in knowing how to help *my* students to know how to help *their* students develop as citizens.

“What would you do differently?” Amy probed. In the moment I realized that I was being confronted with the tension between content and pedagogy that teacher educators often face. Part of the tension for me was whether the pedagogy and content of social studies could be separated.

The answer to Amy’s question spilled out as clearly as if it had been written on cue cards prepared for the evening news. I boldly explained that while my students could recite the definition of the social studies, list all the content areas, explain its historical background, give a rationale for the scope and sequence, and create and teach social studies lessons based on national and state standards, I wondered whether they had any idea on how to prepare students to assume their roles as citizens in a democratic society. By now Amy was both curious and excited, so I continued. “What should I do? Could I conduct my class as a democratic classroom and model how to be a democratic teacher? Would that help?”

Amy looked me squarely in the eyes and without missing a beat, simply said, “Just do it!” (Reconstructed field note from April 26, 2007)

Unfortunately, establishing democratic classrooms, modeling democratic practices, and teaching democratic skills and principles have not typically been part of the explicit curriculum in most teacher preparation programs (Adler, 2008). Neither of us had a model to start from, other than our previous experiences as elementary classroom teachers.

In constructing a new curriculum, we, as former elementary grade teachers, brought memories of both living and creating educational experiences that focused on citizenship and democracy: class meetings, problem-solving about classroom issues, and the relationship between being a citizen in the classroom and in the larger society. These experiences guided us to draw on the curriculum of lives (Clandinin et al., 2006) that teacher candidates brought with them into teacher education. We invited our students to remember and analyze their own elementary curricular experiences as the foundation for developing an elementary social studies curriculum.

We worked together to shape a social studies methods curriculum that would fit our vision of what teacher candidates might need to prepare their students with the necessary knowledge and skills of citizenship (Boyle-Baise, 2003). We wanted to create lived experiences that encouraged a sense of community in our classes (e.g., Greer, Greer, & Hawkins, 2003; Metzger, 2004). We incorporated class meetings (e.g., Triplett, & Hunter, 2005) so that our students could share their opinions on a variety of matters and exercise choice in many of the logistics of the course. Discussions of current controversial issues (e.g., Passe, 2006) were scheduled in an effort to expand their thinking about the meaning of educating students for a democracy. Practitioner-based readings were included that connected social studies

strategies and content with democratic teacher practices. These changes represented our initial attempt to live democratic practices as part of the curriculum of our social studies methods course alongside our candidates.

*Living, but not yet Telling a Story of Curriculum Making*

The following Fall semester we implemented the changes in our curriculum. We emphasized and modeled the importance of the classroom as a microcosm of the greater democratic society. In personal interviews we invited teacher candidates to share their educational goals, concerns about the course, and questions they had. In setting up the course logistics, we offered our students choices. Did they want to purchase a course packet or simply download an electronic version? How did they want to be assessed? Would they prefer traditionally formatted tests? What kinds of assignments did they learn best from? Several times during the semester, we had class meetings so students could make suggestions for how the class operated.

At the end of the semester, we were interested in how the teacher candidates had responded to the democratic practices we had modeled. Part of the final exam asked them to describe a democratic classroom and then tell how likely they were to develop a democratic classroom when they became teachers. As we reviewed the teacher candidates' responses we began to puzzle again about our social studies methods course curriculum and the effect it had had on our teacher candidates and what we had learned as we lived alongside them during the semester. Amy recounts the conversation:

I [Amy] began reading my students' responses from their final exam. *Democratic classrooms are about allowing students to have as many choices in their learning as possible* (Student 15).

Lynnette commented, "A democratic classroom is only about student choice?" She put the papers down and shook her head. "Well, they seem to have understood that choice is the basis of a democratic classroom. Funny, they didn't mention higher order thinking, decisions for the common good, responsibility, knowledge, modeling, or anything else!"

We both wondered aloud, "How did they come up with choice as the only important part of democratic teaching?"

Lynnette suggested that we look at how the teacher candidates felt about using democratic practices in their own classrooms. They read quietly for a few minutes.

Lynnette laughed and read a student's comment aloud. *I am concerned about giving the students too much choice. I do not want the students to feel like they control the class and that they can walk all over me.*



As I looked through my pile of comments I found one that I thought was even more off-target than the one she had read. “How about this one?” *What if students choose something that is not good for them?* (Student 1). I continued, “They seem to think that democratic teaching is an either/or situation—either the teacher or the students are in control.”

Lynnette then read her next student comment. *I am mostly concerned with the fact that I haven't had a good model to look to for a democratic classroom, so I won't know how to correctly implement it* (Student 4). Lynnette then sighed, “They didn't see us as models of democratic teachers, did they?”

Perplexed, I suggested, “Let's read their comments about us as teachers.” *Unlike my previous experiences, this professor was much more understanding and respectful of the workload we had with our other courses* (Student 7). “This student noticed we were aware of their loads.”

“Mine are all pretty much the same,” Lynnette continued, and read more comments aloud. *She took time out of her own schedule to meet with each of us personally* (Student 4). She asks for our feedback and actively implements it (Student 20).

We just looked at each other for a moment, then I observed, “They think we are just nice people!” (Reconstructed field notes from December 20, 2007)

Our students represented us as being kind, considerate, interested in them, and flexible. These were actually deliberate attempts to model democratic practices that they too could engage in with their students. They did not realize that we interviewed them not just to get to know them better, but also so that we better understood the curriculum of lives they brought with them and contributions they could make to the classroom community. The choices we offered were not just our way of being accommodating and flexible, but were opportunities for them to learn about decision making as members of a democratic class community. For example, the final exam could be proctored either in the university testing center or in our class on the date assigned by the university. We asked the class to decide on one or the other. The teacher candidates questioned the pros and cons of each of the options. Taking the test in the testing center would allow them to take the test any time during the final exam week, but would require a traditional multiple-choice test, which the majority did not like. Having the test in the classroom meant teacher candidates would be forced to wait until immediately before the exam week to know the test date, therefore hindering them in arranging their travel plans for their two-week holiday recess. The discussion moved from the logistics of where the test was taken, to what type of test, and finally, what timing would be in the best interest of most of the class members.

In unpacking our experience of living alongside our teacher candidates, engaging, and developing their curriculum of lives, we puzzled over how our students could experience and live authentic democratic practices and not recognize them as such. They had exclusively labeled the things we had done as being kind, giving them choices, or listening to their voices rather than as exemplars of democratic practices and as models of how they could be democratic teachers without abandoning responsibility for classroom management and teaching the content. Our teacher candidates had lived alongside us as we enacted democratic practices together. We had assumed that they understood what we were trying to teach them through our modeling. After our debriefing discussion when the teacher candidates returned to class after their practicum experiences, Amy and I contemplated the disconnect between what we thought we were teaching in our curriculum and what they seemingly were gleaning from our curriculum practices. We wondered what we could do to make our curriculum and intentions more transparent as we continued to live alongside our teacher candidates.

*Living and Telling, but not yet Retelling a Story of Curriculum Making*

After considering the comments from our fall semester cohort, the next semester we altered our curriculum to help our teacher candidates to see more clearly that the practices we demonstrated were examples of democratic practices that they could use as teachers. We continued to model democratic practices with our teacher candidates, and now explicitly labeled, identified, and explained the practices – something we had overlooked in our curriculum making the semester before. For example, after conducting and modeling a class meeting, we taught about class meetings as a strategy for developing community and ownership in the classroom and the purpose for allowing each student to express their opinions and preferences on the rules and operations of the class. We provided a handout on class meetings with the pros and cons of the method, steps for implementation, and a template of an agenda. Our intention was not only to model a class meeting, but to also point out the specific practices which we had used in teaching the course content, provide detailed explanations, and engage them in discussions of this content. By making these changes in our curriculum, we were giving the teacher candidates a better opportunity to recognize that the content of the course was in fact, the democratic practices we were modeling.

We felt that our teacher candidates would be able to live the experiences and tell the story of them. We also thought that they would be able to tell a story of recognizing and then altering nondemocratic classrooms in ways that would make them democratic. Near the end of this semester the students returned to our class after spending a month practice teaching in elementary classrooms. We were looking forward to their reports of democratic and nondemocratic practices in their classrooms. Lynnette reported the following story of her experience debriefing her teacher candidates and the conversation with Amy that followed.

“So, how was it?” I asked as I scanned the circle of faces. Looking across the my students, I could tell they weren’t very excited about being back on campus.

Almost in unison, the teacher candidates insisted, “It was awesome!” They immediately began talking over each other, sharing stories of their successes in working with children. One after another they asserted that being in classrooms was much more educational than any university course they had attended. Nonetheless, I was expecting a moment of validation. In just moments, my teacher candidates would provide examples of democratic practices and how they could capitalize on non-democratic teaching opportunities by turning them into democratic practices.

The class ended. I returned to my office puzzling over the discussion. I quickly called Amy, anxious to compare notes. “I just had the most bewildering debriefing with my students.”

Before I had a chance to share the reasons for my confusion, Amy jumped in. “In my class almost everyone noticed that the students and teacher had created class rules that they posted in the rooms and commented on how the teacher did things to meet specific individual needs. I felt pretty good about that.”

I agreed and continued, adding, “My students also talked about classroom arrangements. They mentioned that what they learned from those two articles we had them read helped them to recognize how the arrangement of the classroom could support students in collaborative work.”

Amy added, “My students commented that student work was posted everywhere in some classes and not so much in others. They connected the posting of student work with ownership in the classroom.”

I thought for a moment, and said, “But what surprised me were their examples of non-democratic practices. They mostly reported on their cooperating teachers’ classroom management. The non-examples focused on students not having choices or being treated unfairly. They thought a good solution for making these events democratic was for the teachers to just be more patient and understanding. They didn’t mention following through on the consequences the students had chosen or discussing the issues in a class meeting where outcomes could be problem-solved.”

Amy chimed in, “My students did a really good job of pointing out all the things we asked them to observe. But, they couldn’t tell how they, as teachers, could turn non-democratic practices into democratic ones. Now what do we do?” (Reconstructed field notes from April 2, 2008)

As our students entered their practicum assignment, they took with them their fragile new understandings of democratic practices, which they had recognized and enjoyed while in our classrooms. However, they also took with them the ongoing narratives of traditional classrooms, which had been strengthened by years of personal experience and observation (Cuban, 1993). Participating in their practicum, they were able to identify the characteristics of democratic classrooms. Yet they were not able to articulate how they might reconstruct nondemocratic classroom practices as democratic ones.

In this experience with curriculum making, we not only lived the narrative of democratic classrooms alongside our teacher candidates, as we had done before, but we also explicitly modeled, named, discussed, and re-demonstrated the democratic practices that compose democratic classrooms. This story helped us to understand that living alongside our teacher candidates, modeling, naming, and discussing, enabled them to live and tell a narrative of democratic practices. However, we noticed that our mutual experiences were not sufficiently powerful for our teacher candidates to move to the next level of narrative – retelling. We had ample evidence that even in a new context, public school classrooms, they could identify and tell the story of observed democratic practices. Given the difficulty our teacher candidates had in identifying nondemocratic practices, we puzzled over this dilemma. We thought we had made appropriate changes in our curriculum, but now continued to ponder the ways we could develop teaching experiences that would better achieve our intentions for the course.

*Living, Telling, Retelling, but not yet Reliving a Curriculum of Democratic Practices*

We continued to adjust our curriculum during the summer term in order to more fully attend to the teaching of democratic practices. After these curriculum revisions, our teacher candidates were able to experience the democratic practices we modeled and also identify them. They could clearly tell how those practices were course content and important to them as future teachers. They demonstrated awareness of the democratic and nondemocratic practices. Because we shifted our curriculum making, candidates were

now able to make appropriate suggestions for how nondemocratic practices could become democratic practices. For example, instead of suggesting that rather than punishing a child for bullying, the teacher could hold a class meeting to enlist the students in identifying the issue, its effect on members of the class, and then guide the students in developing consequences.

We now felt sure that our curriculum making prepared our teacher candidates to construct curriculum that would promote democratic practices and prepare them to teach in democratic classrooms. Because the teacher candidates were now able to live, tell, and retell stories of democratic practices with us, we were hopeful that they would demonstrate these practices as they enacted their narratives as teachers. We decided to follow some of our teacher candidates into their classrooms during their first year of teaching. We anticipated that each of our former teacher candidates would demonstrate obvious examples of democratic teaching that we had modeled and taught at the university. Amy tells the story of her and Lynnette's observations: (Note that all names of students in this story are pseudonyms.)

We packed up our notebooks and observation protocols and headed out the door of the education building. We were looking forward to today's observation. Climbing into the car, I was the first to voice the ambivalence I knew we both were feeling. "After our first two observations, I'm not sure what to expect today. You know, when we went to visit Larinda on Monday I was pretty excited. Of all the teacher candidates that I have had, she was the one I thought was most prepared to be a democratic teacher, but..."

It didn't take a second for Lynnette to finish my sentence. "She was so overwhelmed just trying to deal with teaching in an urban school with such diverse students. Her teaching was fine—it just wasn't very democratic. But to her credit, I think she did make some efforts to do some of the things we taught."

I could only think about the class rules we had seen posted on Larinda's classroom door. "Do you really think that it was a democratic practice to have her students sign their names to the rule poster?"

"I'm not saying she had the students assist in creating rules or that they would necessarily feel that they were responsible for their community, just that she did try to get them to be responsible for themselves by signing the rules," Lynnette defended.

I knew what Lynnette was saying in Larinda's defense was right, but my disappointment in not seeing more of what we had modeled in our classes was hard to disguise. "You have to admit," I argued, "the rest of the observation came up pretty dry on democratic practices."

Lynnette confessed that she was shocked when we went to Ashley's classroom that same day. She had been encouraged when she saw the rules and class jobs posted on the

bulletin boards in Ashley's classroom. However, after talking with Ashley for just a few minutes, Lynnette confessed, "I don't know how to call what she was doing anything but missed opportunities for democratic practices."

I agreed. "My favorite was when she announced that she was giving her students a choice. That meant that they could decide in what order they did the required assignments—they could do the math worksheet before or after the reading worksheet, or the spelling worksheet, or the social studies worksheet. Where is the democracy in that?" I thought a bit, trying to find something positive that I had observed in Ashley's classroom. Finally, I blurted out, "Well, she did have a great bulletin board with all the jobs *on it!*"

"Sure, great bulletin board," Lynnette agreed, "but she never assigned anyone a job. It's hard for kids to feel ownership for what goes on in their classroom if they don't have a responsibility. If she would just assign the jobs and see how it worked, I think she might be surprised."

We headed for the car and started off for our last observation. While we drove, I thought about how we had modeled democratic practices and democratic classrooms in our methods courses and the positive responses we had reviewed from our teacher candidates not so long ago. We had been explicit as we explained our practices as democratic teachers ourselves, and the teacher candidates had been able to recognize those practices in their field experiences. I was heartened as I recalled the desire they expressed to implement what they had learned in their future classrooms. As we turned the corner to the school for our next observation, I optimistically announced to Lynnette, "I'm still hopeful. I think we'll see some good things in Kristen's classroom today." (Reconstructed field notes from October 20, 2008)

Our methods course with teacher candidates is our opportunity to fulfill the purposes of social studies education – preparing students to become good citizens. We, as social studies teacher educators, must be fully aware of how effective our curriculum is in preparing teacher candidates to assume the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to model and teach democratic practices in their classrooms. Stories in this chapter took place while we were living alongside our teacher candidates in our social studies methods courses. Our ongoing curriculum making strengthened our teacher candidates in being able to observe, identify, and practice the skills of democratic teaching and authentically experience democratic and non-democratic practices.

## CONCLUSION

Over the course of many semesters, we engaged in curriculum making that enabled our teacher candidates to live and tell the democratic practices that

we modeled, labeled, and discussed. They were also able to observe the practices of their cooperating teachers and often retell them, providing suggestions for how to turn nondemocratic practices into democratic ones. Though the teacher candidates met our expectations for the course, our goal was not that they just be successful *teacher candidates*, but that they would ultimately become successful democratic *teachers*. We wonder whether social studies methods courses in teacher education programs can educate teacher candidates to be informed curriculum makers who create classrooms as laboratories or training grounds for their students (Dewey, 1916).

### **CREATING A CURRICULUM OF DEMOCRATIC PRACTICES**

As we used democratic practices in our university classrooms, we easily and naturally drew on the experiences and backgrounds that our teacher candidates brought with them. Through our narrative inquiry we began to wonder whether enacting democratic practices within our curriculum making would allow teacher candidates to make the most of the curriculum of lives (Clandinin et al., 2006) present in their classrooms as they prepare their students to live more fully as citizens.

We have great concerns, as social studies methods teachers, about those who will be teaching the next generation of citizens. Public school classrooms hold the potential to be microcosms of a democratic society (Dewey, 1916) where children and youth can gain experiences needed to prepare them to act as competent citizens. Given the current educational milieu, our teacher candidates, as well as teachers in the schools who will become their colleagues, view social studies as a content not tested under current federal mandates, therefore, they do not embrace the importance of the social studies curriculum – educating children for participation in a democracy.

### **LOOKING TOWARD RELIVING A CURRICULUM OF DEMOCRATIC PRACTICES**

When teacher educators construct curriculum, they may tend to focus on only one level of narrative – living, telling, retelling, or reliving. However, as this narrative inquiry illustrates, attending to all the levels of narrative has

the potential to be an important strategy for studying and understanding our practices as teacher educators and curriculum makers living alongside our candidates.

This narrative inquiry has led us to wonder about what will happen to our teacher candidates as they assume roles as classroom teachers. We question whether living, telling, and retelling the curricular plotline of democratic practices is enough to lead our teacher candidates to become curriculum makers of democratic practices. As we contemplate these questions, we wonder what more we can do to strengthen our curriculum to prepare our teacher candidates to relive the democratic practices we modeled and taught in our class.

Our curriculum making has been a long-term process of shaping and reshaping our teaching practices based on our experiences living alongside our teacher candidates in our social studies methods courses. Being wakeful to the four levels of narrative (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), living, telling, retelling, and reliving, demonstrated by our teacher candidates provided the context for us to look closer at our practice and to modify our teaching techniques. Our experiences in social studies curriculum making offer us great hope that we will be able to effectively teach the understandings and skills requisite for our teacher candidates to become democratic teachers and to embrace the curriculum of democratic practices and democratic classrooms.

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# TIP-TOEING PAST THE FEAR: BECOMING A MUSIC EDUCATOR BY ATTENDING TO PERSONAL MUSIC EXPERIENCES

Shelley M. Griffin

## ABSTRACT

*Purpose – This chapter focuses on how teacher candidates engage in a process of body mapping to narratively inquire into how their daily informal and formal music experiences inform elementary music teaching practices.*

*Methodology and findings – In a primary/junior music education course at Brock University, teacher candidates utilize a course assignment to create a visual narrative (body map), along with oral and written narratives that outline their music experiences. Through this narrative inquiry, teacher candidates become aware of how their personal lived experiences influence their perceptions about elementary music teaching. This chapter offers conceptualizations of five threads that emerged from the narratives: process of body mapping and musical experience, music everywhere, school influences, family, and fear.*

*Value – This inquiry deepens understandings of curriculum making possibilities in elementary music teacher education as teacher candidates*

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*begin to form their music teacher identity based on their lived experiences. Such visual, oral, and written narratives contribute to increased narrative understandings by demonstrating the power teacher candidates' personal music experiences have in shaping teacher identity and, in turn, teaching practice.*

**Keywords:** Elementary music; music experiences; teacher education; narrative inquiry; body mapping.

It is just before 8:00 a.m., Wednesday, my first class with a new group of teacher candidates. The quiet Celtic background music wafts through the stereo, setting the stage for our two-and-a-half hours together, diving into teaching primary/junior music. It feels like a crash course with so much to do and so little time. How am I going to cover it all in six classes? More importantly, how am I going to uncover it all? My heart beats a little faster, ensuring that everything is in its place. I think I am ready. I want them to love it. I want to instill passion in their hearts for teaching music. I want teacher candidates to understand how their own experiences are gifts toward shaping practice. As these thoughts race through my head, I begin to make eye contact with my new teacher candidates, greeting them with "Good Morning." Behind the return welcome smiles, I sense some reluctant eye contact and hesitation. As we move to the open space and begin our opening activity, "The Body Boogie," the prevailing fear is evident on the faces of some. Me? Teach music? As the professor, the ache in my heart reaches to that place of wonder, continuing to ponder why this is so. Why the reluctance? This seems to be a common thread I have been experiencing over the past six years with those enrolled in a Bachelor of Education. I have continued to reflect upon how to draw upon teacher candidates' experiences of music in their daily lives as a means to inform their teaching practice. How can I help them deconstruct their perceptions about teaching music? Perhaps it is time to develop these wonderings into a research inquiry. And so it is ... (S. Griffin, personal communication, March 12, 2010)

## AN UNFOLDING STORY

As a teacher educator, I have been astounded at the fear that accompanies many who cross the threshold into a course of curriculum and instruction in elementary music methodology. This fear and anxiety intrigues me as a musician, music educator, and a teacher educator. I continue to puzzle over how teacher candidates define music. What is it about their knowing of music and teaching music that creates this lack of confidence? I wonder about the stories these teacher candidates tell themselves and others about who they are as musicians. I ponder how their experiences of engaging with music might inform the way they perceive music. I consider how my

knowing of their experiences could shape my teaching of them as beginning teachers. Furthermore, I wonder how their lived experiences with music might shape the lives of teacher candidates with whom they work. These musings dance around in my head.

As this inquiry, framed by the musings above, is in progress, I share in this chapter my first year findings, findings I consider to be *in the midst* (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Being in the midst means that the insights are temporal, as they have a past, present, and future. Clandinin and Connelly expanded upon this concept when they described that narrative inquirers live in relation with participants in a place or series of places, in social interaction with milieus. The inquirer then concludes the inquiry “still in the midst of living and telling, reliving and retelling, the stories of the experiences that make up people’s lives, both individual and social” (p. 20). As I continue to navigate my way through the inquiry, I also offer my insights and reflections and considerations for the importance of narrative inquiry research in music teacher education.

During my career as a teacher educator, I have continued to be puzzled about how I might play a role in breaking down some of the grand narratives of *school music* which play themselves out in the lives of teacher candidates. I have wondered how I might interrupt the fear they experience around music teaching. Within my practice, I have tried different ways to create a space to honor the ways in which my teacher candidates come to know music in their lives. Three significant individuals inspired me to honor teacher candidates’ experiences in new ways.

## THEORETICAL INSPIRATIONS

Dr. Adam Adler, a teacher educator at Nipissing University in Ontario, Canada, assists elementary generalist teacher candidates to reconnect with the music in their lives. He explained, “Rather than beginning the music methods course with established educational theory, I decided to proceed from their beliefs and experiences through the use and process of narrative” (Adler, *in press*, p. 5). These ideas resonated with my own experiences with narrative inquiry and also my commitment to respecting teachers as curriculum makers (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992).

Through creating a musical self-portrait and critical musical autobiography, Adler engages his teacher candidates in creating visual, textual, digital, or performative narratives to assist them to identify their past experiences as they influence their present identity. Adler (2008) believes

that because teacher candidates enter a methodology course in music education with varying levels of musicianship and experience, they sometimes approach the course with fear and trepidation. As prospective teachers, they often struggle with their personal histories in music education, histories that were not always favorable. Accordingly, teacher candidates often perceive a gap between their own musicianship and what they feel they need as support to be able to succeed as beginning teachers. Adler (in press) explained that, in some cases, teacher candidates virtually reject the possibility of achieving substantial skills even before commencing their methodology course. I share similar sentiments from my own experiences of working with teacher candidates.

Adler invited teacher candidates to share their narratives through various mediums, as he believed the various representations invited a pathway that opened new possibilities for music education. I was intrigued by his teacher candidates' representations and I came to see how important it was to know their stories on a much deeper level. I began to think about the teacher candidates with whom I worked. Did I really know their stories?

I then learned from Dr. Allan Peterkin and Dr. Allison Crawford (2008), Department of Psychiatry, Faculty of Medicine, Mount Sinai Hospital, University of Toronto, about how they utilize body mapping as a visual means to understand the life experiences of patients. Body mapping is “a form of art and narrative therapy used to gain understanding of ourselves, our bodies, and the world we live in” (Canadian Aids Treatment Information Exchange [CAITIE], n.d.). Utilized by HIV positive women who participated in workshops in Tanzania, Zambia, and Canada, body mapping “rapidly became a tool for story-telling, helping women with HIV/AIDS to sketch, paint, and put their journeys into words” (CAITIE, n.d.). Further to this, “participants first outline their bodies to create highly personal self-portraits. The body mapping process includes drawing, painting, visualization exercises, group discussion, sharing, and reflection” (CAITIE, n.d.). For their purposes in psychiatry, Peterkin and Crawford used questions similar to the following to propel thought:

- How do you feel today?
- Where do you come from?
- How would people describe you?
- What is a slogan you live by?
- What is an image that represents you?

*Internalizing Body Mapping*

I was propelled to think about what body mapping might look like in my own teaching practice and how modifying such an experience could perhaps enable me to invite the music experiences and stories of my teacher candidates without solely a pen and paper writing task, as I had in past practice. I pondered how body mapping might become a curricular possibility to enhance teacher candidates' narrative understandings of their music experiences. I began to wonder about how visual art, in combination with words, might enable teacher candidates to arrive at a different place emotionally around their music experiences. How might this encourage them to put on paper the stories they tell themselves over and over about who they are? How might this encourage them to understand both their musical joys and their musical fears? How might this be a powerful tool in shaping their future teaching practice?

**METHODOLOGICAL UNFOLDINGS**

As a result of the inspiration of Adler (2008; *in press*), Peterkin and Crawford (2008), along with a review of literature on music teacher identity (Bernard, 2004, 2009; Dolloff, 2007; Kirk, 2008; Lamb, 2003; Smith, 2007) and fear (Hallam et al., 2009; Russell-Bowie, 2009; Seddon & Biasutti, 2008), I began to plan for how I would structure an experience for my new teacher education classes in September, 2008. I decided I would have teacher candidates work in groups of three or four to create a body map, a visual representation of their music experiences. From 2008 to the present, I have continued this practice.

As I engaged in new practices of visual narratives (body mapping), along with oral and written narratives, I began to narratively inquire into how the informal and formal experiences of music in prospective educators' daily lives inform their developing teaching practices. My inquiry sought to deepen conceptualizations regarding how teacher candidates perceived themselves as beginning music educators based on their personal experiences of music.

Narrative inquiry, a relational form of inquiry that both represents and understands the living and telling of experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), has become increasingly prominent in the field of music education (Barrett & Stauffer, 2009a). Barrett and Stauffer (2009b) noted that, "Narrative inquiry projects are deeply relational and committed to the pursuit of questions of educational significance—questions that challenge

taken-for-granted notions of the nature of life and learning in and through music” (p. 16). Stauffer and Barrett (2009) have described such inquiries as *resonant*, suggesting they have the four defined qualities of being “respectful, responsible, rigorous, and resilient” (p. 20). These four qualities provide an ethical grounding and are imperative for narrative work. When narrative work is resilient and resonant, Stauffer and Barrett (2009) articulated that consequently, narrative inquiry scholarship troubles certainty, moves away from grand tales of music-making and turns toward the consideration of multiple stories, voices, and meanings of music and music experience. Intending my inquiry to be resonant, I moved from telling stories of my teaching practice to inquiring into my teaching practice. This inquiry “situates [teacher candidates] and [myself as a teacher educator] in the known and the familiar while it asks us to make the known and familiar strange and open to new possibility” (Clandinin, Pushor, & Orr, 2007, p. 33). By living alongside teacher candidates, our curriculum making (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992) in music education began to emerge. It is in this next section that I turn to share how this resonance emerged.

### *Curriculum Making in Music Teacher Education*

During the 2009–2010 academic year, I began my music methodology courses (primary/junior music section) with an opening musical activity of song and movement, where teacher candidates were up on their feet, making music in the first five minutes of class. From there, we moved directly into the body mapping activity, *My Musical Story: Personal Connections with Music*. This occurred before taking attendance or reviewing course expectations as I wanted them to see how their own perceptions and experiences would guide their experiences in the course.

The body mapping activity became part of a course assignment that consisted of two parts: (1) an in-class visual art body map regarding their music experiences and (2) an out-of-class independent written reflection. The creation of the visual art body map was facilitated through my provision of a series of 15 questions. Through this process, teacher candidates realized the power of their own experiences in shaping their own practice as teachers. I formulated questions I thought could shape an environment in my teaching. These questions included the following:

1. Draw an outline of yourself.
2. Add features that indicate who you are (e.g., hair, eyes).

3. Where do you come from?
4. Describe a recent experience where you encountered music. Consider: Where were you? Who was with you? How did it make you feel?
5. How would you describe your music interests?
6. What do you know about music?
7. What do you want to know about music?
8. How do you feel about being here in a class, learning about how to teach primary/junior music?
9. Who has influenced your musical experiences?
10. What is one of your most favorite musical moments?
11. Have you ever had a negative experience with music? If so, what do you recall about this?
12. What do you remember about music in elementary school?
13. Have you told this music story before?
14. What kind of music teacher would you like to be?
15. How can your prior knowledge help you succeed in this class?

I organized each class into small groups of three or four teacher candidates working on one piece of large chart paper. Each group was provided with markers and colored pencils. Adler (*in press*) discusses the need to minimize risk by removing the possibility of failure and opening up modes of expression through multiple forms of representation. While I encouraged the visual art to be the focus, I did not want the perfection of the visual art to be a paralysis to the body mapping experience. Accordingly, I invited them to use written text as well. At times, a word might encourage them to revisit an idea. Although they were working in groups, I emphasized that they should focus on representing their own ideas with minimal conversation. As I led the teacher candidates through the questions, I accompanied the activity with some Celtic harp playing on the stereo in the background. There were often points of laughter as participants chuckled at their own perceptions of their visual art capabilities. Between each question, I paused for a few minutes for the teacher candidates to reflect and consider how they would best represent the question through an image. Responding to the series of questions took approximately 45–60 minutes. Interestingly, as the experience continued to unravel, the participants became increasingly focused and centered on adding detail to their body maps.

These samples of the body maps provide insight into the unique, individualized visual stories that emerged. All were created with a variety of bright and pastel colors. Although completely different from one another, Megan (*Fig. 1*) and Donna's (*Fig. 2*) body maps were full of





Fig. 1. Megan's Creation (Pseudonyms are Used to Protect the Anonymity and Confidentiality of Teacher Candidates).



Fig. 2. Donna's Creation.



Fig. 3. Dan's Creation.

vibrant colors and written text. Dan (Fig. 3) chose a unique pose, positioning his body to be lying down and relaxed, filled with images and minimal written text.

#### *Looking Inward: Personal Music Experience and Curriculum Making*

As I watched the experience unfold, I became very interested in how some of the teacher candidates easily began to create their body maps with a wealth of color and precision. Others took time to reflect on the questions, drawing a small image. Some teacher candidates found it more comforting to use words, whereas others found it hard to get their ideas down on paper, whether it was through an image or text. I saw frequent expressions of daydreaming as I scanned the faces of teacher candidates who were working to translate their thought processes into something concrete on paper.

I became inspired by observing that as the experience unfolded, there was a sense of comfort that prevailed in the classroom. By engaging in this process, the walls of fear seemed to be somewhat shaken as teacher candidates began to realize that, in fact, they all had musical histories and

music experiences. I learned that a large majority of them engaged with and experienced music on a daily basis. I wondered if this activity did begin to interrupt some of their stories about the place of music in their lives. I began to consider how I, as a teacher educator, could use these experiences as a strong means to explore their developing identities and teacher practices as elementary school music educators.

As the questions were completed, I invited the small groups to talk about some highlights from their musical body maps with one another and share their thoughts around the process of participating in this sharing of their musical lives. As I circulated around the room, I was both fascinated and empowered by their conversation. As they worked in small groups, I asked the teacher candidates to divide up the chart paper, cutting out their own body maps. After small group conversation, we came back together as a whole group to debrief the body mapping experience. Teacher candidates began to open up as many revealed that they never consciously contemplated how integrated music was in their daily lives. Accordingly, they began to connect that personal music knowledge could in fact transfer to their own initial curriculum making (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006) as music educators. Several alluded to the fact that they never really considered how their early experiences of music in school, either positive or negative, could impact their perceptions of music teaching. By sitting in the chairs as teacher candidates, they were invited to think about the powerful influence they could have on the future music experiences of others. It was during this time that the depth of narrative understanding became heightened as teacher candidates were empowered to reflect at a deeper level than they may have had through solely completing a written reflection.

Following the completion of the in-class work, I invited teacher candidates to individually modify or add to the musical stories they told through their body mapping and to prepare a two-page reflection (to be submitted the following week) on the content of their musical story. I purposely did not provide teacher candidates with a copy of the prompting questions so that their stories would unfold, instead, from their body maps.

The reflections demonstrated the teacher candidates' thinking about what it means to be a music educator and what knowledge and skill, in fact, they already possessed toward this end. They demonstrated beginning understandings of how their narrative experiences were shaping their perceptions about music, whether positive or negative, and how they needed to challenge previous assumptions about teaching and learning.

## INSIGHTS UNCOVERED

Conle (1996) described resonance as an important phenomenon within preservice teacher inquiry when she shared, “It is commonplace to use the term *resonance* for an echoing or resounding process in which something is produced in reaction and in response to an event” (p. 299). She discussed how stories reverberate within us, calling forth another story in an echo-like fashion. This involves complex, metaphorical relations that connect many aspects of a story.

As the teacher candidates engaged in the body mapping activity, conversation, and subsequent written reflection, their stories emerged in an echo-like fashion. Examples of this were evident when teacher candidates shared family or school music experiences. Such conversations occurred when one person offered insight on one of these topics, which prompted another to share a personal experience related to that topic. This mirrors Conle’s (1996) sentiments: “One narrative element in the trigger story becomes the source of another story. The one evokes the other like an echo making us resonate with metaphorical connections, as we echo the response” (p. 305). She further explained that the emotional interaction helps to bridge differences and create similarities with one another’s experiences. As the groups worked together, creating their body maps and debriefing them, there was a sense of *emotional echo* (Conle, 1996).

This echoing process created resonance in the analysis process. In attending to the teacher candidates’ words and their visual images, I drew upon Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) and Connelly and Clandinin’s (2006) use of the three-dimensional inquiry space, expanding upon the three features that reflect an ontology of experience. The terms used to describe these are “*personal* and *social* (interaction); *past*, *present*, and *future* (continuity); combined with the notion of *place* (situation)” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 50). Through this unfolding narrative inquiry, I attended to the three-dimensional space, understanding my relationship to the inquiry as I invited our (teacher candidates’ and mine) informal and formal music experiences to shape and contextualize curriculum making in our music education class.

Thus, the resonances were categorized into the following threads: process of body mapping and musical experience, music everywhere, school influences, family, and fear. As the threads are discussed in the following sections, samples of body maps are included to provide context for the various threads discussed. These threads offer insights into how I puzzled

about my teacher candidates' storied music experiences as I lived alongside them:

1. How do teacher candidates experience music in their daily lives?
2. How do personal music experiences shape teacher candidates' perceptions of elementary music education?
3. How do visual narratives influence teacher candidates' music teacher identities?

### *Process of Body Mapping and Musical Experience*

Many of the teacher candidates commented on how the body mapping process was insightful as they began to give voice to their music experiences through the process of creating the visual art. Alia described her most inward sentiments when she indicated that she thought she initially did not have a musical story to tell. She revealed how the process made her more comfortable once she realized that the prompting questions did evoke musical experiences. She, too, did have a story. She described this when she said,

Once the music was turned on and the first question was put on the board, I suddenly became worried. I thought to myself that I am not a musically inclined individual and felt as though music was not a big or important part of my life. Yet, it wasn't before long that I realized I was wrong. (Alia, Reflection, September 16, 2009)

Others enjoyed the opportunity to tell their music stories in a way other than through text. Amy commented on this particular aspect.

I think this activity was a great opportunity for us to reflect on our past experiences and really think about what kind of music teachers we want to be. (Amy, Reflection, September 16, 2009)

As Megan explained, there was a sense that the body mapping process caused the teacher candidates to dig deeper. She articulated that,

As the questions continued to dig into my memories and my associations with music, I began to connect where I came from with the quality and quantity of music I had encountered. These aspects would, in turn, directly affect my teaching style and ability to teach in all areas. (Megan, Reflection, September 16, 2009)

Teacher candidates had to inquire into their experiences in new ways. Following the body mapping, teacher candidates began to echo sentiments that they had not really consciously pondered such as how their own

informal and formal experiences affected their perceptions about music teaching. Particularly, they had not thought about or storied how their experiences as listeners and daily consumers of music could influence their attitudes toward teaching music. Furthermore, it was intriguing that this type of exercise had enough impact that teacher candidates such as Connor and Megan began to see how they could utilize a modified example of this instructional strategy to understand student experiences within their future classrooms. This was evident when Connor wrote,

Overall, I have truly enjoyed this activity as it gave me the opportunity to try and better understand the reasoning behind my deep love of music and to reflect on how this can relate and inform my future practice as a potential music teacher. (Connor, Reflection, September 16, 2009)

Similarly, Megan explained how she wanted to integrate this practice into her future teaching:

I truly believe that music inspires creativity and I will adapt this reflective project into my own classroom. (Megan, Reflection, September 16, 2009)

### *Music Everywhere*

Through beginning to understand the concept that *music is everywhere*, teacher candidates thoughtfully began to articulate that which was most difficult to put into words, how music connects with each and every person individually, on a very personal level. This was apparent in Andrea's explanation of her emotional connection with music when she said, "I know of nothing else that can have this sort of influence over me." She explained,

Music has the ability to evoke a wide range of feeling and emotions within me. It also has the amazing ability to heighten and intensify whatever feeling I am experiencing at the time. I know of nothing else that can have this sort of influence over me. (Andrea, Reflection, September 16, 2009)

Through sharing musical interests from artists to genres to daily routines involving music, a transparency began to emerge. Teacher candidates began to speak of a deep connection that they felt with music. Sarah and Deidre both spoke of this.

In my life, music has always soothed me, especially while I was growing up, it seemed when nobody understood me, there were always songs that expressed what was going on inside of me. (Sarah, Reflection, October 28, 2009)

The influence of music in my life is undeniable. (Deidre, Reflection, September 16, 2009)

Teacher candidates also began to share the positioning of *place* in relation to their musical experiences. When discussing place as part of the three-dimensional inquiry space, Clandinin, Pushor, and Orr (2007) noted that there are often sequences of places in which events occur. When talking of her daily routine, Kelly explained the relevance of place in her daily music experiences:

Since doing the body image I have begun to notice how much music is really involved in daily life. From my alarm clock in the morning, to the drive home at night, music is so much a part of my daily life. I am also more excited to learn about music. I have to admit that I was not fully looking forward to this class and was unsure of what to expect, but I am now looking forward to learning more about music and hope that I can have a positive effect on my future students' musical experiences. (Kelly, Reflection, September, 2009)

Those who came in sharing that they had *no musical background* began to realize that perhaps they needed to name and deconstruct what musical background meant to them. It was through this process that teacher candidates started to adjust their perceptions and see how their previous knowing of music and the naming of that knowledge influenced what they thought was required to teach the subject. In such instances, teacher candidates began to identify that music is everywhere and they could utilize their narrative personal experiences as a means of musical knowledge to inform their future teaching.

### *Family*

The family influences were overwhelmingly positive as the connection with family members jumped off the pages of the body maps and the written reflections. Scott described his musical memories growing up when he proudly shared,

I grew up in a very musical family; my cousins, aunts and uncles all played instruments so often, during Christmas holidays, they would plan a big music festival in my grandparents' basement. (Scott, Reflection, January 20, 2010)

Kayla, too, spoke about how a love of music was instilled in her to become a "well-rounded individual." She further explained,

From as far back as I can remember, my life has always been filled with music. A lot of this is a result of my parents who have always been strong believers that you need some kind of music training in order to become a well-rounded individual. (Kayla, Reflection, October 28, 2009)

The majority of teacher candidates shared that they were first introduced to music through their family engagement in either cultural or religious traditions, or merely by making music informally at home or through private lessons. Many, including Jessica and Ross, spoke of these influences:

As a fetus, my mother sang to my twin sister and I because she loved to sing. From as young as I can remember, I have been involved in music. I sang in the Sunday school programs, sang hymns in church, sang Christmas Carols at Christmas and sang songs with my grandma as she played music whenever I visited. (Jessica, Reflection, January 20, 2010)

At an early age, I was exposed to music at church and home. My mom would sing songs that she learned when she was younger to my siblings and me. (Ross, Reflection, October 28, 2009)

When teacher candidates drew or spoke about who influenced their musical interests, a number spoke of a specific grand/parental influence, either a memory with their mother or father or grandparents (Jessica, Ross, and Scott). Deidre specifically recalled a strong childhood memory:

As a child I remember standing in front of the large mirror attached to my Dad's record player, singing and dancing for hours. With my sister and friends we put together entire shows, charging our families admission to come and watch in our living room. (Deidre, Reflection, September 16, 2009)

As the influence of musical genres became more apparent as they entered the intermediate years of schooling, greater discussion evolved about sibling influences and interests of specific genres. Jesse spoke distinctly about how his brother influenced his musical tastes. He shared,

My brother took me to Woolco when I was in grade 6 and I purchased my first ever album with my own money – The Electric Orchestra's New World Record. This began my love of record albums, which my brother greatly influenced, showing me how to take care of them with inner and outer sleeves, and using a professional record cleaner before playing them. (Jesse, Reflection, October 28, 2009)

However, it was not until completing the body mapping and the writing that teacher candidates began to see that their informal family experiences of music shaped their beliefs about the place of music in the world and the place of music in their future students' lives. In this light, their experiences began to have a past, present, and future, as the *social* interactions of family formed each teacher candidate's individual context within the three-dimensional inquiry space.



*School Influences*

The topic of school music certainly became apparent in the body mapping and subsequent oral and written reflection. In all instances, there was a blend of positive and negative comments that evolved surrounding school music. In Lara's body map (Fig. 4), she drew multiple happy faces to indicate her childhood memories of singing in choir. She drew a picture of herself standing next to a flip chart and explained that she was asked to play the *teacher role* back in grade 6, leading her class in music while her teacher was away for five weeks. She described this as a, "quintessential turning part in my life, I began to teach, something I have wanted to do since then" (Lara, Reflection, January 20, 2010). On her shirt, Donna (Fig. 5) recalled all the music theory symbols that she remembered learning in school. She proudly shared this musical knowledge as she responded to the question I posed: What do you know about music? Both Andrea and Connor also spoke of favorable schools experiences.

Some of my fondest childhood music memories are when I was involved in the primary and junior choirs. I remember being particularly excited when I was chosen to sing a solo for a grade six concert. (Andrea, Reflection, September 16, 2009)



Fig. 4. Lara at School.



Fig. 5. Donna's School Memories.

I was fortunate enough to have an extremely supportive and talented team of music teachers at the high school I attended. (Connor, Reflection, September 16, 2009)

Whereas some noted these favorable experiences of school music, others had specific negative examples that colored their identities of their own musicianship and what they had to offer as future educators. As Sophia storied her pain, she spoke specifically of the memories that have lasted from her experience in grade 8.

I will always remember the shame and embarrassment I felt while performing a song as a requirement for a culminating activity in grade 8 ... Through looking at my images on my musical story I now believe that my elementary school music classes were somehow set up in a way that lead me to believe I am not good at music. (Sophia, Reflection, January 20, 2010)

Many spoke of specific teachers that influenced their perceptions; interestingly, a number did not recall specific music content being taught, but they certainly could articulately describe the type of teacher they had and how that teacher made them feel as students. These insights brought to the forefront the powerful memory influence that a teacher has by the way

he or she interacts with students. Abbie recollected her elementary experiences:

I am both scared and excited to teach music because I feel as though during my elementary school years music was not all that fun. (Abbie, Reflection, October 28, 2009)

Hannah, too, reminisced about what type of teacher she recalled, which caused her to reflect upon her vision of herself as a future teacher when she said,

I want to be the kind of teacher I never had; one who is willing to look at each student and see the musician in them, and encourage them to embrace that musician, in whichever form they choose. (Hannah, Reflection, January 20, 2010)

Such commentary brought out conversation in the oral group reflection of how their future students might see them as teachers. Many highlighted that their negative school experiences had enough impact that they began to own a story of music fear and an inept ability to teach it.

### *Fear*

Stories of fear seemed to echo through all of the body mapping experiences and oral and written reflection. On her body map, Sophia (Fig. 6) wrote “FEARLESS” in uppercase letters and described how she wanted to create a safe space in her future classroom for students to enjoy music-making. She described,

As a future educator I will pride myself on creating a safe space within my class, while attempting to ensure that no student feels pressured to do something against their will. (Sophia, Reflection, January 20, 2010)

Scott (Fig. 7), wrote on his body map, “I just hope I can pull it off.” He explained how, “I know that I will not be the world’s greatest music teacher” (Scott, Reflection, October 28, 2009), but he hoped that with additional practice, he would be able to overcome some of his fear and anxiety about music teaching. Christine and Jesse specifically spoke of their anxiety toward teaching music when they revealed:

Teaching music scares me now but I want to integrate music into most subjects. (Christine, Reflection, September 16, 2009)

Although I love music, I admit I am confused and nervous concerning how to teach it. I just hope my appreciation and own enthusiasm will encourage any future students I teach to love music also. (Jesse, Reflection, October 29, 2009)



Fig. 6. Sophia's Fear.

Jessica realized that teaching music also required more than music experience. She spoke about this shift in her thinking when she had the opportunity to teach music during her teaching placement.

I had the opportunity to assist my associate [mentor teacher] with teaching primary music to six classes from grades one to three. I realized that despite all the music experience I have, teaching music is a whole new ball game! (Jessica, Reflection, January 20, 2010)

Not only did I see fear in the eyes and body language of teacher candidates as they created their body maps, but I began to hear and see it in the words that teacher candidates articulated as they storied their experiences. Words such as confused, nervous, scares me, and concerned were all utilized. Melissa indicated that she secretly hoped that she might not have to teach music when she said,

I am very nervous at the thought of having to teach music. I have always had such quality instruction in this area I am very concerned I won't be able to teach it to the quality I experienced. I often hope that I will be placed in a school where I am not



Fig. 7. Scott's Fear.

required to teach this subject, but I know I cannot expect this. (Melissa, Reflection, January 20, 2010)

As a teacher educator, when I heard and saw the written comments regarding fear and anxiety, I was compelled to think about the importance of constructing my music methodology courses in ways which teacher candidates were invited to reshape their fear into joy for teaching. I was continually reminded of the importance of inviting teacher candidates into such a space whereby they could voice their personal stories. In doing so, they could inquire into their own stories that would offer them the opportunity to see how their stories influenced their developing music teaching practices.

Through the body mapping exercise, teacher candidates did begin to give voice to their experiences as they drew and talked about painful experiences that shaped a story of fear in their lives about music. They shared what type of teacher they would like to be and what they have learned from negative experiences. For some, the fear became interrupted when they began to acknowledge their own experiences and they saw that music teaching did not

need to be *the way they were taught*. They began to imagine future possibilities for what being a music educator might mean. They began to see that if music had such a central part in their daily worlds, they could embrace those ways of knowing music to inform their teaching experiences.

## A TEACHER EDUCATOR LOOKING FORWARD

Through drawing and narrating their personal music experiences, teacher candidates began to see how their music experiences in relation, and over time, were shaping their perceptions about music, and how they deconstructed previous assumptions about music teaching and learning. In this light, their narrative experiences became resonant (Stauffer & Barrett, 2009).

While I initially was concerned about the time the body mapping would take out of my already tightly crammed 15 hours of elementary methodology, I now realize that engaging in this visual and written narrative process with teacher candidates has been foundational to changing my practice, enabling me to attend to the personal experiences of my teacher candidates. As this narrative understanding was built into my first class, it began to set the stage for the following classes in music education. Thinking about how the narratives of teacher candidates shaped my curriculum making, I continue to reflect upon the question: How does attending to personal music narratives through body mapping allow for curriculum making in music teacher education?

Through this process, my practice has continued to change as I have come to the awareness that the 15-hour music methodology course ought to increasingly be about the teacher candidates' musical knowledge and desires, their experiences and experiential knowledge of music and music education (grounded in their own lived experiences), and less about me, as the teacher educator, with my agenda of what I think they might *need to know*. As the teacher educator, I continued to maneuver along this tight wire in the subsequent five classes following the body mapping. It is here that I contemplated ways for curriculum making that invited the teacher candidates to continue to give voice to their understandings of music content and pedagogy as well as articulate what they did not know and what they felt they needed to know to be successful music educators.

In particular, one powerful strategy that emerged was by having the teacher candidates, in relationship with one another, work in small groups to present readings, through active music-making, which reflected

the course content. During this process, I stepped back, as they worked through the content, divulging to one another areas they were or were not comfortable with, figuring out strategies to creatively present and involve their peers in musical instruction. For some, this was a big challenge as it moved them out of their comfort zones. During their presentations, however, they worked in relation with one another, as I, too, worked alongside them to demonstrate various pedagogical aspects and music instructional strategies as I began to understand their lived experiences in music. In these moments, their musical narratives and experiences often continued to come forth, as they did in the body mapping exercise. In these instances, together, we were reminded that their own narratives were constantly shaping their practice. Importantly, it was also here they began to see how they might envision themselves working in relation with their future students. As teacher candidates began to understand their previous music successes and failures, they started to deconstruct experience and transferred that knowledge toward what type of music educator they may or may not wish to become.

It became clear that working narratively with teacher candidates has developed into a vital form of shaping teacher identity in my course. As the teacher educator, I am passionate about assisting teacher candidates to realize they do have prior experiences that matter and are of importance to teaching. By commencing with their personal lived music experiences, they “uncover teacher as potential maker or breaker of musical experience, and they are challenged to envision solutions for their own teaching and ... begin to consider themselves in the role of classroom music educator” (Adler, *in press*, p. 15).

Through my work alongside teacher candidates, I continue to be encouraged, empowered, and excited about leading them toward unpacking their music experiences in ways so that they can begin to see threads through their experiences and subsequently conceptualize how these are integral to informing their teaching practice. It is worthwhile to consider the possibilities that such relational work may have for shaping teacher identity within the broader field of teacher education. Accordingly, this process is constantly enlightening my practice as a teacher educator, which in itself speaks to the value of why I believe continued narrative inquiry in music teacher education is of necessity. Inquiring narratively into my curriculum making as a teacher educator contributes to the discourse in music education and offers possibilities for developing new understandings in music education, music teacher education, teacher identity, and the field of teacher education. I see body mapping as a curricular possibility to enhance

teacher candidates' narrative understandings of their music experiences and the potential of these narrative understandings to shape their own teaching and learning processes as music educators.

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**PART IV**  
**A CURRICULUM OF LIVES IN**  
**TEACHER EDUCATION**



# STORIED WAYS OF APPROACHING DIVERSITY: RECONCEPTUALIZING A BLENDED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT IN A MULTICULTURAL TEACHER EDUCATION COURSE

Ramona Maile Cutri

## ABSTRACT

*Purpose – This narrative inquiry explores one teacher educator’s curriculum making process (Connelly & Clandinin, 1992) to elicit teacher candidates’ emotional and analytic engagement with multicultural education.*

*Approach – Three semesters of fieldnotes, from one teacher educator’s planning and execution of a blended learning format multicultural teacher education course, with face-to-face classes and asynchronous instruction through technology, document her struggles to create a blended learning curriculum model that explicitly addresses ways to impact teacher candidates’ dispositions toward multicultural issues.*

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*Findings – The inquiry raises hopeful questions about the possibilities of using stories and technology in a multicultural teacher education blended learning delivery setting. Additionally, the inquiry highlights fruitful tensions involved in making space for the stories of teacher candidates from both nondominant and dominant culture to become part of the curriculum of the class.*

*Research implications – Narrative inquiry’s application as an empirical research method in the field of multicultural education is demonstrated. Highlighted particularly is the capacity in narrative inquiry methods to document places of tension and inclusion in multicultural teacher education.*

*Value – Awareness of the potential of storied ways of approaching diversity and the benefits of negotiating the tensions involved are of value to teacher educators exploring curriculum making in a blended learning format. Blended learning is reconceptualized beyond the blending of face-to-face and technologically mediated class sessions to include a notion of blending planned and lived curriculum and public and private learning opportunities.*

**keywords:** narrative inquiry; multicultural education; blended learning; teacher education; technology; nondominant and dominant cultures.

## INTRODUCTION

This is the story of my curriculum making (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992) efforts to use technology to help elicit teacher candidates’ emotional and analytic engagement with multicultural issues. Multicultural education comes in many varieties (Banks & Banks, 1995; Nieto, 1995). In my work as a teacher educator committed to principles of social justice, I embrace an approach to multicultural education that focuses on the inequitable distribution of power and access to knowledge in schools and society. This approach is known in the literature as transformative multicultural education. The goals of transformative multicultural education include preparing people to examine their own cultural identities, critique the institutional and personal inequalities embedded in current schooling and societal practices, work toward social justice, and acknowledge the moral dimensions of such work (Gorksi, 2001; Banks, 1996; Giroux & McLaren, 1994; Goodlad, Soder, & Sirotnik, 1990).

Multicultural education as I conceptualize it in my curriculum making is not concerned with getting teacher candidates to merely consider the “obligations of diversity” such as being nice to each other or appreciating each other (Benn Michaels, 2006, p. 17). Rather, I am concerned with ways to engage my teacher candidates emotionally and analytically with the “obligation of equality” (Benn Michaels, 2006, p. 17) that focuses on the moral dimensions of everyone having equitable access to power and knowledge in schools and society.

My curriculum making occurs in the context of a U.S. based teacher education program in which many teacher candidates are from White, English speaking, middle class, Christian cultural backgrounds. In my courses, I seek to conceptualize these teacher candidates from the dominant culture in the United States as capable learners of transformative multicultural education (Lowenstein, 2009). The same is true regarding the teacher candidates who come from nondominant cultural backgrounds. The distinctions of dominant culture and nondominant culture when describing different groups of people with disparate access to power and knowledge in schools and society help highlight the inequalities that exist in the diverse U.S. society. However, labels describing people do not convey their lived experiences. Thus, in my curriculum making, I seek storied ways of approaching diversity and thereby engaging my teacher candidates emotionally and analytically. My curriculum making efforts are best introduced through a series of vignettes describing why I embarked upon this venture.

Vignette #1:

My chair asked me to turn my traditional multicultural education course into a blended learning course that would meet in both face-to-face class sessions and electronic class sessions when the students worked independently and asynchronously. The university wanted to develop more of these types of courses for reasons as diverse as not having to build more parking lots and for capitalizing on Internet resources. I, of course, said yes. Later, in a faculty meeting, my chair mentioned how great it was I had said yes rather than say something like “Go jump in a lake.” I laughed inside because my chair had no idea what he represents to me. He is a White man in a position of authority – I would die before I said no to him. Inside, I was resistant to the blended learning format for several reasons. First, I believe that one of the primary responsibilities of a teacher educator is to model theoretically grounded pedagogy for her students. Since most of the teacher candidates I teach will work in traditional face-to-face classrooms, I need to model this type of pedagogy for them in a face-to-face classroom. Second, I believe that one of my strengths as a teacher educator is my ability to humanize issues of multicultural education and guide my students through the often difficult process of confronting issues such as racism and privilege (Marx, 2006). I am a woman of mixed ethnicities, including Caucasian, from a poverty background. I wondered how, if I wasn’t face-to-face with my

students, I could use my abilities to scaffold my students into the curriculum of transformative multicultural education.

Vignette #2:

I got this idea in my head that watching a short video clip of an English language learner and her mom in their home talking about their daily lives could be a really powerful experience for my teacher candidates who are mostly White, middle class women. At this time, there were growing anti-immigrant sentiments in my state and the country that were infused with much emotion and that, in my opinion, sought to dehumanize nondominant culture people. I realized that merely discussing the pros and cons of immigration in a lecture was no match for the emotionally charged debate raging around me. I wanted to touch my teacher candidates' hearts and get them to consider multicultural issues from a place of compassion. This was around the same time that my department chair asked me to create the blended learning course, so the whole idea of learning objects beyond "readings" was really opening up to me and getting me excited.<sup>1</sup> I had seen that textbook readings just become homework versus something students interact with, and then share with their friends. I had also seen that when my students found an article, video, blogpost, etc. – a learning object – about a current event or topic they thought was interesting, they'd not only forward it to me electronically, but share it with all of their friends. I noticed that the things they forwarded were from various sources, ranging from pop culture to academic journal articles they read in other classes. I wanted to create in my blended learning class this same type of interest, engagement, and sharing of learning objects but make them specifically related to multicultural issues such as immigration issues, poverty and homeless school-age populations, etc. This was also around the time I was jumping on the Facebook bandwagon and discovering the power of electronic social networking in this generation of college students' lives. So there I was – an expert in multicultural education with little experience with technology teaching teacher candidates who were experts in technology with often little experience with multicultural issues.

These vignettes demonstrate that education is increasingly complex as the information age and attention to diversity add new dimensions to the curriculum making process (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992). In this chapter, I first present the intentions of my narrative inquiry. Second, I discuss the characteristics of blended learning. Third, I present the theoretical perspective from which I approach multicultural education and discuss the narrative analysis tools that I employed in my inquiry. Finally, I share and analyze stories of my curriculum making.

### *Intentions of My Narrative Inquiry*

My narrative inquiry documents the particulars of my curriculum making struggles and successes as a "digital immigrant" (Prensky, 2001) teacher educator of mixed ethnicities trying to: (1) create a curriculum to activate

students' emotional and analytic engagement with multicultural education while they are out of my classroom during asynchronous electronic class sessions and (2) structure face-to-face class sessions to encourage students to share and reflect upon their experiences. Through analyzing my own risk taking as a curriculum maker, I document how opportunities opened up for my students to recognize themselves as curriculum makers in our course. This shift for my students from being consumers of the course's multicultural education curriculum to being contributors to the course's multicultural education curriculum represents the reciprocal learning that my students and I experienced as we approached diversity in storied ways.

### *Characteristics of Blended Learning*

Blended learning environments combine face-to-face instruction with computer-mediated instruction, and such technology use is gaining popularity in teacher education (Hixon & So, 2009; Graham, 2005). However, researchers are asking if teaching through technology ever really fosters the type of emotional connections with multicultural issues necessary to positively influence teacher candidates' dispositions (Cutri & Johnson, 2010). How can professors just migrating to the digital age ever really reach out to "digital native" students (Prensky, 2001) and utilize their strengths in the curriculum?

When I began my curriculum making process, I thought that I wanted to incorporate digital stories of diversity into my blended multicultural education course because they would be effective learning objects during the class sessions when students would do their learning online rather than attend my class in person. Learning objects are self-contained, digital, web-based resources used to support learning (Beck, 2009). The focus of my curriculum is not the technology itself, but rather "how that technology can be used to bring out the very best in how teachers teach and how students learn" (Robin, 2008, p. 221). Guan (2009) explains that multimedia presentation learning objects consist of "learning material [that] is often presented with text, audio, video, and static pictures, whereby [the] same information is sometimes repeatedly presented by different media" (p. 62).

### *Theoretical Perspectives and Analytic Tools*

Transformative approaches to multicultural education attempt to ground teachers' thinking in the ethics of teaching in a pluralistic society through



the construct of social justice and promote critical self- and societal reflection (Giroux & McLaren, 1994; Banks, 1996; Vavrus, 2002). The digital stories of diversity that I share with my students are what Robin (2008) describes as “an instructional tool [in which] teachers have the option of showing previously created digital stories to their students to introduce content and capture students’ attention when presenting new ideas” (Robin, 2008, p. 222). In my blended learning course, I attempted to present the content of transformative multicultural education using technology and creating spaces for students to share and reflect upon their own stories.

I collected stories of my curriculum making successes and frustrations and stories of students’ lived experiences in my class. My reactions to the stories recorded in my original fieldnotes emerged through the process of my examination of the classroom narratives I collected. Then, I compared and contrasted the resulting text (Clandinin, Pushor, & Murray-Orr, 2007) to specific aspects of the scholarly literature on multicultural education and technology to weave my inquiry into the conversation concerning technology and multicultural education and to reveal my curriculum making process.

Even in beginning my narrative inquiry, I felt myself bumping up against dominant stories currently being lived out in multicultural teacher education. Thus, in this chapter, I utilize three modes of analysis put forth by Connelly and Clandinin (1990): burrowing, broadening, and restorying. These three modes of analysis help me make deeper meaning from my stories. Burrowing into the theoretical setting of transformative multicultural education enables me to paint the intellectual and social scene for implementing a transformative multicultural teacher education curriculum with predominately White, middle class, Christian, English speaking female students in the private religious university where I teach. Additionally, I burrow into the curriculum making process of using technology as a means of conveying stories of diversity and reflecting on them in teacher education courses. Broadening, or making public my own questions and tensions that arise in my narrative while exploring my research questions, illustrates dominant and emergent stories currently being lived out in multicultural teacher education. Restorying the narratives I have collected enables me to document my experiences living out a transformative multicultural teacher education curriculum making process in all of its concrete particulars of time, place, person, and circumstance and enables me to capture how my identity and personal practical knowledge (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995) changes. This process enables me to transform lived experience into a shared research event and thereby provide an emergent curriculum model for integrating technology into multicultural education teacher education.

## **AN ENACTMENT OF MY CURRICULUM MAKING**

In the process of enacting my curriculum model and conducting this narrative inquiry, I came to realize that my curriculum making decisions were more complex and personal than I first realized. The following excerpt from my notes demonstrates the ways in which my curriculum making efforts were enacted:

Heidi is a White, English speaking girl in her early 20s from a beach town in Southern California. She shared in whole class discussion how where she is from she often goes running, and usually the Mexican workers whistle at her when she runs by. She explained that this drives her crazy – she does not like it. But then one day she realized what those Mexican workers were doing outside near the street where she runs. The Mexican workers were working – they were the gardeners, the guys working construction, etc. This realization explained to her why the men were always by the streets where she runs. They are always outside working. This realization changed a bit the way that she thinks of those men. Yes, she still doesn't like them whistling at her, but she said that she realized that the men are not just hanging out on the streets waiting for her to pass by. She told the class that the Mexican men are out there because they are working hard.

This realization Heidi shared in class discussion happened before she ever came to my required multicultural teacher education class. However, her telling of it at that point during our class discussion was tied directly to the lecture about the myth of meritocracy and students' opinions of documented and undocumented workers. The students had previously watched, listen to, and read various learning objects about documented and undocumented workers in the United States during their asynchronous electronic class session and their homework assignment. The learning objects included items such as (1) a video of a young Latina and her mother in their home talking about their daily lives and aspirations; (2) current event newspaper articles and news video clips about immigration issues; (3) an academic article titled *Testimonios de Immigrantes: Students Educating Future Teachers* (González, Plata, Garcia, Torres, & Urrieta, 2003); and (4) statements from church authorities urging compassion toward immigrants. The teacher education program in my narrative inquiry is located at a university that is affiliated with the teacher candidates' and my own religion thus making the link between spiritual beliefs and multicultural education natural, relevant, and appropriate (Cutri, 2009). These learning objects provided the context for and brought to life the social theoretical terms the students acquired through lecture and reading. A sample of social scientific terms that Heidi and her classmates had learned by the time that Heidi shared her story in class included: deficit theory (Valencia, 1997); passive racism (Tatum, 1999);

institutional racism; meritocracy; and the myth of meritocracy (McNamee & Miller, 2004). Heidi's comment illustrates the tensions between stories of her experiences with people she calls Mexican workers and the curriculum she is experiencing in our multicultural education course.

## THE PARTICULARS OF PLACE

Heidi's description as a White, middle class, English-speaking, Christian woman in her early 20s matches the demographic description of the majority of teacher candidates in the United States who usually have little experience with the topics of transformative multicultural education (Ladson-Billings, 2005; Slater, 2008). Like most pre-service teachers, Heidi and the students in my classes expect to learn strategies and activities to use with diverse students rather than engage in critical reflectivity about issues of culture (Gay & Kirkland, 2003).

The majority of teachers in the United States continue to come from White, middle class, English-speaking, Christian backgrounds (Ladson-Billings, 2005; Slater, 2008). The demographics of teachers contrast sharply with the demographics of today's students. English language learners (ELLs) are the fastest growing group of public school students, a group expected to keep growing with increased density across the United States (NCELA, 2008). My university is responding to the need for more teachers to be qualified to teach ELLs in the setting of their mainstream classroom by providing the course *The Foundations of Teaching English Language Learners* as an allowable substitute for the required multicultural education course within the teacher education program. It was this course that I was charged to adapt to a blended learning format.

The majority of my students are what Prensky (2001) defines as digital natives or people who grew up native speakers of the digital language of the Internet and social networking. Like any advocate of culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995), I wanted to build on students' prior knowledge and interests and connect those to the content to be taught. I recognized that a blended learning course format presented an opportunity to incorporate my digital native students' inclination toward technology, social networking, and pop culture into my curriculum and pedagogy.

I knew the power of story and the power of pop culture and wanted to put together the powers of story with the lure of pop culture as part of the curriculum making in my blended learning curriculum. That is how I was drawn to multimedia stories and creating accompanying learning activities

that center on the use of social networking technology. Yet, I was still concerned that the learning experiences mediated by technology would not provide the same emotional engagement with multicultural issues that I could provide in a face-to-face class session.

Designing the course, I thought carefully about what learning objects might touch the students' emotions, build on their existing faith, and challenge their thinking in the asynchronous electronic sessions and prompt their sharing of stories during face-to-face class sessions. I settled in on learning objects consisting of text, audio, and video from sources including academic, religious, and pop culture.

When educating for transformative multicultural education, it is not enough to ask teachers to engage in this type of work as merely concerned professionals, or even as politically energized citizens (Cutri, 2009). Transformative multicultural teacher education is best accomplished if teachers are allowed and encouraged to use their intellect, emotion, body, and spirit as ways of knowing, teaching, and learning (Rendon, 2000). Tisdell (2006) asserts that spirituality needs to be considered a component of a person's cultural identity along with their race, class, gender, etc. Though spirituality cannot be reduced to merely a socially constructed item, a person's spiritual beliefs do contribute to their cultural identity and position in society – two important components of transformative multicultural education. For these reasons, in my curriculum making, I encourage my students to use their intellect, emotion, body, and spirit in their approach to the issues. The stories my students tell in class can be windows into their engagement of their private beliefs with the public curriculum of transformative multicultural education.

## **BROADENING THE PERSONAL TO THE PROFESSIONAL**

Connelly and Clandinin (1990) describe broadening as an analytic mode that makes public one's own questions and tensions that arise in a narrative inquiry. Heidi's story focuses on her realization that the men she calls Mexican workers are indeed men who work hard at physically demanding jobs located outside. I first use Heidi's story to explore my own anxieties and realizations in my curriculum making experiences as a teacher educator of mixed ethnicities teaching a transformative multicultural teacher education class. Second, Heidi's narrative helps me explore tensions and gaps in the

professional literature about transformative multicultural teacher education. These explorations constitute an analysis of Heidi's narrative in terms of the personal public dimension – one of the dimensions of a narrative inquiry space (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Clandinin, Pushor, & Murry-Orr, 2007).

When Heidi first started to tell her story to the class in whole group discussion, I immediately thought to myself, “Oh no, where is this going?” I stress to my students that participation is worth 20% of their grade and their job is not to agree with my opinions but to carefully engage with the learning objects and critically think through the issues and their own opinions. With that as the established norm of my class, I sat back and listened to Heidi's story. However, I am continually concerned about possibly needing to repair the message being sent to my students by their peers without denying the experience of the person sharing. I tried to listen to her story while simultaneously considering how it might be interpreted by her peers.

Listening for how to interpret things professionally and listening for how I interpret them personally is a balancing act (Cutri, Manning, & Chun, 2010). My mom was White and my dad looked Mexican (he was half Puerto Rican and half Korean). He could have easily and often been out on streets similar to those of the Mexican workers in Heidi's story, but he would not have been doing the manual labor jobs that they were doing. He was a drug dealer for most of my life, and my mom was addicted to drugs for most of my youth. He might not have whistled at Heidi running by, but he would have been there near the street to sell drugs. As Heidi ran by, she may have thought he was whistling at her with the other workers. We had plenty of close family friends who were Mexican workers – one of whom went to jail for a crime my dad committed. In fact, this man's wife and children came to live with us for the length of the jail sentence.

I share my background with my students briefly at the beginning of class, but do not readily bring it up throughout the semester. Yet the lived narrative of my childhood always runs through my own head. I find myself working to balance the shame, anger and other emotions that pop into my heart and head when students talk about people from nondominant cultures in ways that label them or make assumptions about them. Consciously acknowledging my emotions and letting them inform my professional curriculum making decisions helped me to listen to Heidi's story for *her* message – that the Mexican workers' continuous hard work proved that meritocracy is a myth, not a reality, for most people. This was not the message I originally expected from Heidi's story. I had been mentally

preparing to juggle acceptance of Heidi's contribution with a need to repair any damage caused by the story I expected her to tell. However, Heidi's message turned out to be a crucial message to the class since it reinforced the face-to-face lecture and electronic learning objects on the myth of meritocracy and the honor of much of the work that undocumented people do in the United States. My class would have missed out on this "teaching moment" if, in my fear of what I thought the message of Heidi's story was going to be, I had stopped her from telling her story.

As in this situation with Heidi, my sensitivity toward being of mixed ethnicities and lower socioeconomic class can simultaneously cloud and clarify my experiences. I perceived myself as being in a lower social position with regard to Heidi's narrative because I identified my dad and family friends with the Mexican workers of her story. Yet, in the present classroom space, I was actually the person in power (the professor) struggling to maintain my critical analytic awareness of power relations and structures. In my classes, I am committed to giving my students voice and honoring their experiences in this storied way because part of my curriculum is to teach them how to honor the experiences of their future students. Experiences like this one with Heidi challenge me to listen to the full extent and message of students' stories and recognize them as vital components of the curriculum of the class.

## **BURROWING FOR DEEPER UNDERSTANDING**

### *Recognizing White Teacher Candidates as Learners*

Lowenstein (2009) asserts that, often, White teacher candidates are considered empty vessels when it comes to learning the curriculum of multicultural education. She asks that we recognize that our White students bring personal experiences of culture into the classroom; that they are not culturally neutral. Culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995) urges teachers to find productive ways to use students' personal experiences to forward their learning. If this is to be, then multicultural teacher education classes must provide space for students to share their stories. Heidi's story illustrates that White teacher candidates can analyze their previous experiences in ways that forward insights into lives of people in different circumstances than their own. However, it should be noted that the type of reflectivity exhibited in Heidi's recounting of her story is greatly fostered through the explicit teaching of social scientific concepts and terms,

such as the myth of meritocracy (McNamee & Miller, 2004). Equipping teacher candidates with such analytic tools enables them to move from the personal experience of their stories to casting their story in larger dialogues involving issues such as race, equity, class, etc. and using them as a springboard for learning.

The questions of what and how I teach my teacher candidates arise in the specific situations in which we encounter each other (Schwab, 1969, 1973). Olson and Craig (2001) assert that it is critical to “intentionally account for how teachers filter their professional development experiences through their personal practical knowledge expressed in community” (p. 667). Given the specific particulars of our teaching and learning situation, I constantly ask myself how the teacher candidates will filter the multicultural education curriculum through their beliefs. Rather, than silence or ignore exploration of this sometimes tension laden space, I organize specific activities in class and as homework that are designed to engage my students’ spiritual beliefs and personal political opinions so that we can first collectively identify the filters through which they are experiencing the class, and second, when needed, critique and expand their filters. If I silence or ignore these filters rather than engage them, I may overlook vital opportunities to help teacher candidates develop strategies and beliefs that support them in teaching their future diverse students.

Three learning activities set the stage for the story Heidi told during a face-to-face session in our fifth class. The first learning activity involved the students watching a video clip from the Broadway musical “Avenue Q” (McCullum et al., 2003) in which puppets sing the song “Everyone is a Little Bit Racist.” After viewing the video, my students were asked to post the video to their Facebook status or other social networking site. Next, the students wrote an analysis of their friends’ responses to the video. In their written analysis of the comments they received, they were to use social scientific terms learned in class to describe how comfortable or not their friends were with talking about race. The second learning activity was a spiritual beliefs reflection. I instructed my students to identify three spiritual beliefs they hold and, in a written reflection, relate those beliefs specifically to their future work with diverse students.<sup>2</sup> The third learning activity preceding Heidi’s comment was a sticky note activity. I distributed three Post-It sticky notes to each student. I then instructed them to anonymously write the first word or image that popped into their head when I wrote the following groups of people on the board: refugees, pioneers, and undocumented workers. I wrote the term describing each group of people one at a time to ensure that students wrote their response to that individual

group as it was named. They put their anonymous responses up on the whiteboard under each of the different groups of people. Then, as a class we read each sticky note response and created categories describing the different responses under each group of people. The word or characteristic of “lazy” appeared under the category of undocumented worker. Heidi’s telling of her story about the Mexican workers as hard working, after we did the sticky note activity, was a direct contradiction of this stereotype.

It is interesting to note that Heidi told her story in class two periods after the teacher candidates did the sticky note activity in response to our discussion of the social scientific term, “the myth of meritocracy.” This suggests that perhaps Heidi’s insights, initiated in her lived experience, were refined over the course of the class sessions and culminated in her telling her story in class.

## **SITUATING STORIES IN THE PRESENT, PAST, AND FUTURE**

Maillet, another student of mine, is in a different class section than Heidi. Maillet, from Mexico, is the only student of color in her section of my course. I turn to her story to explore the rich resources that diverse teacher candidates contribute as curriculum makers. [Quiocho and Rios \(2000\)](#) state:

We believe that ethnic minority teachers bring sociocultural experiences that, in the main, make them more aware of the elements of racism embedded within schooling, more willing to name them, and more willing to enact a socially just agenda for society (generally) and schooling (specifically). (p. 487)

From my notes:

We had been talking about the tension between having compassion for undocumented workers and reckoning such compassion with the details of *Are they breaking the law? What about taxes?*, etc. etc. Maillet spoke up and shared that many people in her family are here in this country illegally. She explained that this was because some got bumped out of the lottery for applying for citizenship. Maillet told the story of her sister who had gotten bumped out of the lottery and is now here illegally because she was not naturalized with the rest of the family. Maillet explained that her sister has a two year old son who was born here, and thus is a citizen. This little boy has leukemia. Maillet told how her sister lives in fear that she will get deported and have to face the choice of taking her young sick son back to Mexico with her and leaving all of his medical care here in this country, or leaving her son with her extended family and returning without him. Maillet ended her story with a question, “This situation shouldn’t be allowed to exist – what is being done about situations like these?”



Mailet's sharing of her sister's story illustrated points I wanted to make in my face-to-face lecture and to draw from the electronic learning objects the students experienced as homework assignments. Specifically, I wanted the students to consider the difficult process of working out compassion in the reality of politics, economics, and policies. I felt it would be more educative to start working out this tough process in the safety of our teacher education class rather than when they are in the schools with students and their families.

Connelly and Clandinin (1988) assert that "curriculum is something experienced in situations" (p. 6). Mailet experienced the curriculum in the situation of her own family. The other students experienced the curriculum in the situation of having a classmate share her first hand experience with them. Mailet's lived experiences became the curriculum of our class that day and forwarded the teacher candidates' analytical and emotional engagement with the difficult process of working out compassion in the reality of politics and policies regarding documented and undocumented people in the United States. This story-telling event is indicative of the power of narrative as lived and told experience – the closest one can come to feeling another's experience is through engaging in their story.

In my fieldnotes, I recorded the following:

What was the response from other class members to Mailet's story? Hum, this is a good question. They were in awe of the story – in the sense that this was a lived reality of someone in their class. They expressed this awe in sort of a quiet way – they did not ask her follow-up questions at least in our whole class discussion. I was so into talking about the policy implications of Mailet's final question that perhaps I did not give the class members an opportunity to respond to Mailet's story. Also, I wanted to protect Mailet and make sure that no one said anything inappropriate to her.

Similar to my response to Heidi's story in which I could mostly relate with the Mexican workers in her story, I related mostly to Mailet's story from Mailet's position. I have had people in my family who have been "illegal," not because of immigration status but because of breaking the law by dealing drugs. I transposed my shame and embarrassment about my own family members onto Mailet's experiences. Because I wanted to protect her from her classmates' potential responses to her story, I steered the class discussion away from Mailet's personal story into the realm of policy implications. Ironically, because of my lived experiences leading to my concern for Mailet, I may have limited an experience my class could have had in deeply engaging through shared experience with exactly the topic I wanted students to negotiate.

I realize now that Mailet may not have felt any shame or embarrassment about her sister's situation, but I was not experiencing Mailet's story from her perspective, I was experiencing it from my own. Connelly and Clandinin (1988) state, "Every classroom situation grows out of some preceding classroom situation" (p. 7). They elaborate on the historical nature of curriculum as experience:

All situations are historical ... [I]t is also true that what happened yesterday, and the week before, and in fact at any stage during any one participant's life also is part of the history, for that person, in that situation. (p. 9)

My response to Mailet's story was rooted in my present as a teacher educator concerned with pointing out policy implications, and my response was simultaneously deeply rooted in my own past lived experiences as a little girl whose daddy was illegal in many regards. Rather than remaining in the residue of shame I feel about my past, I need to continually find ways to have my past inform the curriculum I am currently making with my teacher candidates without allowing it to undercut or misdirect those experiences (Cutri, Manning, & Chun, 2010).

Mailet's story and my reaction to it further illustrate another aspect of Connelly's and Clandinin's (1988) conceptualization of curriculum as experience: "Situations have a future" (p. 8). In my fieldnotes, I recorded the following:

After class, my mind was going, and I thought I need to ask Mailet if she would be willing to retell her story on video with iMovie or something so that I could share it with future classes. Her amazing first hand story shared as the only person of color in our whole class also brought me right back to my dissertation work on multicultural education curriculum enactment and my research findings that the best curricular resource in the class is the students from minority backgrounds themselves who are willing to share their experiences in the context of the class and interactions with their peers from the majority culture.

My response to Mailet's story documents how my *present* curriculum making experiences connect back to my *past* graduate research, and extend forward into my *future* curriculum planning. Connelly and Clandinin (1988) define their construct of "personal practical knowledge" as "a particular way of reconstructing the past and the intentions for the future to deal with the exigencies of a present situation" (p. 25). Mailet's story presented me with exigencies or pressing, urgent situations that called to action my past, present, and future curriculum making self.

*Negotiating Narrative Authority*

Both Heidi's and Mailet's stories illustrate how, while engaged in the progression of interacting with learning objects and participating in learning activities, they express and enact their personal practical knowledge and explore the meaning of their own knowledge through sharing their stories. [Olson and Craig \(2001\)](#) call this process gaining "narrative authority" (p. 669). They explain:

Examining the development of narrative authority can help us address the question of whose stories get listened to and which stories gain authoritative status. (p. 670)

Acknowledging and encouraging students to gain narrative authority in my multicultural education course has been an opportunity for my self-reflection. In one mid-course evaluation, a student wrote:

Often when I bring up an opinion that differs from the instructor, she will either ignore my statement completely or rephrase what I said to match what she had previously stated. I feel disrespected and not valued.

It is true that although I want my students to achieve narrative authority in my class, there are times when I morally disagree with what they say and, intentionally or not, shut down their narrative authority by asserting my own. [Olson and Craig \(2001\)](#) warn that "[e]ven when these stories are silenced, they continue to be authored and lived pre-reflectively in practice" (p. 670). When I remember the tensions I felt as Heidi and Mailet shared their stories and I lay those tensions alongside the student's mid-course evaluation, I realize I need to develop skill in making visible my own narrative authority while also letting students express theirs. Even knowing this, I continue to feel tension to protect the moral integrity of the messages expressed in my class about diverse students and their families and to develop ways to invite teacher candidates to critically examine such opinions as they develop pedagogic practices that support multicultural students.

The threat of what [Olson and Craig \(2001\)](#) label the "unreflective bases for professional practice and decision making" (p. 670) that results from silenced narrative authority is my motivation for striving harder to have opinions that conflict with mine aired in class. I fear shutting down students' inappropriate stories may create resentment that closes their minds and hearts to issues of multicultural education when the intentions of my curriculum making are to open them. The effort to achieve shared narrative authority, even when teacher educators and teacher candidates disagree on

moral grounds, is a narrative tension that I still, and probably always will, find a challenge to negotiate.

## IMPLICATIONS

My curriculum making responses to Heidi's and Mailet's stories make public "moment by moment relationships and happenings on the [curricular] landscape" of my teacher education classes (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 76). As I look back on the narrative of my curriculum making journey, my original nagging question re-surfaces in my mind in a new light. *How can I develop new ways to approach diversity issues in my blended learning format multicultural teacher education course?* Three prominent realizations have emerged for me through this narrative inquiry into my curriculum making.

I started out thinking that the "new ways" in which I was going to approach diversity in my course were through the inclusion of digital stories and pop culture learning objects that engaged the intellects and touched the hearts of my students. Indeed, I think I accomplished that. However, I realized through my narrative inquiry that the most powerful teaching tool I implemented in my course was creating curricular space for my students to tell their stories. The publically shared stories my students told were the greatest curricular resource for engaging the class intellectually and emotionally in matters of diversity. Stories such as the ones shared by Heidi and Mailet in my class – stories of their "curriculum of life" (Clandinin et al., 2006, p. 12) – became the curriculum of our whole class.

Both nondominant and dominant culture students recognized their lives as curriculum, and themselves as curriculum makers, as their stories became the curriculum of the class. This realization can inform teacher educators' practice by encouraging them to make room in their curriculum for the lived experiences of all teacher candidates to be considered curriculum. The curriculum making I have described in my narrative inquiry makes visible to other teacher educators the thoughtfulness that is needed to create space for this type of shared learning and manage the tensions that inevitably arise in these rich learning situations.

The second realization gained through my narrative inquiry illuminates my motivation behind wanting to approach issues of diversity in ways that touch my students' hearts. In my narrative inquiry, I closely examined my curricular responses to my students' stories, in particular the ones told by Heidi and Mailet. Through recognizing my deeply seated emotional

responses to their stories – responses that centered on my own past – I realized I want my students to have emotional connections and responses to diverse students precisely because I am a minority myself. Issues of poverty, illegality, discrimination, perseverance, and accomplishments in nondominant culture students' lives are not just abstract intellectual concepts for me – they were/are me. I realized that my curriculum making decisions to use narratives in my course stem from personal reasons. My personal motivation for wanting to incorporate storied ways of approaching diversity in my blended learning teacher education multicultural class illustrates that indeed curriculum grows out of a person's past, present, and future. This realization can encourage teacher educators to rigorously examine their own cultural identity and explore its influence on their teaching and curriculum making.

Third, I realized that making space for teacher candidates' stories to become part of the curriculum in the class will always position me in places of tension. In those spaces, I will have to continually negotiate competing demands. In relation to Heidi's story, I found myself in tension between creating space for students to develop narrative authority for and from their experiences and my responsibility to construct a classroom space where students' negative beliefs and preconceptions about diverse students are not confirmed but examined and critiqued. Another tension provided by my experience with Mailet centers in utilizing one student's narrative authority to challenge the beliefs of fellow students while honoring my obligations to provide an emotionally safe classroom space. Yet one more tension that became visible to me is the tension that arose as I worked to balance students' narrative authority with my own narrative authority and with the moral integrity of the course. My negotiation of these tensions awakened in me how such tensions have the potential to be sites of reciprocal learning for teacher candidates and teacher educators.

Through narrative inquiry into my experiences as a curriculum maker in teacher education, I am afforded opportunities to develop insight and skill to make a blended learning multicultural education space a space of rich curricular promise. My narrative inquiry has forced me to burrow (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990) into the course delivery format called "blended learning" which traditionally means a combination of face-to-face class sessions and asynchronous electronic class sessions (Graham, 2005). I have made new sense of the blended learning class format by "concentrat[ing] on the event" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 11) itself in my narrative inquiry. Though uncomfortable and difficult at times, I focused on the "emotional, moral, and aesthetic qualities" (Connelly & Clandinin,

1990, p. 11) of the event called my blended learning multicultural education course. In so doing, I have distilled my understanding of my efforts to approach diversity and technology in a storied way.

I began my narrative inquiry with trepidation toward using technology and blended learning in my multicultural education course. Yet, through what Connelly and Clandinin (1990) call “soft” or “gentle” inquiry, I was able to find ways to productively work with technology and blended learning to create a curricular space for learning in ways that took me beyond my conventional practices. I came to reconceptualize blended learning beyond its traditional meaning. I now reconceptualize blended learning to include two additional *blended* components. First, in my narrative inquiry, blended learning emerged as a blending of the planned curriculum of the course (the learning objects and learning activities) with the lived curriculum of the students via their stories. This blended learning manifested as an opportunity to recognize both nondominant and dominant teacher candidates as capable learners and to also recognize opportunities to blend their stories together to produce vital curricular resources in my multicultural education course. Second, I reconceptualized the blended learning format of the course as a blending of private and public learning opportunities. During the asynchronous electronic sessions, the students were able to go away and experience learning objects and think about them and talk to others. These opportunities represent a kind of private learning time for teacher candidates to digest the material. Then, when we returned to the public space of a face-to-face class session, the teacher candidates had an opportunity to participate in the public learning activities and discussions. The blended nature of private and public experiences holds rich potential for storied ways of approaching diversity and technology.

As I teach future blended learning multicultural teacher education courses, I recognize the need for more research into the delicate process of balancing teacher candidates’ narrative authority with my narrative authority and the moral integrity of the course. I approach these future narrative inquiries into such tensions with increased faith in the possibility of constructing curricular space for teacher candidates’ stories to be a collective force to examine and critique negative beliefs and prejudice toward nondominant students. I look forward to assembling a planned curriculum of the course that engages teacher candidates’ own moral imaginations and encourages them to share their lived curriculum – stories of their moral wrestling – in the private and public learning forums of my blended learning multicultural teacher education course. I invite other

teacher educators to also explore in their own curriculum making the potential of such storied ways of approaching diversity and technology.

## NOTES

1. Learning objects are the sources of information, digital resources, from which students can learn (Wiley, 2000) and are often interactive and story based.
2. For readers interested in learning more about the spiritual beliefs reflection assignment, please see Cutri (2009).

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# ATTENDING TO MILIEU: LIVING A CURRICULUM OF PARENTS ALONGSIDE TEACHER CANDIDATES

Debbie Pushor

## ABSTRACT

*Purpose – The purpose of this chapter is to define and explain a curriculum of parents, its purpose and importance as an addition to teacher education curriculum, and how the author lives out this curriculum alongside teacher candidates.*

*Approach – The chapter gives an account of the author’s narrative inquiry into the lived experiences of two teacher candidates who were engaged in a curriculum of parents.*

*Findings – The chapter highlights how the teacher candidates’ acceptance of dominant notions of parents as outsiders to the processes of schooling or as individuals to be wary or fearful of was interrupted by their experiences within a curriculum of parents. An account is given of their dis/positioning as they came to “un-know” their understandings of professional as someone with power and control and to reknow it as an act of standing together with parents; as a reflection of the “person to person.”*

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**Narrative Inquiries into Curriculum Making in Teacher Education**

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Research implications – *This initial narrative inquiry makes visible how intentionally making and living out a curriculum of parents alongside teacher candidates impacts their beliefs and assumptions about parents and the way in which they position themselves as teachers in their work with parents and families.*

Value – *The value of the chapter is that it is the first work that has detailed a curriculum of parents. The chapter shows the major contributions such a curriculum can add to teacher education programs – as it moves the curricular commonplace of milieu from a subordinated position in relation to the other commonplaces of student, teacher, and subject matter to one of coordination.*

**Keywords:** *Curriculum of parents*; curriculum-making; narrative inquiry; teacher education; curriculum commonplaces; dis/positioning; professional; milieu.

## NARRATIVE BEGINNINGS

When I reflect back to my early years as a teacher or a school principal, before becoming a teacher educator, I realize I was unawake to much of the taken-for-granted positioning of teachers and parents in relation to the school landscape. Although I warmly greeted parents and family members on the first day of school, I did not consciously invite them to linger, to stay for coffee, or to feel a welcome part of the unfolding events of our classroom or school that morning. Although I planned many family activities in which we built relationships and the students and I shared the curriculum making we were doing at school, I continued to wear my teacher suit to “Meet the Teacher” nights and parent/teacher conferences to convey my positioning as a professional. I continued to facilitate parent workshops and parenting sessions (even though I was not a parent at that time). It was not until I took my first son to kindergarten that I experienced, in personal and particular ways, the marginalized positioning of a parent in relationship to the landscape of school. I pull forward earlier writing that captured my thoughts about my experiences as a parent on Cohen’s first day of kindergarten.

In my home and in my interconnections with Cohen, my parent knowledge holds a primary place of importance. This parent knowledge has grown in depth and complexity

as my time and experience as Cohen's mom has expanded. Through our constant contact, through the shared living of our lives, I have come to know Cohen in a way that is unique to me. Wanting a place, a space, a time to share that knowing with Cohen's teacher, with those people who were now going to play a significant role in his life, was important to me that morning. What I learned as I stood outside of the school [waiting for the school doors to be opened] and outside of Cohen's classroom [as the children were welcomed and settled in the classroom], was that my position as parent was not an integral one to the "story of schooling" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995). (Pushor, 2001, p. 9)

It was this awakening, deepened by a multitude of other moments experienced at drop-off and pickup times, open houses, conferences, or in school council meetings, that caused me to puzzle over the storied plotlines of parents being lived out on school landscapes. It was this awakening that prompted the focus of my doctoral program of research, a narrative inquiry into the positioning of parents in relation to school landscapes, and my later narrative inquiries into parent engagement and parent knowledge (Pushor, 2001; Pushor & Ruitenberg, 2005; Pushor, 2008). As I lived alongside parents and educators in these inquiries, I came to understand more deeply the taken-for-grantedness of parents' positioning in schools. I began to wonder what it might take to interrupt this taken-for-grantedness. When I became a teacher educator, I began to look closely at teacher education curriculum for where and how the voice and place of parents was being reflected in undergraduate programming.

## **CURRENT TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

What I learned is that, currently, in teacher education programs in colleges and universities across Canada – and I surmise that we can generalize that beyond Canada – it is difficult to find curriculum, in the form of designated courses within a calendar of offerings, intended to invite teacher candidates to develop philosophical, theoretical, and practical underpinnings related to engaging parents in their children's teaching and learning.<sup>1</sup> Although the topic of parents may be touched on briefly in some courses,<sup>2</sup> it is a topic that is largely absent in the curriculum of teacher education. Joseph Schwab (1978) conceptualized curriculum as composed of four commonplaces: subject matter, teacher, student, and milieu. Three of the commonplaces – subject matter, teacher, and student – take up the vast majority of course content in teacher education programs. In departments of curriculum, courses focused on subject matter areas, such as mathematics and language arts, dominate the teacher education curriculum. The commonplace of

teacher is intertwined in the methodological components of these subject matter courses as well as specifically attended to in courses focusing on aspects of teaching such as instructional design and strategies. The commonplace of students is also intertwined throughout subject matter and teaching methodology courses as, for example, programming for student diversity is foregrounded or learning strategies are introduced. Students are, further, often the purposeful focus of courses such as assessment for learning. Schwab's fourth curricular commonplace, that of milieu, as it pertains to parents, family, and community (rather than school or classroom), is rare content in teacher education courses. That it is rare content is intriguing given Schwab's assertion that "[n]one of [the commonplaces] can be omitted without omitting a vital factor in educational thought and value" (p. 509). Although Schwab conceptualized the relations between the commonplaces as being one of "coordination, not superordination-subordination" (p. 509), current positioning of the curricular commonplaces in teacher education programs does not reflect such coordination. It is important for us to step back from this current reality and to ask questions about why parents are mostly absent in the curriculum of teacher education.

Writing about curriculum, Grumet (2009) stated, "All of it has been made up" (p. 25). She argued that curriculum is the way it is because someone(s) with power decided it would be so. It is a reflection of the beliefs, the knowledge, the epistemological stance of certain individuals in a particular place at a certain point in time. Grumet (2009) asserted,

At any given moment, in any classroom in any country, the curriculum that offers children important information about their world can be unraveled and questioned. All these choices that constitute knowledge and its presence in schools are generated by the social and material histories of the people who participated in them. Just to get on with the business of everyday life, however, we agree to a provisional version of the world, assuming that some of it is steady and stable .... (pp. 26–27)

In universities, too, teacher education programs offer provisional versions of the world, provisional versions of teaching and schools. Sometimes these provisional versions align with our own as teacher educators and we see a place for ourselves within the curriculum being lived and taught in our institutions. Other times, given our own lived experiences and what we have come to know and understand as a result of them, we bump up against these institutionalized versions of curriculum.

Currently living in such a "bumping up" place, I find myself questioning the subordinated positioning of milieu in institutionalized versions of teacher education curriculum and, in particular, a lack of coursework that

attends to the development of teacher candidates' beliefs and practices around working with parents. In this "bumping up" place, I find myself bringing into being a *curriculum of parents* – a curriculum that reflects my own sense of directionality, of intentionality (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) – my beliefs and values, my purposes, my vision of education, and my hopes for reform. I find myself using what I know to determine what to teach and how to teach it.

How I understand and enact a *curriculum of parents* as a teacher educator is as a "living curriculum" (Chung & Clandinin, 2010, p. 180) – one that reflects the intertwining of many lives and of many experiences in the living with the raising and the educating of children. I invite teacher candidates to understand a *curriculum of parents* as a curriculum of life (Portelli & Vibert, 2001), but one lived as a life course of action *with others*. I invite them to understand that a *curriculum of parents* therefore becomes a "curriculum of lives" (Chung & Clandinin, 2010, p. 193). In explicitly enacting a *curriculum of parents* in teacher education, I am challenging teacher candidates to reimagine what it means to be a teacher and how that might be lived out in the co-construction of curriculum with parents, children, and other family members.

## A CURRICULUM OF PARENTS

My *curriculum of parents* has been evolving over time. Coming into teacher education with lived experiences as an educator and a parent, and situated freshly in my doctoral research, I began to invite teacher candidates, in the courses I taught, to consider the positioning of parents in their children's schooling. Over time, I became deliberate in creating a curriculum strand in each of my undergraduate courses to engage teacher candidates in examining their beliefs and assumptions about parents and to begin to imagine how to translate these beliefs into practice.

Interested in understanding how living out a *curriculum of parents* in their teacher education coursework has influenced teacher candidates' developing teacher identity and how it has shaped their beliefs and practices in relation to parents, I engaged in taped conversations in spring 2009 and spring 2010 with four former teacher candidates at differing stages in their careers. In some instances, we also re-explored projects or assignments they did as they lived out a *curriculum of parents* in their former course work.

In this chapter, I include conversation fragments from my inquiry with Caitlin Miazga,<sup>3</sup> who completed her bachelor of education degree in 2009,

and with Ryan Digneau, who was in his second year of teaching kindergarten. Then, I make explicit what a *curriculum of parents* is, give examples of what I do as a teacher educator to make and live that curriculum alongside teacher candidates, and provide my rationale for why I do it. I use fragments from our conversations (written and oral) to explore these beginning teachers' developing and deepening understandings of the ways in which their lived experience with a *curriculum of parents* is impacting their beliefs and practices as teachers and, for Ryan, how that is reflecting back in various facets of his school landscape. As I reflect on their conversation fragments, I explore Vinz's (1997) notion of dis/positioning; that is, how living out a *curriculum of parents* in teacher education has the potential to shift teacher candidates' understandings of what it means to be a professional. Finally, as I turn to considerations of curriculum reform in teacher education, I consider the importance of intentionality and participation (Fine, 2009) in making a *curriculum of parents* alongside teacher candidates.

### *Teacher Candidates' Stories of Parents: Why a Curriculum of Parents*

Although various forms of parent communication such as "Meet the Teacher" night, phone calls and newsletters, report cards, parent/teacher conferences, assemblies, and concerts for parents and family members are all aspects of teachers' work in which they will be engaged in the first day, week, and month of their teaching career, new teachers continue to enter the profession who have not experienced teacher education curriculum that facilitates their development of beliefs and practices around parent/teacher relationships. In the absence of curricular experiences with parents, teachers often adopt a story of parents which exists in implicit and unchallenged ways on the school landscapes of their childhood or field experience placements. In these dominant narratives, parents are often positioned as outsiders to schools and, sometimes even, individuals to be wary or fearful of.

New teachers surveyed by the Metlife Foundation in 2005 "report[ed] that engaging and working with parents was their greatest challenge" (Constantino, 2006). It was a challenge because they had received no ideological or practical preparation for this work. Without a curriculum that engages teacher candidates in a deep exploration of who parents are in the schooling of their children, and who teachers are in relation with parents, this does not come as any surprise. Would new teachers find it challenging to teach mathematics if they had had no mathematics courses in

which to explore underlying ideology, pedagogy, and methodology and to try out and experience teaching practices? Would new teachers find it challenging to develop instructional plans if they had had no education or practice in doing so?

I taught Ryan Digneau just one course, an elective in the final term of his teacher education program, *Children's Literature in the Primary Grades*. Continuing to be connected to Ryan in his position as a kindergarten teacher, I asked Ryan to talk with me about his unfolding beliefs and practices regarding parent engagement. When Ryan reflected back on his feelings about parents as a teacher candidate and as a beginning teacher, he expressed a sense of feeling vulnerable in his relations with parents, perhaps even fearful, as he relayed,

[V]ery much in your teacher education program you get a sense that you should have control. Control, time limits, this is what has to be done, everything has to be done within a time frame, and all those kinds of things. So, when something doesn't go right, or when you're being marked during your internship, when it's a class you've planned, you're hoping the kids, crossing your fingers ... It starts that fear concept going where, when you get a job, you still think, "Oh, someone is going to judge me. I can't let [parents] in because I'll be judged."

[Y]ou are still insecure, you want to make sure you are doing everything right. You have so much to attend to. We have such a fear inside. "I don't have control. I don't have control." We feel we will be embarrassed or something like that. (Conversation, March 2009)

Caitlin Miazga was a teacher candidate with whom I was in relationship for her full two-year teacher education program. I was Caitlin's instructor in her language arts methodology classes in both terms 1 and 2 of her program. After her 16-week internship in term 3 and her return to campus for the final term of her program, Caitlin enrolled in the *Teaching and Learning in Community Education* course I offer as an elective. Caitlin's reflection on her initial understanding of parent engagement is drawn from a learning response she submitted to me in this course.

Parent involvement was something I had never really considered for my classroom/school, let alone parent engagement. It wasn't something that I had experienced as a student, so it was difficult for me to imagine what it was and what it would and could look like. In my own experience, the closest thing I can remember to parent involvement was having moms send snacks for school parties. There may have been a few field trips when parents chaperoned, but that was the extent of it.

It was such a foreign concept at first that I just couldn't wrap my head around it. The thought of it made me uncomfortable, and I actually outright disagreed with it. It wasn't that I viewed parents as the enemy, but I couldn't picture them being a part of the school



or the classroom. I think I felt this way for a number of reasons, in large part because I felt like I had a sense of entitlement after working my academic buns off through five years of university. I thought, “I am the one with the education degree. I am the teacher.” I don’t intend for these statements to come across as authoritative as they do. I think I’m still a warm and friendly person. It’s not like I’d ignore parents if I saw them in the halls, or in the parking lot, or out in the community. I would be friendly. I would smile, say hi, engage in conversation. But even with a friendly demeanor and polite small-talk, this unintended authoritative attitude is the message that still gets across to parents. (Written reflection, March 2009)

Before, or with little, engagement in any planned curriculum in their teacher education programs to explicitly interrogate the ways in which parents are being positioned in relation to their children’s schooling, these teacher candidates unwittingly took up dominant plotlines being lived out on school landscapes – plotlines in which parents are frequently positioned as the “enemy” or as persons to be fearful of, in a “them” and “us” story. Interrupting these dominant plotlines is one of my key intentions as I live alongside teacher candidates in a *curriculum of parents*.

*Interrupting Storied Plotlines of Parents: Intentionality  
in a Curriculum of Parents*

Interruption, for me, is the thoughtful and deliberate act to break in on well-known and well-rehearsed stories of schools and of parents’ positioning in relation to schools (Pushor & Ruitenberg, 2005). Interruption is, first, a process of making conversation regarding parents an integral part of the curriculum in every course I teach. It is then a process of learning and “unlearning” (Williams, in Loomba, 1998, p. 66) – of narratively inquiring alongside teacher candidates into assumptions and beliefs about parents; conceptualizations of parent involvement and parent engagement, teacher knowledge, and parent knowledge; and the structures, policies, and practices of schools, which privilege educators and marginalize parents in relation to the school landscape. It is, further, a process of engaging in practice, which brings us alongside parents, family, and community members, creating competing and conflicting stories of parents (Clandinin, 1995) – stories that challenge or threaten the taken-for-grantedness of “old” stories, which put new stories in their place. Such interruption enables an explicit rethinking of the hierarchical positioning of teachers, the privileging of teacher knowledge, and both the power and the vulnerability which such positioning and privileging instills in teachers. Interruption presents the possibility of transformation for teacher candidates and for teacher education.

*What is a Curriculum of Parents?*

I am being purposeful in naming this explicit attention to the positioning of parents in teacher education a *curriculum of parents*. Although educators speak of a mathematics curriculum or a language arts curriculum, I am consciously choosing not to name this attention to parents a “parent curriculum.” Although mathematics and language arts are both a subject matter, parents are more than a topic or focus. They are, like educators, human beings with autonomy and intention. They hold personal practical knowledge shaped by their continual and contextual interactions with other persons, things, and processes (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995), and they express that knowledge in intellectual, moral, and affective ways. More than mere subject matter, they, too, are curriculum makers in their lives and with their families.

A further consideration for me is that, in the field of education, terms such as “parent workshop” or “parent inservice” frequently denote a session in which someone with expert knowledge instructs parents on how to be better parents – better homework helpers, better managers of children’s behavior, and better caregivers. Believing that all parents have knowledge and strengths, I choose to step away from language that may denote a curriculum that does something to or for parents rather than denote a curriculum that imagines parents in a side-by-side positioning with educators in the facilitation of children’s teaching and learning – mutually determining homework expectations or inviting parents to share a portfolio of their child’s learning at home in the parent/teacher conference, as examples.

As well as using the language of a *curriculum of parents* to denote what I am standing apart from, I also consciously use that language to reflect what ideas I am standing with. Connelly’s and Clandinin’s (1988) conceptualization of curriculum as “one’s life course of action” (p. 1) expressed a notion of curriculum as the paths one has followed and the paths one intends to follow. I want the language of a *curriculum of parents* to capture this sense of parents – a sense that being a parent is a life course of action. I want the term to capture how a parent’s life course of action is integrally interwoven with a child’s life course of action.

When children come to us in schools, they are already living multiple identities: as a grandchild, a daughter or son, a sister or brother, a nephew or a niece; as orphaned, detained, or wards of the system; as situated in neighborhoods, Reserves, on the streets, or in other geographical locations; as members of racial, cultural, religious, or economic groups; and as members of other chosen communities. When they come to school, they come with this multiplicity and contextuality, not independent of it. In both direct and

indirect ways, they bring their [parents], families and communities with them. (Pushor, 2010, p. 7)

A *curriculum of parents* consciously attends to this multiplicity and contextuality. It acknowledges that children are cared for and educated at home and they are cared for and educated at school. It invites teacher candidates to consider their work as teachers as intertwined with that of other caregivers and educators who hold a place in the lives of children.

Another consideration for me in naming this curriculum was the use of the word “parents.” Although children live in the complex contexts of families and communities, and with other individuals in their homes positioned in multiple and varying ways, there is typically a role lived out in a family by someone who have more responsibility than others in the family for the care and well-being of the family members. It is a caregiving position unique to others in the family, which are, primarily, care-receiving positions. It is also a caregiving position that is in a relationship with educators and school personnel unique to that of the positions of other members of the family. As parents of our three sons, it is my partner Laurie and I who are invited to parent teacher conferences, called to excuse our children’s lates or absences, required to sign permission forms, and pay student fees. Although there is no doubt our sons’ lives are shaped by their relationships with their brothers as well as with us and by the context of our family as a whole, their brothers’ relationship with each other’s schooling is different than Laurie’s and my relationship with it. I am using the term “parent” to signify this unique positioning and to have it consciously represent all individuals who fill this particular role in their family, regardless of their non/biological relationship to the child/children. A *curriculum of parents*, then, challenges teacher candidates to attend to the ways in which educators position themselves in relation to those individuals in the nonschool contexts of a child’s life who are also responsible for the child’s education and schooling.

### *Composing a Curriculum of Parents*

In each of my teacher education courses, the *curriculum of parents* is situated in the context of the particular subject matter: language arts, children’s literature, and community education. I often share pertinent stories from my lived experiences or stories of experience of participants and co-researchers drawn from my research texts, as a way to pull forward teacher candidates’ own stories of parents. As they unpack their stories and come to hold conscious and explicit assumptions and beliefs about parents, we talk about

the development of subject matter practices that align with their beliefs. We interrogate, in relation to the subject matter, who is seen to hold knowledge and whose knowledge counts; we interrogate where we see or hear parents and where we do not; we interrogate what is decided in schools, why, and who does the deciding.

In my language arts methodology courses, as an example, I provide teacher candidates with opportunities to develop a sense of identity as language arts teachers, which reflects and encompasses their knowledge of children as situated in the context of the children's families and communities. To this end, we talk about welcoming parents and building relationships with them, about engaging parents in their children's schooling experiences, and we explore how to make language arts programming decisions (for both the class and the student) collaboratively with parents. In one assignment, "Knowing Students and Milieu," teacher candidates interact with a buddy student in the range of her/his day-to-day contexts to explore where learning may be happening for that child and what the learning may look like. The assignment involves multiple visits by the teacher candidate with her/his buddy – at school, at home, and at places within the child's community where she/he spends time.<sup>4</sup> The purpose of the assignment is to have the teacher candidates come to know the child as an individual, a language learner and user, and as a member of a family and community.

In my children's literature courses, as another example, I create an assignment in which teacher candidates simulate a curricular interaction with parents. I ask them each to imagine themselves as a teacher of a specific grade level and to write a newsletter to their students' parents introducing their proposed literature program for the year, including their criteria for determining their literature selection. I ask them to offer parents possibilities for playing a role alongside them in their children's literacy development or to invite parents to imagine possibilities of their own. I ask them to consciously use language, tone, and formatting in their newsletter, which reflects both their beliefs about their relationship with parents and their specific knowledge of families and community. My intent with this assignment is to give teacher candidates an opportunity to try on a teacher identity in relation to parents, to translate their beliefs about parents and about literature choices into lived practice, and to demonstrate how they will use their teacher knowledge alongside parent knowledge in creating rich programming for children.

In the community education course I teach, to provide a third example, my aim is to enhance teacher candidates' knowledge of and experience with

community education. Among the breadth of course outcomes, my specified outcomes around a *curriculum of parents* include developing a sound philosophy of parent engagement and understanding how to translate that philosophy into practice, developing an understanding of what parent knowledge is and how to use parent knowledge alongside teacher knowledge in decisions regarding teaching and learning, reconceptualizing the schooling of children in the context of family and community, and learning ways as an educator to step out of the school and into the community.

A significant element of this course is the teacher candidates' engagement in a 20-hour community education project. Situated in one school for the term, teacher candidates design their project alongside school staff. Their projects may have a single focus or they may involve a wealth of different activities. Teacher candidates' engagement with parents may range from activities such as conducting home visits with a community teaching assistant to facilitating a women's book club with mothers, from working alongside parents in extracurricular clubs or activities to coplanning a unit of instruction with a teacher and interested parents from that classroom. In this project, teacher candidates have the opportunity to interact directly with parents, developing a relationship with them, coming to understand the knowledge the parents hold, and gaining a stronger understanding of how the parents are engaged in their children's teaching and learning, whether it be on the landscape of school or outside of it.

Integral to each of these lived experiences within our *curriculum of parents* is the teacher candidates' wakefulness (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) to their disposition regarding parents. Typically, the word disposition is thought of as a thing, as a trait a person possesses – a “characteristic attitude,” a “state of mind,” an “inclination” (<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/disposition>). In our work together, we also consider disposition as an action, as a conscious act to “dis-”/position – to move “apart” or “away from” (<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/dis->) a usual “position,” a usual stance. In Vinz's (1997) writing, she asserted that “dis-positioning” calls for engagement in continual processes of learning to “un-know” and “not-know” (p. 139). To “un-know,” teacher candidates come into their interactions with parents intending not to talk first, but to listen first. They come to hear what parents know about themselves, their families, their children and their children's learning, and their communities. To “not-know,” teacher candidates come to their work of, as examples, facilitating a women's book club or a family activity, to choosing literature for a classroom or creating a literacy profile of a child, by trusting in a process – one of conversation with parents, perhaps one in which differing opinions will have to be

negotiated – open to working through moments of ambiguity and uncertainty as the process unfolds. In each of the experiences, teacher candidates are asked to take up a position that offers parents a true opportunity for engagement in curriculum making.

## **STORIES OF TEACHER IDENTITY: REDEFINING NOTIONS OF BEING A PROFESSIONAL**

I turn now to fragments taken from written and spoken conversations with Caitlin and Ryan, teacher candidates who engaged in a *curriculum of parents* in one or more of the courses I described earlier. As we talked about their experiences with an explicit *curriculum of parents*, we explored what awakenings may have been prompted for them and how this curriculum may have shaped their beliefs and practices.

### *Conversation Fragment 1: Caitlin – Teacher Candidate*

My own thoughts about parent engagement were completely turned around last year, and this year they have continued to grow and expand. Even now when I picture parent engagement ... I have to check my own perceptions and ensure that dads, grandparents and other caregivers and kin can all see themselves comfortable being involved and engaged in the school and classroom environment.

For new teachers ... it is important to let down that barricade and be open and vulnerable to sharing all these experiences. I think it is so important as an educator to make the time to stop and think ... To have a value and belief system in place as a teacher is so important. I think many teachers have a fear of letting go of their power. Perhaps they imagine if they allow parents in, the school will soon be solely in the hands of their parents. Letting parents in doesn't mean giving up power. It means making space and sharing power. Empowering others doesn't lessen what we have to offer, it enriches it. With parent engagement, there is reciprocity. The ideas of both parties are valued. There is trust, communication, respect and equality. In parent engagement, everyone benefits: parents, teachers and students.

Parents are a child's first teacher. They foster their child's growth and development for the first years of their lives before they come to school. They continue to help their child grow throughout their school years and long after their child has gone through the K-12 system. Who knows a child better than their own parents? When we stop and think about this, it becomes even more obvious that parents should be key players in their child's schooling and that it is essential that we work with one another rather than against one another. (Written reflection, March 2009)

*Conversation Fragment 2: Ryan – Second-Year Teacher*

As a brand new teacher, when you go to your first Meet the Teacher Night, you are nervous. With no teacher education about these interactions and no experience, you're just making it up ... This year, though, it's been easy. I had already talked to the parents a lot. I had developed more of a relationship. That relationship sets you up for everything else you want to do together.

What I've learned through my own study, my own personal development, is about bringing parents into the knowledge aspect and seeking out knowledge in your community and with those around you ... To a parent who is sending their kid, we have to let them know we don't know all and we want their help; that's when you are going to bring them into your world. You are giving something up but you are also getting something.

This year, I write home in daily emails. I might write, 'Parents, today we planned (X), we created (X), we researched today in books.' That's amazing for parents to see. I remember in your class we talked about doing parental visits right at the beginning of the year. Being that last year was my very first year, I wasn't comfortable with that; I wasn't comfortable in the school yet. I had done phone calls last year – that worked well – touching base to say your child is doing great, just to touch base, not to bring up a problem. But I still found that by the time I got through the cycle of that, I wasn't talking to everybody that much ... But then this year, my principal said, "At a former school, I sent daily emails." I said, "Wow, that's exactly what I want to do." Because I want to do something full to engage parents ... I sent home a letter at the beginning of the year [about daily emails] and I was surprised by the response; 17 out of 25 families right away signed up. Then I do send a monthly calendar and newsletter in print to all 25 families as well.

It takes about 10 minutes of my time every day. I jot major concepts of the day, how they can support their children with these concepts at home, any little tidbits of news. I watch how long I make it. I don't want it to become a burden or one more thing for parents to have to do. They started contacting me back and I was amazed at what they said. They said, "I can't believe how this impacts our communication with our child. Now I know what to talk about with my child, how to support my child at home, how I can reinforce things at home." In our community many parents work. In some instances, there is a divorced family. The emails work because both parents get the email; it's not just one of them getting a note. Everybody's contacted, everybody knows what's going on; it changes what happens with the child at home.

There is definitely a difference for me this year. Last year I was meeting all parents for the first time. I was new to the community ... How do you get down to the nitty gritty if you don't even know each other's names? No relationship was set up whereas, this year, the parents and I are on a first name basis. The daily emails really help to build relationships because we're talking all the time. Now, when we see each other, we can hug each other, those kinds of things that really help. When the parents come into the school, it's not a foreign place. They have someone to say, "Oh, hey, how's it going?" and not feel awkward about it.

I haven't done home visits yet. Next year, it's that one step further. We opened a pre-Kindergarten now in our school and we're opening a daycare. I see a lot of the parents daily in school because of that. So when their kids are in Kindergarten, it's going to be really easy for me to do those home visits. Before it was brand new. It was scary for me. That's on my agenda for next year because now that I've got this figured out, I can move farther. (Conversation, March 25, 2009)

### *Interrogating Caitlin's and Ryan's Dis/Positioning*

In their conversations, as Caitlin and Ryan moved backward and forward in time and located themselves in various places, they made visible and explicit some significant shifts in their views of parents' positioning in relation to school landscapes and in who they want to be as teachers alongside parents. Caitlin began by recalling her childhood experiences of parents in school as being times when moms brought cupcakes to class to celebrate their children's birthdays. She then moved forward to her engagement as a teacher candidate in a professional program. In both the place of her childhood school and the place of the university, Caitlin took up the dominant plotline being lived out on these landscapes, a plotline positioning teachers rightfully on the school landscape and positioning parents in a superficial support position off the landscape. Caitlin wrote of the "sense of entitlement" she believed her education degree would – and should – give her as a teacher; as someone with five years of university education, and the professional knowledge and status resulting from a degree in education. As a second-year teacher, Ryan began his conversation by moving back to the time and the place of his undergraduate education. He spoke of the sense that was instilled in him that a teacher should have control – control of children, control of time, and control of the plans. Knowing that such an image of control was impossible to live up to but feeling the need to maintain the image, Ryan accepted the plotline of teaching behind closed doors. "I can't let [parents] in because I'll be judged."

We see in Caitlin's and Ryan's acceptance of this dominant plotline, their sense that to be a professional is to be the one in charge. Sarason's (1995) definition affirms this sense of professional.

However you define a professional, that person's training makes clear that there are boundaries of responsibility into which "outsiders" should not be permitted to intrude. Those *boundaries* are intended to define and protect the power, authority, and decision making derived from formal training and experience. (p. 23)

Given her lived experiences, the position Caitlin assumed as she entered her teacher education program was one of insider who would be friendly and



polite to parents in the halls and parking lot and out in the community. As an insider, she saw herself making the boundaries permeable for parents on nonteaching and learning occasions such as school parties or in instances such as field trips when she needed additional resources to realize her professional agenda. For the most part, Ryan's undergraduate education and experiences served to reinforce the notion that maintaining such professional boundaries would serve to protect his sense of power and authority.

By living out a *curriculum of parents* in all of my courses, I was intentionally attempting to interrupt the unquestioned notion of what it means to be professional, a notion perpetuated in other teacher education curricula and in dominant narratives lived and told on school landscapes. In regard to this notion, Grumet (2009) wrote,

There is the failure of professionalization, which idealized the authority of knowledge, the so-called knowledge-base, imposing university practices ... and reinforcing the separation of teachers from children and families. (p. 28)

Many times this failure of professionalization – the sense of who holds knowledge and whose knowledge counts and the sense of who has a place on the school landscape and who does not – became a discussion within our *curriculum of parents*. It became something I asked them to stay wakeful to when they spent time with parents both on and off the school landscape, to consider as they read school and classroom newsletters, participated in school events and attended to taken-for-granted features of school landscapes such as signage and entry and exit routines. Wondering how shaping his engagement in such curriculum making may have been, I asked Ryan the “so what?” question. “So what difference did our work together around parents make to who you are as a teacher today?” Ryan replied,

You'll never live up – but if you have a plan, if you have something to work towards. I feel like this has been a great jumping off point. What if I didn't have your class and what if I didn't have the principal that I do? I'd be the person with the closed door. I wouldn't have this plan.

Your class taught me to figure out what I believed; this was not something I knew, but something I realized I wanted. Looking at what you believe – it's huge, huge! Because I know for some people, [parent engagement] is not going to be something they believe in. At least, if you can put that out there. Because it's a life changing thing. It will change the way your classroom works, the way relationships develop, all those things, the personal things. It will flow over into the teaching and the knowledge and the academics. My kids this year, from where the kids were last year, the difference is astounding. You realize the small things really make a difference and that was nothing to do with teaching. It was the relationships and stuff, the relationships being of high importance.

Sometimes we see ourselves as we have to live up to something. In parents' minds too. But that almost creates that gap – we're trying to live up to the professional but what we really need to live up to is the person to person. It was by chance, that was an elective that I took your class. It was by chance that that happened. Without it, definitely, the things I do think of all the time would not be a part of what I do. It has to be touched upon, it just has to. It's a process; you're not going to jump in full force. You have to take it to where you're comfortable but also, in this profession, that's why we're here. We're here to take risks, to create new ways of learning, to be creative. (Conversation, March 25, 2009)

Following *Vinz's (1997)* assertion that “dis-positioning” calls for engagement in continual processes of learning to “un-know” and “not-know,” I am struck by an aspect of Ryan's unknowing expressed in the aforementioned conversation fragment. I find his switch in emphasis from the professional to the personal striking. Earlier, Ryan spoke about how living up to the professional creates an increased sense of vulnerability and an increased distance between teachers and parents as teacher interns and new teachers strive to live a story of being the knower, of being in control, and of having everything go right. He has come to live a new story instead, a story of the “person to person.” In his second year, Ryan invited people to flow in and out of his classroom and to work together with him. No longer feeling the need to stand alone in a bounded position, Ryan was able to make his vulnerabilities visible to parents and talk about how things went later in “good conversation.” Ryan's unknowing – and reknowing – of professionalism is a dis/position of standing together, rather than standing apart.

Caitlin's dis/positioning reflects a similar unknowing. Although Caitlin was not yet teaching when she and I engaged in a written conversation, she had lived out an explicit *curriculum of parents* in three of her undergraduate courses. We see in Caitlin's words that she had also come to “un-know” (*Vinz, 1997*) what it means to be a professional: “Letting parents in doesn't mean giving up power. It means making space and sharing power. Empowering others doesn't lessen what we have to offer, it enriches it.” As with Ryan, Caitlin's reknowing of “professional” is a knowing situated in reciprocity and a side-by-side positioning with parents. “The ideas of both parties are valued. There is trust, communication, respect and equality. In parent engagement, everyone benefits: parents, teachers and students” (Caitlin, March, 2009). *Noddings (2009)* argues that responsibility is a much deeper concept than accountability, the quality professionalism typically calls for. “[*R*]esponsibility [italics in original] points downward in the power chain; it asks us to respond to the legitimate needs of those placed in our care” (p. 17). Caitlin's unknowing – and reknowing – of professionalism is a

dis/position of care and responsibility for ensuring *everyone* is strengthened from their interactions, rather than for solely ensuring the school's agenda has been served.

### *Intentionality and Participation*

Fine (2009) asserted that “intentionality and participation [are] crucial elements of lived curriculum” (p. 37). That has been true in Caitlin's, Ryan's, and my shared curriculum making. My intentions as a teacher educator were not neutral. I did not pretend to be objective when I added elements of a *curriculum of parents* into my course syllabi. I did intend to make dominant plotlines being lived out on school landscapes visible and to hold them up for our interrogation. I did intend to interrupt these plotlines by creating opportunities for teacher candidates to experience and live out competing stories of parents. Speaking about equitable, desegregated education for American youth, Fine (2009) posed a question about intentionality:

... perhaps the question about intentionality and purpose is less about whether or not a school intends to reproduce race and class inequity, and more about whether or not a school organizes itself to interrupt the reproduction of class and race inequities. (p. 36)

That wonder plays itself out in relation to the inclusion of a *curriculum of parents* in teacher education as well. My intention as a curriculum maker alongside teacher candidates was definitely about organizing ourselves to interrupt the reproduction of stories of school in which parents are positioned in marginalized and inequitable ways. In both Caitlin's and Ryan's conversation fragments, we see that the intended interruption was realized for these two teacher candidates. They made explicit their dis/positioning as they moved from standing apart from parents to standing with parents. We see them both intending to and living up to the “person to person” with parents in their planned and lived actions as teachers.

## **CONTINUING WONDERS ABOUT A CURRICULUM OF PARENTS**

For both Caitlin and Ryan, the *curriculum of parents* lived out in their elective courses – courses optional to their teacher education program – most significantly shaped the plotline they took up in regard to their

dis/positioning with parents. That Caitlin was randomly assigned to my language arts cohort and that Ryan took an elective I offered “by chance” causes me to return to Fine’s wonder. Are we, as teacher educators, comfortable to leave current undergraduate curriculum as is, intending not to reproduce the marginalized and inequitable positioning of parents in our schools, or are we willing to organize ourselves through a *curriculum of parents* to intentionally interrupt the reproduction of such inequities in schools? My conversations with Caitlin and Ryan cause me to wonder why, with our understanding of the interrelated nature of the four curriculum commonplaces (Schwab, 1978), attention to milieu, particularly as it pertains to a child’s lived context off the school landscape, continues to be significantly lacking in teacher education courses. Our conversations cause me to wonder if teacher candidates, without experiencing a *curriculum of parents*, will enter the field of education believing that working with parents and families is extraneous, insignificant, or an add on to their core work as teachers.

Grumet (2009) stresses, “Curriculum innovation does not suggest a radical or exceptional property or process of curriculum; it is its foundation” (p. 25). To make a *curriculum of parents* from my lived and told experiences and the lived and told experiences of the teacher candidates with whom I work is foundational work. To “engage in the politics” that brings such a curriculum into the “public debates” may be the challenge (Grumet, 2009, p. 28). I believe such politics play out on more than one stage. Within the place of my teacher education classrooms, as the teacher candidates and I make powerful new curriculum arising out of our lived and shared experiences, we have the opportunity to revolutionize our practices (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) – mine as teacher educator and theirs as teacher interns and beginning teachers. As these beginning teachers assume positions in schools, as Ryan has, and as they extend the process of interruption we have begun, by living out the “professional” as the “person to person,” they continue the curriculum making and the revolutionizing of practices. On more formal political stages, as I put this chapter into print and as I engage in debate with colleagues in my faculty about what is important to attend to in our undergraduate program renewal, the question of curriculum – what curriculum and for what purposes – becomes entangled with “a larger conversation about the intent of public education” (Fine, 2009, p. 34). Perhaps we are back to the questions of, “Whose knowledge counts?” and “Who decides?”.

Connelly and Clandinin (1988) expressed their belief that “the essence of reform is nestled in an interacting matrix of life stories” (p. xvi).

I sincerely hope that as we move forward in teacher education and with curriculum reform, we attend to parent stories and stories of parents as crucial to the interacting matrix.

## NOTES

1. In February 2009, Elise Hoey, an undergraduate research assistant, searched the web sites of Faculties of Education in representative universities across Canada (University of British Columbia, University of Alberta, University of Saskatchewan, University of Manitoba, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE)/University of Toronto, McGill University, University of New Brunswick, St. Frances Xavier University, University of Prince Edward Island, and Memorial University) to identify courses that offer a curriculum around the topic of working with parents to preservice teachers in undergraduate programs. No such courses were identified.

2. For example, educational administration courses on governance raise discussion about acting “in loco parentis,” requirements regarding reporting to parents, and rights and responsibilities of parents.

3. Teacher candidates chose to use their given names rather than pseudonyms. Excerpts from written reflections and taped conversations are used with permission.

4. This assignment is done with the ethical approval, and following the ethical guidelines, of our College of Education. After parents receive an official invitation from me as the course instructor to have their child participate in our Knowing Students and Milieu project and they have given their signed consent, each teacher candidate meets with the parents and negotiates the parameters of their relationship with their child – when, where, and how often they will meet, for example.

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# MAKING CURRICULUM OF LIVES: LIVING A STORY OF CRITICAL LITERACY

Dixie K. Keyes

## ABSTRACT

*Purpose – The purpose of this chapter is to retell the narratives of a preservice teacher and a teacher educator as they lived a story of critical literacy and curriculum-making as a curriculum of lives.*

*Approach – The chapter presents a year-long narrative inquiry centered on the revisioning of curriculum for an undergraduate literacy course for preservice teachers.*

*Findings – The researcher broadened her understanding of teacher and teacher educators as curriculum makers to include preservice teachers as curriculum makers. As preservice teachers in the literacy course were invited to reflect on their own literacy backgrounds, several crucial narratives emerged that shaped new understandings for the researcher/teacher educator and drew her into her own curriculum-making with moral purpose. One preservice teacher began a journey of narrative authority and curriculum-making as a curriculum of lives in a subsequent field experience, even through the mire of political pressure in schools.*

*Research implications – The preservice teacher's retelling featured children who discovered newfound understandings of social justice through*

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*literary ways of knowing and critical literacy events. She developed new understandings of how to help public school students value and define their literacies and their life events, all of which folded back into the undergraduate literacy course.*

*Value – Teacher educators can be encouraged to walk in relationship with their preservice teachers, valuing human experiences and lives as curriculum rather than relenting to top-down, politically driven, outside curriculum.*

**Keywords:** narrative inquiry; narrative authority; teacher education; critical literacy.

## **THE POLITICAL PRESENT: DECIDING ON AN EPISTEMOLOGICAL STANCE**

In this early part of the 21st century, the U.S. educational system faces a national standards movement that began largely without the voices of teachers. Current events – the Common Core Initiatives (Cavanagh, 2009; NGA & CCSSO, 2010), the Race to the Top (US Department of Education, n.d.), and the reconstruction of No Child Left Behind (US Department of Education, n.d.) – make collaborative inquiry among teachers, teacher educators, and educational researchers, as advocated by Connelly and Clandinin (1992), even more challenging – and critical. In the arena of public education, the educators who live alongside children feel the dominant force of the conduit funnel, or formal curriculum – objectives, content, readability levels, and texts to be read – pushing down on them. This funnel metaphor represents the outside forces that tell teachers what curriculum to use and how to manage classrooms. Craig (2002) described the conduit as “a mostly hidden and often unquestioned premise underlying the field of education...” (p. 200). Conversely, in this book chapter I recognize that the lives of students and teachers, in relationship, as the curriculum.

teachers do not transmit, implement, or teach a curriculum and objectives; nor are they and their students carried forward in their work and studies by a curriculum of textbooks and content, instructional methodologies, and intentions. An account of teachers’ and students’ lives over time is the curriculum... (Connelly & Clandinin, 2002, p. 365)

Craig (2002) proposed that the conduit could be shaped by human experiences, relationships, and systems – if lives were attended to (pp. 197–201). As I am still early in my career as a teacher educator, I continue to view curriculum through the eyes of a teacher with 15 years of public school experience. The conceptual melody I have come to know of teachers as curriculum makers loses its harmony when I work as a teacher educator with colleagues who *study* teachers and *recommend* curriculum.

In a recent graduate degree program meeting, I was challenged to include more factual knowledge about “theorists” in a course I developed on adolescent literacy. What was being challenged, specifically, was the focus in my course on position statements from national organizations led by teachers and from literacy leaders who spend most of their time in classrooms with teachers, along with my selected course readings and activities that attend to the lives of adolescents who live their lives in the midst of 21st century literacies. The evident divide among the faculty challenged both my interpretation of theory and the others’ respect for theory grounded in teacher practice.

As I complete this chapter, I note that almost two years have passed since the occurrence of the events captured in the preservice teachers’ narratives which I share. In this light, I include thoughts of recent educational reform movements to necessarily attend to the temporal nature of this narrative inquiry and to bring stories from the past forward to the present while thinking about my intent for the future. In my current context as a teacher educator, steeped in the pressures of the national standards movement and the tensions of faculty divisions regarding what and whose knowledge counts, I can see how the simplicity of becoming part of the conduit can be attractive to teacher educators tasked with redesigning programs, considering theoretical perspectives, writing accreditation reports, and applying for grants. Yet it is my own storied past that continues to push against this formalized notion of curriculum.

Exposed in all narratives are the relationships involved, a temporal avenue stretched across teacher landscapes; an avenue which folded back onto itself as “life lived upon a Mobius strip” (Bateson, 1994, p. 43). “The possibilities for reliving, for new directions and new ways of doing things” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 189) presented themselves through the narratives. Four theoretical backdrops swathed the stage as I considered the preservice teachers’ narratives: the concept of narrative authority (Olson, 1995) which teachers find when they relive and retell teacher stories; the rich, artistic decisions involved in Schwab’s commonplaces; the considerations of teacher candidates as curriculum makers *before* they enter their own classroom; and the tenets of critical literacy.

## CONSIDERING THE STAGE: THEORETICAL BACKDROPS

### *Narrative Authority*

Olson (2008) wrote of the reconceptualization of a program for preservice teachers, noting her belief that reform can be considered from the inside out if narrative authority is honored. She shared, "... our best practice is continuously informed, inspired, and reformed through valuing the evolving narrative authority of each individual" (p. 393). This chapter has remained an anchor for me over the past few years during the unharmonious events that challenged my epistemological stance as a teacher educator. I was reaffirmed by Olson's work as I read of how narrative authority was the centerpiece of the revitalization of the teacher education program at her university. It is critical to share Olson's (2008) words here as she describes the transformative value narrative authority can have for teacher education programs:

When we place the narrative authority of the individuals involved at the center of our teacher education curriculum, we begin to provide opportunities to explore not only what we know, but how we know, how we come to know, and why we choose to know in particular ways. We begin to experience ourselves as dynamic learners and as such live rather than only tell a story of lifelong learning ... When it is not assumed there is one correct answer or one right way, questions lead to understanding as students and teachers become researchers of their own narrative authority. (p. 378)

I wrote of the developing narrative authority in teachers (Keyes, 2009) and teacher candidates (Keyes, in press) after living alongside the educators involved. I watched how narrative authority authorized meaning for them as they shared their stories of teaching, recognizing them as narratives and as centerpieces to the work teachers do each day. Craig and Olson (2002) cite narrative authority as critical to the development of a person's narrative knowledge "in community with others" (p. 116). Central to this chapter, then, is the telling and retelling of narratives from preservice teachers and myself as a teacher educator as we live this life on a Mobius strip, looking for new directions.

### *Teachers as Curriculum Makers: Taking into Account Schwab's Curricular Commonplaces*

Connelly and Clandinin (1992) explicated the historical development of teachers as curriculum makers with a prophetic examination of the public

charges teachers faced, with “a large share of the criticism” (p. 367) directed to how teachers were seen to be “the principal impediment” (p. 367) to curriculum reform. They linked this attitude to the game of curriculum making where bureaucracies placed teachers as “mediators between the curriculum and intended outcomes” (p. 367) creating a “pervasive climate of antipathy to reform on the part of teachers” (p. 367). Their work continues to be a neon sign of significance today given the national movements cited earlier.

Schwab’s curricular commonplaces are further foregrounded in [Connelly and Clandinin \(1992\)](#) seminal work as they restate, “any account of curriculum ... entailed an account of four commonplaces ... teacher, learner, subject matter, and milieu,” noting Schwab’s insistence that any talk of curriculum cannot leave teachers out of the conversation (p. 366). This flashing connection blends Schwab’s assertion of the daily intricacies of teachers’ lives as intertwined with students in particular milieus, the world of their subject matters at hand, and with the concept of teachers as curriculum makers – holding lives and experiences in the forefront of daily learning interactions.

### *Critical Literacy*

How does critical literacy fold into the aforementioned? Centered in [Friere’s \(1972\)](#) “conscientization” or critical consciousness, critical literacy is a literacy of lives, a way of thinking about personal literacies that engages learners in empathy and compassion, in living lives as change agents. [Comber, Thomson, & Wells \(2001\)](#) share, “That critical literacy remains problematic and changing is perhaps exactly as it should be as long as *teachers are part of the debate* [italicized by the author]. We need to document multiple cases of critical literacies developed in different contexts” (p. 91). In earlier research, I ([Keyes, 2009](#)) documented the experiences of one middle level literacy teacher in the context of the Mississippi Delta and schools therein, a region with a dominant white culture and few minority teachers and minority voices. Sam, the educator who created space for me to walk alongside him for a year in this research, found that his “actual lived experiences” ([Keyes, 2009, p. 14](#)) were central in the process of his new ways of critically knowing. As his students learned from him, his learning experiences came from their responses. Analyzing this curriculum making helped us both to understand more fully how “existing conditions ... came to be ... and how they might be different” ([Darder, Baltodano & Torres, 2003, p. 15](#)). This research provided me with an important narrative from

which to pursue future dialogue and analysis as a teacher educator. My investigations and curriculum making interests in critical pedagogy (Keyes, 2009) served an important role in the development of the literacy course in which Rachael was involved. It also provided a pathway toward the social justice issues found in Rachael's narrative, which comes later in this chapter.

### **DIXIE'S STORIED PAST: A TEACHER'S WAY OF KNOWING**

Right after graduating with my Bachelor of Science in Education in 1993, I accepted the first offer that came – an eighth grade English teaching position in Roma, Texas located in deep South Texas, halfway between Laredo and McAllen. Because I had showcased my independence by leaving Arkansas at age 19, my mother and sister understood that I thrived on travel, on challenges and on anything different than where I came from. They gave up trying to convince me of other options and simply agreed to help me move.

Directly on the border of Mexico and the Rio Grande River, the historical town of Roma, founded in 1736, was the host of an international bridge which crossed into the Mexican town of Miguel Aleman. Upon my first visit there, the endless arid landscape of sand-colored dirt spotted with tufts of desert grasses, wheels of tumbleweeds, flowering cactus and misshapen mesquite trees challenged me to stay, and later became an organic part of me – just as the *mestisaje*<sup>1</sup> form of the Spanish language from the voices of my students still lives within me. I can still close my eyes and see the breathtaking beauty of desert sunsets ... turquoise skies unfiltered by any noise except the howl of a coyote or the music from a *pachanga*<sup>2</sup> on a Friday night.

The insecurity I felt from living in a context of language, culture, and socioeconomics different from my own was nested in a safety net woven of the curiosity, generosity, and welcoming nature of the community members. Inspired by the notion of finally being a teacher, yet ignorant of the trials of an eighth grade classroom, I had no initial knowledge of the varying background experiences of my students, entirely different from my own. Although the stares from adults and youngsters alike in Alberto's Grocery and at the gas station were discomfiting, there was a stimulating challenge present in every little encounter in this foreign land. Crossing the border and using my minimal Spanish to eat *cabrito*<sup>3</sup> or to purchase small gifts to send to my family in Arkansas gave me the rewards of appreciative glances from Mexican vendors or curious smiles from the attentive waiters.

Walking to a high point in the land behind my neighborhood, I could see very clearly the Rio Grande River down the slope where the land of Roma ended, then back up the banks on the other side where Miguel Aleman began and the small adobe stores with residences atop looked like boxes made of bright colors – rose pink, avocado green, lavender purple, and butter yellow. Everything was surrounded by dirt ... to see green, one had to find a plazita<sup>4</sup> where often there was some sort of fountain, manicured grasses, or windmill palms promising soft whispers as breezes passed upon them. Only after leaving Roma would I realize how images of the endless dirt, the dark wood in the Catholic Church, the patterned lizards living in the shade, the vibrant oranges layered upon the turquoise and blue of the sunset, and the pungent smells of chile<sup>5</sup> from Miguel Aleman would remain in the neural networks of my brain.

It was students like Jose Rolando, Gabriella, Yamil, Luis, and Esmeralda who taught me how to teach. Although I did not yet know the theoretical foundations of a curriculum of lives (Connelly & Clandinin, 1992), by embracing difference and making myself vulnerable in a strange land where I was initially known as “la gringa” or “la extranjera,”<sup>6</sup> my curriculum for the students quickly shifted to one shaped by their lives. With the support of the principal, Mr. Danelo Gonzales, the students and I created the school’s first newspaper, where Jose Rolando, Gabriella, Yamil, Luis, and Esmeralda wrote about their lives. Often when we stayed after school to work on the paper or to rehearse with our record-miming team, everyone would end up in the hallway outside my classroom dancing to Selena<sup>7</sup> music and turning cartwheels. Yamil wrote fluidly and expressed himself through music – he played the guitar in a mariachi band. He was from a wealthier family, the fourth generation to live in the area of Roma, and his grandmother just finished a term as mayor the year I moved there. Gabriella and Esmeralda came from homes with no fathers and lived in a poverty-stricken part of town with lots of extended family members. I know from taking them home multiple afternoons they kept conejos<sup>8</sup> in cages behind their homes, not as pets but as dinner. As Luis became editor of the paper, he transformed from a sluggish, disinterested student into one with a quick step and lots of creative ideas. Jose Rolando never returned to school after the Christmas break of my first year – he was killed in a car accident while visiting his family in Mexico. I still dream of him, his small, dark face with thick eyebrows looking intently at the camera while he leaned casually against the brick wall, one leg cocked back. Each month for a year after his death, his mother would call me to see if I found any other pictures of him she could take to mass as she prayed for his soul in purgatory.<sup>9</sup>

I lived in this context – as the different one, the other – where deeply rooted perspectives of border life and Mexican heritage constantly surprised and humbled me, where new experiences with community people whose families had lived in the desert for several generations shaped my ways of thinking, my creativity and my curriculum making. My students wrote both in Spanish and English; I began to write in both Spanish and English. I quickly researched Latino authors and used *dichos*<sup>10</sup> to introduce elements of grammar. I read Villasenor (1991), Esquivel (1992), and Cisneros (1994). I made room for my students to become my teachers. I accepted their invitations to dinner with their families. I learned from my teacher assistant, Susie, a resident of the community. She was a constant bridge for my understanding of the language and culture, inviting me, as an example, to her ranch home for Christmas tamales – made from a pig butchered the day before, fresh with spices I did not recognize. She often explained the “why” of student and parent behaviors to me, most of which emanated from their personal histories or community gossip. My vulnerabilities as a learner and an outsider were cushioned by the safety of the arms of my students, a caring principal and colleague, and a welcoming community.

I eventually moved east of Roma, twice, to other districts on the border, continuing to teach middle and high school Hispanic students and second language learners. Because a number of them were illegal immigrants, the realities of life on the border (“La Frontera”<sup>11</sup>) came into my classroom each day. The narratives of my students ranged from starving family members still in Mexico to being hassled and hustled at Border Patrol checkpoints. I became awake to and immersed in a curriculum of lives that centered around urgent and emotional issues of social justice.

## **SITUATING THE COURSE: THE TEACHER, THE LEARNERS, THE SUBJECT MATTER, AND THE MILIEU**

### *The Teacher*

When I moved back to Arkansas in 2006 and noted the growing number of Hispanic families in the area, I thought that incorporating this contemporary and personally experienced issue of life on the border (to include illegal immigration) into the curriculum could prove helpful to teacher candidates who would most likely be working with Hispanic students originally from

border areas. Awake to the lives of former students which had intertwined so intricately with my own and my concern for attending to the growing diversity with our student population in Arkansas, I developed my Literacy through Literature course for middle grade preservice teachers, from literature selection to reflections on ethnocentrism to the considerations of perspectives of difference. At the same time, I wanted to be the kind of curriculum maker I had been in the classroom, bringing the lives of the preservice teachers into my curriculum making as a teacher educator. In doing so, I failed to consider the tension I would create in situating my lived curriculum alongside the curriculum of life lived by preservice teachers in the region where I now lived, a region lacking political, social and cultural sympathy toward and knowledge of illegal immigration.

### *The Learners*

Thirteen middle level teacher candidates enrolled in the Literacy through Literature course – eight of them with an emphasis in math/science, and five with an emphasis in language arts/social studies. With a shortage of math and science fifth and sixth grade teachers in our state, many of our middle level program students entered the program choosing that major in hopes of better job opportunities. Some simply loved math and science and genuinely wanted to teach the middle grades. Many math/science students did not expect this course to be pragmatic for their futures; they did not yet understand they would have field experiences outside of math and/or science, or that they may be offered a teaching position outside their specialty since our state certifies them as “generalists.” Even more importantly, many had not been presented with the concept of literacy across the curriculum. The course goals, described below, often caught them off guard:

Literacy through Literature for the Middle Grades is designed to assist middle level pre-service teachers, all majors, in becoming widely acquainted with the wealth of trade books available for children/young adults. Pre-service teachers will become more knowledgeable about the role various genres of literature play in the continuing literacy development of middle level learners, enabling them (pre-service teachers) to make informed, creative decisions regarding the utilization of literacy materials for the middle level student.

Theory and application of critical literacy, the reading process, reading and writing connections, read-alouds, response journals, reciprocal teaching, literature circles and questioning techniques will be included in the course content. The major course project involves the development of text sets for various content areas at the middle level which



will incorporate elements of critical literacy and selected approaches and strategies reviewed during the course. The overall focus for this course is to illuminate the ways to enhance comprehension and content integration of various genres while considering adolescent literacy needs. (MLED 3013 course syllabus, 2009)

I spent two weeks of class meetings providing them the opportunity to discover the relevance of the course through National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), International Reading Association (IRA), and National Middle School Association (NMSA) position statements on adolescent literacy which spotlight reading and writing across the curriculum. We also reviewed varied definitions of reading in order to develop background knowledge needed to move forward with the content above. The students experienced the theoretical and practical, curricular scope of critical literacy, from examining meanings and authorial intent within texts to using their own “cultural currencies as vehicles” for learning and for social action (Sturtevant et al., 2006; Fehring & Green, 2001; McLaughlin & DeVoogd, 2004; Larson & Marsh, 2005).

Knowing that books can change lives and that finding meaning within texts that matter to young people is key to their literacy development, I intended to focus in this middle grades course on more than which books to use when. As a curriculum maker, I valued multicultural literature – those voices of diverse authors that motivate and build socially relevant connections in texts and present voices of “others” that can bring deeper understandings of life. Discovering that positive responses to the course content begin with the preservice teachers reflecting on their own literacy lives, I chose to facilitate rough draft writing of a literacy autobiography (Strong-Wilson, 2008). Although this writing cracked or opened the door to the relevance of literacy for most students, it did so with some discomfort. Students were invited to bring in a literary artifact which for some elicited some difficult memories of school. These experiences, though, often began narratives of curriculum-making for the preservice teachers.

### *Subject Matter*

In regard to subject matter, I included a focus on critical literacy strategies which I had the preservice teachers actually experience as learners, later analyzing their thoughts and the theory behind critical literacy. To provide an example, I used such strategies as QTA (Questioning the Author) in connection with an author study. Subject matter blended with considerations of milieu as I selected two novels for all students to read for our

literature circle time and for involvement in critical literacy exploration – *Crossing the Wire* by Will Hobbs (2006) and *Mississippi Bridge* by Mildred Taylor (1990). Victor, the main character in Hobbs’ novel must “cross the wire” after his father dies in order to provide money for his family in Mexico. For me, the plot pulls forward in my mind my storied experiences with Jose Rolando. In my classroom, though, I hear murmurings of “those illegal immigrants” and “why can’t they speak English?” In my mind I hear the voice of Jose Rolando’s mother, “Miss, Miss, tiene mas picturas de mi precioso, Jose?”<sup>12</sup> Undoubtedly, my narrative authority provoked me to include *Crossing the Wire*. I was using my experiences, based in the narratives from my teaching in South Texas, to authorize my choices. *Mississippi Bridge* brings forth its own uncomfortable questions.

### *Milieu*

The curricular commonplace of *milieu* brings forward issues of generational poverty and racism in the context in which I now live and in which this course was taught. The novel *Mississippi Bridge* depicts a few hours in the life of a young white boy embroiled and embedded in the destructive and torturous racism of the South in the 1930s. This novel elicits uncomfortable questions about the graphic portrayal of racism and the still-existing tension between the silent anger of black community members in our area of the country and those who believe the descendants of slaves should get over the past. As the teacher, my responsibility is to create a safe zone for discussing the issues involved in these novels. I have discovered that preservice teachers have to begin these discussions where they are, and I must accept their perspectives as starting points, as initial positioning for curriculum-making, that includes these perspectives yet brings to the fore new complexities. My work to interrupt the general hegemonic milieu of not talking about racism, of not raising the tension at how most of the black people in this area attend low-performing schools, of not addressing how few black teacher candidates are present in our program sometimes drained my energy, but it was heartening to see students reliving stories and sharing new stories as their journeys on the Mobius strip – outward from their lives, into the lives of the novels’ characters, then back to their lives again – brought them new understandings.

As I continued to teach this literacy course, I was ready to find out more about my learners. I wanted to reach out to them narratively and involve them in my plotline. How could I continue to make more of an educative

curriculum for them in regard to their teacher knowledge of literacy and their desire for social justice? Furthermore, how could I let them know they are already curriculum makers, even in this early stage of their teacher lives?

### A Glimpse into a Messy Legacy of Literacy

Why; Poetry has one, Excuses doesn't

These days poetry does not rain much, but excuses do.  
 Excuses are many while poetry is few.  
 The suffering, all the while, are ignorant to the hidden battle.  
 They do not know of what they are being deprived of.  
 They may never know.  
 Although, all hope is not lost just yet.  
 The few who are advocates of poetry are not discouraged.  
 They rise up like the evaporation of rain.  
 They encourage the incorporation of the almost lost art in all areas  
 No subject is exempt of the power of poetry.  
 No teacher is exempt unless thoust teaches no poetry.  
 Advancement requires enhancement.  
 One that poetry may bring to any curriculum if given a chance. (Course assignment by Carl, November, 2008)

One of the last assignments I asked of the students was to create a poem by pulling out key words or phrases from two pages of a chapter on how-to and instructional texts from our textbook, blending the words with their own. I cannot explain the word, punctuation or capitalization choices of the author of this poem, Carl, a preservice teacher who wrote it during my course. I include it just as he wrote it. What he pulled for this poem went far beyond what I asked – he used his own words and phrases to dig into purpose (*encourage the incorporation of the almost lost art*), into social justice (*The suffering ... are ignorant to the hidden battle*), into metaphor (*They rise up like the evaporation of rain*), into traditions of teaching (*no teacher is exempt unless thoust teaches no poetry*), and into transformation (*Advancement requires enhancement ... one that poetry may bring to any curriculum if given a chance*). Juxtaposed with his literary legacy writing from early in the class, I recognized that his thinking had deepened on the subject of literacy. Earlier, in his autobiographical writing, he had written:

What words would I use to describe my literary legacy? I definitely have to think about that. I don't *not* think my literary legacy was a good one growing up. That being said, I don't consider it a total failure me being in college and able to read and write decently. Disappointing is a good word to use as I look back. I had the chance to read but I just didn't. I didn't like to because I was bad at it and I was bad at it because I didn't read ... . And I didn't read because I didn't like it. Everything was a mess. An emotion

that came to mind as I discussed my literary legacy with my group was pity for myself. I kind of felt bad for myself back then. I had a rough time growing up because of my lack of reading skills. Right now I am not entirely sure how I am going to incorporate books into math class. My experience with books either way will impact me greatly. Whether I use books or not I am still going to have a slight disadvantage in the literacy category because of my experiences. All in all, I don't have much of an idea how I will use or incorporate books into my classes I teach. (Course assignment, September 12, 2008)

During group conversation in the course, Carl said he still does not care for reading. "What's the point?" I heard from him. He feels like he's a slower reader, saying, "It's just hard." He admitted to never finishing *Winnie the Pooh* as a child and to reading Cliff notes in order to pass his high school literature courses (Field notes, September 20, 2008). Conversely, he successfully completed reading Joan Bauer's *Rules of the Road* (2005) during the course, partly selecting it because of its short length. He enjoyed that novel and even read the second one in the series before the end of the semester. In sharing Carl's perspective, I can more fully represent how I lived my own story in finding an educative curriculum for preservice teachers and how that story was relived when my students gave it back to me as curriculum makers. As Carl moved from being a reluctant reader to a writer who foregrounded the tenets of purpose, social justice, traditions of teaching, and transformation in his poem, he affirmed for me the value of making a curriculum in which preservice teachers are invited to live, tell, retell, and relive their stories of experience (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, pp. 187–189) as literacy learners and prospective teachers of literacy. He was living within his experiences, and I was attempting to follow where this would lead, through any tensions that arose and with hopes of studying myself in relation to others (p. 188).

## **PRESERVICE TEACHERS AS CURRICULUM MAKERS: THE BEGINNING OF NARRATIVE AUTHORITY**

'It ought to be possible to bring teachers in touch with their own landscapes. Then learning may become a process of the 'I' meeting the "I" "...Teachers need to reclaim themselves in their practice rather than becoming 'clerks' in an already-delivered curriculum. (Strong Wilson citing Maxine Greene, 2008, p. 13)

I share the narrative of a language arts/social studies major, a preservice teacher and peer of Carl, to make visible the curricular possibilities in creating space for the living, telling, retelling, and reliving of stories of

experience in preservice teacher education courses. Rachael's story demonstrates that she is a curriculum maker – instrumental in living out curriculum with a deeper meaning, with her students whole lives in mind – curriculum as “the course of one's life; a brief account of one's career” (Connelly & Clandinin, 1992, p. 364). Preservice curriculum makers like Rachael consider the practise (with an “s”) of teaching as an “art” (Schwab, 1983, p. 245). I note Schwab's intentionally different spelling of “practise” to honor his admonitions that teachers are not “assembly line operators, and will not so behave.” Each time I return to his thoughts, I am re-inspired and reminded that only teachers have the “knowledge adequate to an art” in this world of education that often ignores teacher voices (p. 245). I learned from Rachael, and from Carl as well, that providing them the space to care about critical literacy may be the most significant contribution I can make to their growing narrative authority as preservice educators. My story turns back on itself now as I compose this, exploring my responsibility to preservice teachers in my Literacy through Literature course within the milieu of a teacher education program in the region where I live. Most of our teacher candidates are white and live in rural areas without much interaction with anyone different from them. Over my four semesters as instructor of this literacy course, only two African-American teacher candidates have passed through the middle level program on my campus. Yet when our teacher candidates arrive in their local schools for field experiences, one of their placements will be in a “diverse” school with more than a 30% diverse student body. Rachael's story involves her curriculum making choices connected with *Mississippi Bridge* and the socio-cultural history of the students she taught during one field placement.

*Rachael's Story: “It's okay to be angry.”*

“Please, boss ... I got to get to the Trace t'day. Please, boss. I done got my ticket. I done made all my plans. Folks spectin' me. I gots t' go on this bus!”

“Nigger, I said you getting' off.”

“Boss, please ... ”

That bus driver, he ain't give Josias chance to say no more. He jerked Josias forward to the door, put his foot flat to Josias' backside, and give him a push like Josias wasn't no more 'n a piece of baggage, and Josias, he gone sprawling down them steps into the mud ... I ain't know'd what to say. He ... walked away, back toward the bridge. “Josias!” I called. “Wait on up a minute, will ya? Josias!”

I run after him but Josias, he ain't stopped.

“Josias! I’m right sorry! Sorry ‘bout you can’t go on that bus! Josias, ya hear me ... ?”

He stopped now and looked back at me. I stopped too. “Well, that’s jus’ the way, ain’t it?” he done said. (from *Mississippi Bridge* by Mildred Taylor, 1990, pp. 49–50).

Rachael, a white 35-year-old mother of two, entering her second career, chose a language arts/social studies major in our middle level program. She already loved literature and valued the collection of literacy strategies, both in a pragmatic sense and within a critical literacy perspective. Not under my direction, but from her own strength as a curriculum maker, she decided to read *Mississippi Bridge* aloud to her fifth grade students, secure in believing they could handle it at their age and in their environment. Even after hesitation from her teacher supervisor who had commented that “the language may make some students feel uncomfortable,” and that “the students aren’t mature enough to sit in the carpet area” to listen to the book, Rachael became “pretty adamant” about using *Mississippi Bridge*.

From 50% to 75% of her students were African-American and her school was located in a lower socioeconomic part of town. The school district had created magnet schools the year prior with hopes of more blending of student demographics. Rachael’s school became the Math/Science Magnet School, but the hoped-for spread of diversity did not happen. As parents/students chose which school to attend, neighborhoods won out over magnet themes. All portions of Rachael’s narrative, including the quotes above, are from the transcript of a taped interview (January 10, 2009). The excerpt immediately below describes Rachael’s careful deliberation about her curriculum choice as she faced particular hurdles. She observed the students for a week, made extensive, careful notes, and more.

I also noticed ... who was responding to instruction? And I noticed and I actually made myself some literal notes and it was the African-American population that wasn’t responding. They weren’t raising their hands in the air ... most of them arrived late to school. They weren’t excited to be there. In the halls they were the students who were always getting into trouble ... they walk like soldiers there ... it’s a military style in a military line. They have to be absolutely quiet and hands behind their backs and it was the African-American boys who had the most trouble, the most difficulty with that. Nonetheless, as my paper became full of answers I decided I wanted to try *Mississippi Bridge* because I thought Mildred Taylor talks about the things that were going on in the 30s and this is something the students could relate to ... poverty, the Great Depression, Civil Rights and I thought that if I could get these students to see themselves in the literature, that they would speak up ... they would become involved. They had to have something to say ... because of their position. They had felt these things being from where they were from ... the families they were from — the low economic status. I thought they could relate.

It wasn't something I thought about lightly. I reread the book, researched Mildred Taylor and found a quote from her ... I won't quote exactly but summarize, "I wanted to write literature that African-Americans could see themselves in" ... and I thought this was her reasoning, this is why I'm wanting to use it ... it HAS to work. What did "work" mean? I didn't know but I wanted to see where it would go.

After speaking to the social studies teacher who confirmed the students had already studied the Civil Rights Era, the Great Depression and Martin Luther King, Rachael convinced her hesitant teacher supervisor to allow her to "move forward" with the novel. Being forewarned that she would be "watched," Rachael did not know if she would be given one day or two, but she began. She read aloud to the students using QTA strategies and found herself "amazed" at the student response.

"The students I had made a note about – that I never heard them respond or speak up in class – they were willing to share. And they were intelligent, so it was not that they did not have the capacity or the intelligence to speak up ... nothing had sparked their interest obviously to get them to engage or converse." Seeing the class dynamic positively unfold under Rachael's guidance, the teacher directed her to take as much time as she needed with the novel study. As Rachael progressed through the novel's plot, the graphic depictions of racism entered the milieu of the classroom.

I remember the first time I used the word "nigger" and it was in the book and I stopped because I knew that's not a word those students wanted to hear and I asked them "how does this make you feel?" Not just the African-American students but the white students said, "This makes me angry." So for the African-American students to hear a white student say it angered him too now we have a bond and you could see it. You could see it in line. You could see ... I followed them outside on the playground during a few of those days and we were having friendships form and I honestly can't say it was the book. I want to say, I want to hope it was the book that opened up some new ideas and relationships. It was just amazing to see these students bond and I remember one student in particular said, "It makes me angry." And I said, "That's okay." And he said, "No teacher has ever told me it's okay to get angry." And I said, "Teachers get angry ... we all get angry. It's what we do with our anger ... we have to put it into positive action." I kept telling them at this point when we read and shared the book in my college course that I wanted to put it down. It really bothered me. It unnerved me, but I followed it through and I read it and I told the students, "Hang in there with me ... You'll see that Mildred Taylor puts that anger to positive use in the end." And there were times when they were angry and they wanted to stop reading it and were so upset that I just allowed them to stop and share their feelings. I was just shocked at how no one told them it was okay to be angry. They aren't supposed to be angry.

Rachael watched her students change. "Not just their thinking, not just with QTA, but how they responded to each other and respected each other." As a curriculum maker, she labeled her approach, "I think it's critical

literacy. I just think it was the right book and the right students. It worked. It just worked.” She knew that deliberate book choice, as in my choosing of *Crossing the Wire*, brought forward issues of social justice. By telling this story to me and by living it, she reached some conclusions, demonstrating her growing narrative authority. “I know Mrs. \_\_\_\_ talked about not having enough time in the curriculum to do read-alouds,” she commented, but Rachael still claimed them to be “necessary.” She described her discoveries of the many research, writing, and critical reading state frameworks she covered during what turned into “The *Mississippi Bridge* Unit,” lasting seven days. From our time together in the Literacy through Literature course, Rachael understood how to embed state-mandated standards into relevant, authentic literature exploration.

In the same semester of her field experience, Rachael joined me at the state teachers’ conference and presented the theory and application of Questioning the Author. At the conference, and later in the taped conversation with me, she relived the following story, a more specific outcome of her transformative choice to read *Mississippi Bridge* to her class.

The culminating activity [of our unit] was a writing assignment. They could write a character analysis or they could write a letter to the author. The majority wrote a letter to the author. One was a boy who I was told would never even write. He just had a habit of not turning homework in at all. I saw him writing, and he raised his hand and asked for help. I went over and I thought he probably wasn’t writing on the assignment, that he was doing something else, but he was. And he wanted me to read his words, and it said, “Mildred Taylor, I bet you felt like there was a worm inside of you eating up your pride.” And I thought wow ... I just cannot believe these kids are not only relating to a story, but they are able to put it into their own words. What’s so neat about that is not just that he chose to do the assignment but that it was so insightful. It actually got her [the teacher’s] attention and she walked over and read it. And she said, “Where did you come up with the big words?” He said, “Just in my head.” And she said, “Have you ever felt like that before?” And he said, “I have felt like that before.” So this led to a discussion to how he had felt MOST of the time, most of his life. So there again, critical literacy ... whereas I’m trying to reach a classroom of students, it obviously affected this ONE student and we were able to see ... and that conversation went on even further to problems at home to things he was going through, all because of a book.

At this point, the teacher decided to read *Mississippi Bridge* and follow through with all of Rachael’s assignment ideas in her afternoon classes (Rachael was only there each morning). The culminating activity to Rachael’s unit was a read-aloud forum where students read their *Letters to Mildred Taylor* to the whole class using a microphone. Refusing to fall into a deficit model, Rachael inquired of the young man who wrote the



narrative above if he would like to read his. He said yes, read it aloud, and “the whole class was just in awe. I cried. The teacher cried,” Rachael shared.

I shared with Rachael that her story was enfolded within mine and that my story had turned back on itself – that I noticed the full cycle of the impact the course had on her curricular decisions and how those decisions shaped the responses from everyone in *her* classroom. She shared with me in the 2009 interview, “Teaching a lesson is one thing, but having the students apply what they’ve learned, that’s what it’s about.”

I responded, “That’s how I feel about you.”

### Conclusions: Teacher Educators as Curriculum Makers

We come to know teaching practice as ‘bred in our bones.’ We experience the cyclical nature of school time and place, understand how school events shape our stories as we live them and tell them in classrooms, and discover children’s stories as they are lived out in relation to those of others. (Connelly & Clandinin, 1992, p. 386)

As I have continued to live alongside recent graduates from our program and spend time in their classrooms, I now understand my curriculum making as centered on lives and how they were lived – on Rachael and the other preservice teachers – and the situations and experiences, often including issues of social justice within families and communities in which they found themselves and their students. It was all about *lives* as curriculum. The most significant question which arises for me now is, “What are we giving our teacher candidates when we recognize them as curriculum makers, and then listen to and nurture their narrative authority?” To continue living my story, I must continue to retell and relive my narratives of teaching so I can reclaim them in my life upon a Mobius strip. Connelly and Clandinin (1988) refer us to the ways narrative helps us make meaning of experience while in the retellings we “refigure the past and create purpose in the future” (p. 24). It is important that our beginning teachers hold their purpose for the future close as they begin their work, knowing above all the value of the lives of their students. How will they know this unless as teacher educators we, too, make our curriculum from their lives?

Other questions arise for me in relation to the development of narrative authority. How do we encourage preservice teachers to use their narrative authority as a source of strength, as Rachael did, to make important daily decisions for her students? Preservice teachers run headlong into the pressure all teachers feel to converge with the implementation of an accepted/traditional kind of curriculum – due to political pressures of teaching to the test for accountability purposes (Carter, 2003; Sturtevant et al., 2006) – rather than to diverge as Rachael did. Lucey (2007) invites us as teacher educators to examine our processes, considering the impact on

the “curricular directions ... and attitudes [of preservice teachers] toward social justice” (in Craig & Deretchin, 2008, p. 246). Returning to Rachael’s story, we see a transformation of both students and the teachers involved. What provides them the narrative authority, the “down and dirty” courage, to be adamant like Rachael? In this current environment of competition in education, of racing to the top, and of teacher accountability for student achievement, will teachers still close their doors and *practise* their art no matter what the conduit directs? My hope, and my intent within my teacher education program, is that when we work with preservice teachers as curriculum makers, we instill in them attitudes of social justice.

As we work with our preservice teachers it is important that we ask ourselves, “Who are we as teacher educators?” What do we gain by living side by side with teachers and children in classrooms? In discussing a socially just curriculum, Oakes and Lipton (1999) stated, “Each day American teachers confront and win, over and over, the battle against the modern curriculum, as they engage students with rich and powerful ideas that touch their lives. That is one reason they return to school each day. The struggle waits for them” (p. 132). Perhaps by opening the space for living and telling, retelling and reliving our own narratives of teacher education – of critical literacy – of student growth in narrative authority – of dissonance in learning, we will understand more fully how to shape our own curriculum making for our future teachers.

As I inquire into the narratives of preservice teachers in my literacy course, I simultaneously inquire into my own practice. I do this inquiring with hopes of preparing these prospective teachers for the struggle of providing an educative curriculum that will help them grow into being curriculum makers who are change agents with moral purpose. I work to prepare them (and myself), pragmatically and with attention to the specifics of local milieus, for the political atmospheres of their future schools. As I think of my practice as a curriculum maker in teacher education, Carl’s words return to me, “The few who are advocates of poetry are not discouraged.” I think of Rachael and the teacher with whom she worked. I think of the student who read his letter to Mildred Taylor aloud in class. I think of the stories of children in that classroom who began to live in relationship – and I am not discouraged.

## NOTES

1. A blended form of Spanish and English known as the particular, border dialect of South Texas.

2. A party with food and dancing.
3. Goat meat, stewed or roasted.
4. Small plaza with manicured grass and patio décor.
5. A collection of peppers dried, sometimes ground for seasoning.
6. The white woman; the strange one.
7. Selena Quintanilla-Pérez, the Mexican-American singer and dancer who was murdered in 1995.
8. Rabbits.
9. The Catholic ritual of praying for the dead to help in their entrance to heaven.
10. Mexican sayings and axioms.
11. Natives of South Texas call the area “the frontier.”
12. “Miss, Miss, do you have any more pictures of Jose, my precious boy?”

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# *NARRATIVE INQUIRY IN CURRICULUM OF LIFE ON EXPANDED AND EXTENDED LANDSCAPES IN TRANSITION*

Shijing Xu

## **ABSTRACT**

*Purpose – The purpose of the chapter is to describe the use of narrative inquiry in a teacher education preservice course on issues in education focused on culture.*

*Approach – The course is positioned among the different kinds of teacher education courses and then described in terms of course assignments and categories of student response.*

*Findings – It is shown how reflective narrative inquiry activities work toward student understanding of idea that all students are “other” and may be understood in terms of intergenerational family educational narratives. Three specific sources of tension are discussed under three headings “My school has no newcomers and no need for inclusive lesson plans,” “They should adapt to us,” and “But I have no culture.” The ideas of a cross-cultural bridge and reciprocity in leaning between newcomers and the receiving society ties the discussion together along with the author’s experience with the subject matter of the course.*

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Research implications – *This work opens an avenue of inquiry into one of the more difficult and widely discussed areas in teacher education aimed at social cohesion and growth.*

Value – *The value of this work is that it extends Connelly and Clandinin's ideas on curriculum of life to specific issues faced in cultural subject matter in preservice teacher education.*

**Keywords:** Narrative inquiry; curriculum; teacher education; narrative; intergenerational family narratives; cultural diversity; reciprocal learning.

## FRAMING THE CHAPTER

The chapter title reflects my attempt to capture several key elements in my teacher education program. It is important to note at the outset that in keeping with the spirit of narrative inquiry, I consider my observations in this chapter to be transitional and developmental rather than summative or conclusive. In fact, my first draft of this chapter positioned my current teaching as the beginning steps of a new phase of my cross-cultural educational journey. I retain some sense of this quality as I more directly explore my teaching program. The idea of *expanded and extended landscapes in transition* points to several things. It points to an underlying Deweyan sense of personal growth in awareness and understanding of a learner's world. The phrase also, jointly, refers to a rapidly changing cultural mosaic of Canadian society and, more generally, of the world as ideas and people travel and intermix cross-culturally. I have experienced *expanded and extended landscapes in transition* as I moved from my rural place of birth to education and teaching in Chinese universities to education in Canada and, now, to teacher education. These experiences are at the heart of my teacher education curriculum. Most of my teacher candidates have not experienced landscapes in transition in the dramatic fashion of moving from one country to another with new language and customs. One of my teaching purposes is to find ways by which my students may see their cultural landscape as an extended landscape in transition.

The phrase *curriculum of life* is widely used in the educational literature. Many who use the phrase trace the idea to either Pinar and Grumet (1976) or Connelly and Clandinin (1988). Perhaps, the most sustained use of the

phrase is found in Portelli's writing (e.g., Portelli & Vibert, 2001). My use of the term is closely related to the Connelly and Clandinin's (1988) idea of curriculum. My thinking is built on their ideas that "A curriculum can become one's life course of action ... This broad sense of curriculum as a person's life experience is behind the idea of this book captured in the subtitle *Narratives of Experience*" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, p. 1). According to Connelly and Clandinin (1988), "The idea of narrative as a story of life as a whole, combined with the notion of curriculum advanced in Chapter 1, means that we need to broaden our idea of education beyond that of schooling. Education, in this view, is a narrative of experience that grows and strengthens a person's capabilities to cope with life" (p. 27). These words have informed Connelly and Clandinin's work and they are an important source of my thinking about *curriculum of life*. *Curriculum of lives* is also used by Huber and Clandinin (2005) and Clandinin et al. (2006) as a term in their current research into lives of children, families, teachers, and administrators in schools.

For me, *curriculum of life* is composed of two basic thoughts that underpin my teacher education work. First, I try to build a sense of *curriculum for teacher education* into this chapter. I try to think of teacher education not only in terms of teachers but, as Schwab's (1978) profoundly simple and important concept of curriculum suggests, also in terms of subject matter, milieu, and teacher (in Westbury & Wilkof, 1978). As I am the teacher in this Schwabian conceptualization of curriculum, I am returned to my own narrative journey in my roles and beliefs as part of the teacher education process. My role in teacher education curriculum is an expression of my overall educational narrative. The *life* part of this phrase refers to the idea underpinning Connelly and Clandinin's (1986) notion of formal education as being a part of one's education and life more generally. This idea of *curriculum of life* links my personal narrative history with my use of *intergenerational family narratives* and *reciprocity and reciprocal learning* as a way of linking life experience, teacher education, and the world of teaching our students enter.

Finally, for me the term *narrative inquiry* in the title gives me an organizing framework that allows me to pull together "Teacher Education as a Curriculum of Life on Extended Landscapes in Transition." Narrative inquiry is my way of thinking about my teacher education curriculum. This way of thinking frames possible classroom activities and assignments that open up for my students a formerly static cultural landscape to one of dynamic possibility reaching into the past and projected into the future.



## CONTEXTUALIZING NARRATIVE INQUIRY FOR TEACHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM

### *A Cultural Bridge*

I use the idea of a bridge as a metaphor for discussing cross-cultural issues in and out of teacher education. This metaphor has been a touchstone in my journey from China to Canada and it is a touchstone for what I see myself doing in teacher education. This metaphor makes it possible to imagine cultures at the opposite end of the bridge from where one is standing. The metaphor also makes it possible to imagine cultural reciprocity as travelers cross the bridge and meet on their journey. Reciprocity and mutual learning among cultures are key idea(s) in my teacher education work. In this regard, I am especially attracted to Cochran-Smith and Demers (2008) chapter in the *Sage Handbook of Curriculum and Instruction* titled “Teacher education as a bridge? Unpacking curriculum controversies.” This chapter explores the role of teacher education in education more generally. As Cochran-Smith and Demers say, “Many of the most enduring issues in public education are at the heart of questions about teacher education curriculum” (p. 262). They also point out that teacher education curriculum goes far beyond what is taught in teacher education classes. They list a broad range of matters, all of which are consistent with Schwab’s concept of curriculum more generally.

Cochran-Smith and Demers point out that the purposes of teacher education programs, like school curriculum programs, vary in important fundamental ways. Among other things, Cochran-Smith and Demers review what they call “curriculum traditions” in teacher education, for instance, Zeichner’s (1983) description of four paradigms of teacher education: behavioristic teacher education, personalistic teacher education, traditional-craft teacher education, and inquiry-oriented teacher education.

Given this way of thinking about the variation in teacher education curriculum, it is important to position my personal views on teacher education curriculum, and the program discussed in this chapter, in context. Where does the work described in this chapter fit? In Zeichner’s (1983) fourth paradigm, the purpose is for teachers to “become agents of social change working for a more just and democratic learning experience for students” (Cochran-Smith & Demers, 2008, p. 266). This way of contextualizing a teacher education program helps frame my own work. In this sense, the teacher education curriculum in which I am engaged goes beyond the teaching of knowledge and teaching skills and classroom competencies, to an education for an increasingly more democratic and

multiculturally sensitive society. As described later, this social mission, which Cochran-Smith and Demers refer to as a political quality of teacher education curricula, links closely to the subject matter of my teacher education curriculum, namely, cross-cultural, reciprocal, knowledge, and understanding. This subject matter brings with it a social growth and change dimension. Although my teacher education experience is exciting and rewarding, it also has moments of tension built around this subject matter and its social growth goal. Students sometimes struggle to shift their personal perspectives on their multicultural world. The curricular subject matter is both knowledge in a descriptive sense and knowledge that carries social values that resonate positively and negatively with students. My discussion in this chapter revolves around these latter matters.

With this context as a frame, my chapter unfolds using Schwab's commonplaces of curriculum to structure my discussion.

## **MY TEACHER STORY: LINKING STUDENTS, SUBJECT MATTER, MILIEU, AND TEACHER**

### *The Evolution of Subject Matter: From Language to Culture*

When I first started my cross-cultural learning journey in Canada, as a former professor of English as a foreign language (EFL) in Beijing China, my goal was to *look for* “the golden key” to unlock the English language for the Chinese learner. I aimed to make meaning of the role of English and the role of English language teachers in cross-cultural and international communications and understanding.

The metaphor of “a bridge” emerged and evolved along with my cross-cultural journey. In the initial metaphor of the bridge, my interest was focused on what could be learned from the “advanced” Western world, and how the cross-cultural experience of my own and other Chinese visiting scholars could contribute to curriculum and teacher development of language education in China. I looked at the bridge as a one way crossing. My perception that “The grass on the other side of the fence is greener” was mostly shared by other Chinese visiting scholars in my study of the educational views held by Chinese visiting scholars. One of the Chinese visiting scholars in my research (Xu, 2000) said,

Whenever I pass by the primary schools here, I always see happy children's faces. I rarely see a child unhappily carrying a big schoolbag because of school pressure. They are

sunny boys and girls. Their life is full of sunshine and happiness. They don't take study as a burden. However in China, we think we have to study very hard. Student life is always very hard. Yes, one has to study hard, but it has become a conception that one cannot learn well if one doesn't go through a very hard time.

I am a father of a 10-year-old boy. I always think it is important to find the best way to teach young children. I really appreciate the western teaching methodology. We should adopt it in the primary school or even kindergarten. (Interview, Xu, 2000)

This sense of wonder at the pleasures of Canadian education was common among my participants and pretty much reflected my own view. We had come to Canada to study a society with an advanced educational system. We found it and we wanted to return to China to bring about similar changes. But this one-sided view of old and new education changed as my journey continued. My narrative inquiry into the role of language and the role of language teachers in education led me to rethink my earlier one-sided notion of the benefits of Western education. I began a journey toward cross-cultural and interdisciplinary teacher development within a broader curricular understanding of language learning (Xu & Stevens, 2005).

*Crossing the Bridge Both Ways: From One Way  
Learning to Reciprocal Learning*

A new puzzle emerged from my initial direct contact with Chinese immigrant children and their families. The origins of this puzzle are illustrated in a conversation I had with a Chinese grandmother. The grandmother said,

Children of Julian's age in China have learned a lot, both in literacy and math, but here in Canada, Julian is playing all day long. There is no homework ... Children of Julian's age need spoon-feeding, as they do not know the importance of study, yet Canadian schools are good for children like Julian who are not willing to study hard but play all day long. (Conversation with Julian's grandma at the Parent Centre of Bay Street Community School, November 12, 2002)

Julian's grandma, a retired Chinese teacher from a Guangzhou elementary school, had a quite different view of Canadian education than did the Chinese visiting scholar as expressed above. Whereas the visiting scholar saw an educational system that led to happy children, Julian's grandma saw an educational system that sacrificed hard work and learning. These contrasting views on Chinese and Canadian education puzzled me. I wondered what might explain these different views on education and I wondered how to think about these different sides of Canadian education.

Connelly and Clandinin (1988) point out that people make sense of learning in relation to their own experiences, both past and present, their beliefs about education, their present needs within a particular situation, and their hopes for the future. Thinking in terms of defined categories and cultural groups, one might be led to think that the Chinese grandmother was “more Chinese” than the visiting scholar who, it might be said, was more modern and westernized because of age and access to Western values. But the Chinese grandmother had been in Canada much longer than the visiting scholar and was, perhaps, more knowledgeable and involved in the educational system than was the visiting scholar. For example, she participated in the school’s Parent Center with her grandson 3–5 days a week. Thinking narratively, the question of why these two participants’ assessments of the school system differed so greatly might be explained in terms of their particular experiences, both past and present, and their particular beliefs and needs, within the particular situation in which they found themselves. The differences between these two views shaped the research puzzle in my narrative inquiry into the cross-cultural schooling experience of Chinese newcomer families on landscapes in transition (Xu, 2006).

*From Newcomer Family Intergenerational Narrative Histories  
to Everyone’s Intergenerational Narrative History*

My research work with newcomer Chinese families threw me into a school context where I made close connections with Chinese newcomers like Julian and his grandma. Because of my increasingly close relationship with children and their family members in the Bay Street Community School Parent Center, I now tended to view education in concrete terms as I connected with children and their families. My narrative had shifted from the somewhat more abstract and formal view to a more concrete and personalized view. Although I did not give up my earlier view about the value of Western education, I became more aware of the narrative origins and legitimacy of criticisms such as those expressed by Julian’s grandma. I also came to see positive assessments such as those of the visiting scholar in much the same light. I came to see judgments about the system, good or bad, as narrative expressions.

I had a strong sense of the cultural richness and value associated with a Chinese background, and my changing narrative sense of education contributed to the fact that very early in my work I sought a bridge

that would link the West and the East. Using the bridge metaphor, I imagined newcomers bringing important values and beliefs from the East and contributing to the multiculturalism in Canada. I wanted to provide a picture of newcomers as both learners and teachers in their host country. Narratively, my mind became oriented to cross-cultural influences and benefits rather than to the more one-sided view with which I had begun.

As I came to learn more about Canada I realized that all Canadians, even Native Canadians when viewed with an historical eye, have newcomer family narratives that involve a cultural bridge crossing. This insight is central to my discussion below of the narrative difficulties my students often have with course subject matter on landscapes in transition.

This basic narrative shaping of my teaching subject matter is central to my teaching. As seen in my later description of my course syllabus, the principal purpose is to work with student teachers in such a way that they see themselves from both sides of the bridge and that they work with their students as people with immigrant cultural histories that may be seen from both sides of the bridge. In general terms, my own narrative shifted from a search for good educational models to bring back to China to a quest to understand both systems and a search for ways to build this idea into my teacher education work. This also led me to what I think of as a more narratively oriented inquiry. I now wanted to explore the historical cultural origins of educational views rather than document so-called positive and negative aspects of Chinese and Canadian education. This narrative thinking (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) governed my research with the Chinese families and their children in Bay Street Community School and its community in downtown Toronto and it governs my preservice teaching. Student teachers, and their students, ideally work toward a narrative understanding of themselves and their cultures rather than searching for similarities and differences. In class, we work on ways my students may see themselves, and the students they teach, on a cultural bridge.

I want now to turn to how this personal narrative history of myself as teacher, and the contained narrative concept of teacher education subject matter, plays out in one of my preservice courses. In the following discussion, I focus on those matters that the students find most puzzling. These student puzzles reflect fundamental narrative threads, and my teaching aimed at addressing these puzzles is framed in terms of narrative inquiry as a practical way of thinking (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006; Xu & Connelly, 2010).

## THE COURSE: *ISSUES IN EDUCATION*

*Issues in Education* is one of the preservice courses I teach. This course was created by our Faculty of Education before I joined the faculty. The purpose of the course is to reflect the changing Canadian society in response to increasing cultural diversity. The course addresses contemporary issues teachers face in our increasingly multilingual and multicultural Canadian classrooms with a focus on how to support and teach English language learners in the mainstream classroom. When I started teaching this course, I made modifications and additions to the course readings and assignment requirements to implement my strong belief in the narratively framed subject matter of cultural diversity and inclusive education as seen in the above discussion. The following is extracted from my modifications and additions to the course syllabus that I had used.

### **Course Description and Expectations**

This course will help prepare students to face the challenges and reap the rewards of teaching in our increasingly multilingual and multicultural Canadian classrooms. Students will gain a deeper understanding of the process of second (additional) language acquisition and their roles as teachers in that process. Given the inseparability of language, culture, and narrative history, language and cultural issues will be studied in the context of narratives of language and culture. We will examine our own narratives and consider the relevance of our own experiential histories to those of our students. Issues such as diversity, discrimination, bullying, and racial name-calling will be critically examined. Based on our understanding of our own narrative histories, and using theoretical principles and research findings on language learning and teaching, experiential learning, and reflective practice, we will move toward practical classroom applications. Classroom management strategies, instructional strategies, evaluative techniques, student stories, and the use of high quality teaching resources will be treated in ways that model multicultural learning environments. Similarly, responses to readings and assignments will challenge students to make links from additional language learning theories and research findings to their own practices in multicultural classroom settings. Strategies for enhancing English language learning across the curriculum will be demonstrated and discussed.

### *An Inclusive Lesson Plan*

One of the course assignments, designed to prepare students for their practicum experience, is for students to design an *inclusive lesson plan*. Students have had instruction in other courses on the purpose of lesson plans, what they look like, and how to draft such plans. The course assignment follows.

### **Inclusive Lesson Plan**

This assignment will be done with a partner or a group of three. Begin with a lesson plan that you or your partner/group member used in your first placement. The grade level, topic and subject are your choice, but you need to bear in mind: Of the four key commonplaces in curriculum (learner, subject matter, teacher and milieu), the learner is of our utmost important concern. In the broader context of social cultural diversity, “how best to teach/engage EAL learners in the mainstream classroom” is one of the urgent issues in our multicultural schools no matter what subject matter or topic you focus on. Start your lesson plan with the learner in your mind: Who are your students? What ethnic, linguistic, cultural, socio-economic backgrounds do they come from? Are they native-born Canadian children or newcomers? What additional language(s) do the students speak at home in addition to English? What personal and cultural knowledge do the children and their families have that can be brought forward to share with one another in class?

Your lesson plan may reflect how you respond to the following questions in your teaching practice:

1. How do you perceive and approach children who appear ethnically and culturally different from you?
2. How do you define and understand “culture”?
3. How do you define and understand diversity and multiculturalism?
4. How do you define “language proficiency”? How do you perceive and approach language diversity?
5. Is language learned or acquired?
6. Is language instruction the business of language teachers only?
7. How do you teach/engage EAL learners in a mainstream classroom?
8. How does your lesson plan incorporate the diverse backgrounds of your students in class?
9. How can you engage parents and/or grandparents in their children/grandchildren’s learning and how does that engagement enable your students to bring forward the knowledge from their diverse personal and cultural narratives?
10. Who are the learners in multicultural education?

The following is a lesson plan suggestion. This suggestion reflects the idea of intergenerational family educational narratives. I discuss this idea and my own research in this area as appropriate to my students’ interests. Students are not required to follow this suggestion. However, many do follow up and the surrounding class discussion is useful for all students.

### **Family Educational Narratives**

You might follow the curriculum ideas in some school boards where children interview family members to trace their cultural origins. The children also talk with parents and grandparents about education, language and culture in their lives. You may model after lesson plans that you find on line or in other published resources, such as the ones discussed in the textbook and in our class. Make sure you give proper reference to the

sources you cite and explain why you like them and what changes you have made to meet the needs of your students according to your observation and experience in your Practicum.

### **PRESERVICE TEACHER CANDIDATES: INTERPRETATION OF SUBJECT MATTER IN TERMS OF PERSONAL NARRATIVES AND MILIEU**

In this section, I briefly discuss two fundamentally important responses to this assignment. The responses are fundamental because they are narratively driven and reflect ways of thinking about culture and about one's own cultural identity. Student teachers' narratives are such that their experience of the subject matter of cross-cultural bridge crossing, and of how they view this subject matter and its milieu in schools to which they are assigned, often leads them to think that cultural histories may not be relevant to their situation. Because of these narrative forces, preservice teacher candidates may, and often do in their situations, think of culture as something rather static. The sense of Canada, and of local communities, as being dynamic cultural places with immigrant histories and changing future landscapes, may not coincide with some student views. In the following, I discuss class responses under two headings "My school has no newcomers and no need for inclusive lesson plans" and "They should adapt to us."

#### *My School Has no Newcomers and no Need for Inclusive Lesson Plans*

Some students placed in all white mainstream schools said that there were few or no cultural issues in their schools as there were no ESL children, nor children of special needs in the schools. Hence, they would say, they did not know how to do the assignment as there was little or no need for inclusive education. From my studies, I understand that my students were not alone in holding such perceptions of cultural diversity and inclusive education. How to engage all children, including those from different white groups, in multicultural education and prepare every child for a society that is inclusive for all in a world that is more and more interdependently connected is one of my commitments and is the focus of my preservice teaching. But saying so is quite different than bringing the idea to life as a part of my preservice teaching. Thinking narratively about oneself as a soon-to-be teacher, about



individual school students, and about local communities is my instructional frame for addressing this response.

As I have stated earlier, I believe that it is important to engage all children, including white children with a diversity of cultural backgrounds, in culturally responsive and multiculturally sensitive and understanding curriculum. The world is increasingly interdependently connected, and the illusion of a culturally static community and society will inevitably give way to a sense of cultural landscapes in transition. Therefore, in my teaching, I persist with the inclusive lesson plan assignment, adding elements and taking as much time as possible to help students make narrative sense of the assignment. My intention is to help my students understand that when we talk about education in terms of cultural diversity, multicultural education, and inclusive education, we are thinking of all children, not only those who do not speak English as their home language or children of special needs. We all have cultural histories when we look beneath the blanket of the here and now. An inclusive curriculum refers to children of so-called mainstream communities as well as to others from communities of difference. The key teacher education activity is for preservice teacher candidates to look into their own narrative histories and into those of their students. The idea is to see not so much as who they are, but to see how they come to be over the generations. The idea of *intergenerational family educational narratives* is my way of bridging “we are this way” to “we came to be this way.”

### *They Should Adapt to Us*

A second generalized response to the assignment is one I have here labeled “They should adapt to us.” This idea is seldom stated this boldly in class, but it is a view heard directly in public life. Even more so, there is a hidden statement of this sentiment in the always well-intentioned policies and school efforts to help newcomers adapt to and integrate with Canadian society. Our urge and generosity in helping newcomers adapt linguistically and culturally carries with it an unfortunate burden of “they should adapt to us.” My own research with newcomer families revealed many such instances. But the significance of the concept of a cultural bridge for thinking about newcomer family educational narratives suggests that while it is true that newcomers need to adapt and integrate, there is a greater truth in an inevitable process of mutual adaptation and reciprocity between newcomer and host cultures. Immigrant adaptation is not a matter of replacing the old with the new; it is not a matter of exchanging one language

for another and one value system for another. It is a process of merging historically founded cultural and personal narratives of experience. Intergenerational family educational narratives are sites for the intersection and interaction of diverse cultures. Newcomer narratives can never be replaced but only altered and reshaped with much being retained and taking on new shape. Although not as obvious, the same is true for the recipient society and its cultural narratives, which are also being influenced, modified, and reshaped in this process. It is widely, and publically, understood that Canadian society is a *landscape in transition* in large part due to immigration. Although a newcomer's adaptive learning may be most obvious and most easily identified, host culture learnings, although perhaps less obvious, are, in the long run, equally important. The schools are one of the main sites for the meeting of cultures on a cross-cultural bridge.

I have learned to understand that some of my students, most of whom are white, and who experienced a primarily Eurocentric curriculum, may still hold the view that it is newcomers who should adapt to and integrate with "mainstream" society. Hence when it comes to class discussions in *Issues in Education*, my students easily understand why and how to support and teach EAL learners and children of special needs, but often find it hard to make sense of why and how to engage white children in multicultural education. This is especially true for students assigned to teach in a seemingly all white "mainstream" school.

In the past 3 years, I have noticed this student perplexity emerging especially after the first practicum assignment. Those placed in a white "mainstream" school often tell me that it is difficult and even impossible to teach an "inclusive" lesson plan. Others might say there is no need for inclusive education as there is no cultural diversity in their school, nor, they might say, are there EAL learners nor others with special needs.

Most of my students are from what might be considered white mainstream communities. These students came to our preservice program with well-intended educational beliefs. They are passionate and idealistic. They readily understood the place of course subject matter for "others" but find it a narratively driven hurdle to see all students as other. I often say "we are all 'other' to each other" as a discussion starter for imagining the relevance of this subject matter for apparently relatively homogeneous classes. In one of the course assignments, I ask my students to observe and take notes of educational issues in school during their practice teaching and to incorporate those issues, and strategic solutions to them, in their lesson plans, plans that might help cultivate an inclusive learning environment and community. The idea is to expand *Issues in Education* to refer to issues

faced by all, rather than only by minorities. But this exercise alone is not enough to bridge the gap because cultural histories are hidden in the mists of narrative history.

## STUDENT REFLECTIONS

An important quality of narrative inquiry in curriculum and teaching is the potential to structure reflections useful for understanding and shaping curriculum and teaching. Connelly and Clandinin (1988) first outlined a series of reflective exercises in their *Teachers as Curriculum Planners: Narratives of Experience*. These ideas have since developed and have been represented for narrative inquiry research purposes. I have developed a narrative reflection exercise, which has been useful for my students as they struggle with the subject matter of Issues in Education. I also find these reflections provide insights for me as I continually adjust my course to the milieu where I have been situated.

At the beginning of the class when we first discuss how to integrate cultural diversity and inclusive education in school curriculum, the difficulties and constraints in implementing an inclusive teaching approach generate lively discussion. In addition to the *inclusive lesson plan* exercise, I ask my students to reflect on the process. Using a reflective narrative approach, I encourage “learning by doing” by assigning a reflective writing piece following a self-inquiry into his or her cultural heritage and positioning him or herself in multicultural Canadian school settings. The following is one version of the reflective assignment.

### Reflection Piece

In a 3-page (double-spaced) paper, begin by identifying yourself with respect to your ethnic, linguistic, social, cultural, educational background, and/or anything that is important for you to identify and/or position yourself in the cultural diversity. See the following questions as a reference, keeping in mind that there is no right or wrong answer to any of them.

- (1) What does multiculturalism in the Canadian context mean to you?
- (2) How do you define and understand “diversity”? Where do you place yourself within “multicultural” Canada?
- (3) How have you experienced diversity? How might that experience inform your teaching in the Canadian setting?
- (4) What are one or two reflective thoughts about teaching and learning in multicultural schools from your experience and observation from your practicum?

I am almost certain that others using reflection activities have found, as have I, that a reflective exercise wonderfully complements other course work aspects. Not all students, of course, find self-reflection easy and useful. There is great variation among students. In general, however, I have found this reflective exercise to be a powerful teaching and learning device for the cultural subject matter of *Issues in Education*. Among the many fascinating things I have learned is something I call “But I have no culture.”

### *But I Have No Culture*

As with the development of the inclusive lesson plan assignment, some students encountered difficulties in writing a reflection piece. In something that was new to me I found that some students who grew up in a white mainstream home and community felt they had no culture. For them, “culture” seemed to apply to visible minorities or people with a different language or accent. For them, cultural diversity seems not to include the cultures of the mainstream white groups. For instance, some students, whose families moved to Canada five generations ago, were less interested or found difficulty in uncovering their cultural and family narratives. Their reflections tended to be more of a restatement of what is discussed in the public media on cultural diversity and multicultural education, rather than reflections of personal and cultural family narratives.

Through various course work activities and discussions, we have class discussions on the values embedded in the idea of cultural diversity. We discuss cultural diversity among white students and students whose families have been in Canada for several generations. We discuss the *landscapes in transition* in student family histories including those whose ancestors came to Canada from European countries. We reflect on the narrative histories behind apparently monolingual and monocultural community identity. I make an effort to cultivate open, curious and creative minds among our teacher candidates as I believe that teachers are role models for new generations and hence are builders of our future. I believe these preservice teacher candidates will, in turn, cultivate open, curious, and creative young minds among the generations to come (Xu & Connelly, 2010).

### *Historical Cultural Narratives and Teacher Education: Summing Up*

It has been a challenging task as to how to respond to my student teachers who claim there are no issues of the sort discussed in our preservice classes

because the schools are essentially monocultural. These are schools made up of white students from families that have, for generations, spoken in English as a first language. But beneath this apparent monocultural surface, there is rich diversity. The Windsor area has a long immigrant history as, for that matter, does Canada as a whole. In my short time teaching in this setting, I have shifted the emphasis in my courses, and in the assignment aforementioned, from a search for issues to a more empirical, narratively driven, descriptive cultural inquiry. By adapting the idea of newcomer intergenerational family narratives, the cultural and linguistic narrative histories of the students in my class become a rich source of cross-cultural and intergenerational educational discussion. I have found that many students may then eagerly take up an array of such exercises in their student/teaching classes and are excited as they are able to explore, in a somewhat similar and related way, the array of cross-cultural issues that are embedded in their own lives and that may be traced to their own, and to their students' own, immigrant narrative histories.

As I work with student teachers from cultures with which I am unfamiliar, I am less able to draw on my own cultural background. My prior work was always with the Chinese but now my students, and their students, have a wide diversity of backgrounds. This narrative process is giving me new insight into student narrative histories in our modern world. Reciprocal learning takes place in my classes between my students and me and it takes place among my preservice teacher candidates. The world that offsets my teaching is no longer China, nor Canada, nor Chinese immigrants in Canada, but all of these and more as preservice teacher candidates and their students with different family educational narratives find themselves on cultural bridges. I am standing at a point in my own narrative in which my world, which seemed to open up in such a massive way when I moved to Canada, is now, under the influence of my teaching, becoming even more open, diverse, and global. I am constantly learning and growing together with my students on extended and expanded landscapes in transition.

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# TURNING POINTS: REFLECTIONS ON THE AUTUMN LEAVES

Debbie Pushor, Julian Kitchen and Darlene Ciuffetelli  
Parker

October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010

Good morning, Julian and Darlene!

As I gaze out the window of my home office, I am captured by the early morning light playing on the yellows and oranges of the autumn leaves. How few leaves remain on our large old birch tree, how fully the lawn is covered in swathes and mounds of color. It is a turning point in the year. I am struck by the significance of my backyard landscape. Just as I am surrounded by the autumn of the year, I am immersed in a turn to the autumn season of the writing of this book. Seasons – in time, in the processes of writing and editing. Leaves – from trees, falling gently to the sunlit grass. Leaves – of paper, finding their place in the rich chapters of this book. As I write, and reflect, I feel the movement of time and space. I am drawn away from my home landscape, by recalled moments and memories of our shared journey and by the images and stories so poignantly captured by the teacher educator authors within this book. I am drawn back home again as I work to express on paper my thoughts and feelings, my new understandings of curriculum making, and my hopes and possibilities for the future of teacher education.

Julian and Darlene, it seems so fitting that we met in spring, a time of new growth and fresh beginnings. I have this image of meeting you on the

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running path in San Diego. Having just been introduced to Julian in an AERA teacher education symposium the day before, but not knowing you yet, Darlene, I laugh in recollection of the hurried introductions we made as the two of you ran in one direction and I ran in the other, all of us running backwards for a moment, calling out to one another to prolong the moment before we each picked our pace up and turned back to our runs. Even then, brand new in our relationship, it seemed we had so much to say to one another.

It's been a rich and educative process to co-edit this book with you, another turning point for me in my sense of identity as a member of the teacher education community. I remember our first teleconference, the two of you at Darlene's home in Toronto, me here in mine in Saskatoon, as we talked about this book project - what its purpose was, why it was important, what we wanted the book to contribute to the field of teacher education. I remember feeling a little anxious before my phone rang, feeling tentative as our conversation began. Our relationship was still new, and though our lives were threaded together, with your doctoral research with Michael Connelly and mine with Jean Clandinin, there was much we did not know about each other or each other's work. How much has changed over the past year and a half as we have exchanged hundreds of emails, talked many times on the phone, and met in person as we've worked on this book! When we were together on the telephone last Thursday, it seemed that none of us could speak fast enough, we had so much to share about the authors' chapters and the rich insights and interconnections we saw in, and between, them.

I guess why I am struck by this reminiscence is that it speaks to how relational this work is - narrative inquiry, curriculum making, and teacher education. All three are centered in experience "... and experience, as John Dewey taught, is a matter of people in relation contextually and temporally" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 189). Cheryl Craig makes this visible in her foundational chapter as she surveys the field of narrative inquiry. She provides both an unfolding chronology of developments in narrative inquiry which contribute to current understandings of teacher knowledge and teaching, and a map of interrelationships between narrative inquirers and conceptualizations arising from their inquiries. We see, for example, how Craig, situated in the context of the accountability era in the United States, built on Clandinin's and Connelly's narrative terms "school stories-stories of school" and "teacher stories-stories of teachers" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996), adding two more sets of paired stories to them: "reform stories-stories of reform" and "community stories-stories of community" (Craig, 2001). We see how the relationships of inquirers and inquiries are extended over time and in the particularities of different places. In the chapters which follow Cheryl's, we

continue to feel the significance of these relationships as certain narrative threads weave in and through the stories the teacher educators tell of their curriculum making, sometimes in relation with other colleagues, and always alongside teacher candidates in their classes.

As I sit here this morning, it is the narrative threads that I am captivated by – the understandings, the continued wonders, the hopes and dreams for the future – that resound and resonate throughout the pages of this book. I'd love to hear what is captivating your thinking on this autumn day as leaves fall and scatter outside my window ... and as they find their way into this final manuscript. What stories do you want to tell of this book, of your sense making, of the narrative threads you see weaving their way through the various chapters?

In relationship,  
Deb

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October 14, 2010  
Hi Deb and Darlene,

As I too gaze out the window of my home office, I am equally entranced by the beauty of the autumn leaves. Over the past few days, the last leaves turned yellow and the ground is a quilt of red and yellow. Others are sad to see the end of summer, yet I celebrate the cycle of life represented in the change of seasons. As our work as editors comes to a close, I am proud of what we and our contributors have accomplished and am hopeful that the publication of our book in the spring will make a significant contribution to teacher education.

I am delighted, Deb, that you have written us this letter and have invited us to share our thoughts in this form. Letter writing has been an important part of my professional development as a teacher and teacher educator since Darlene and I engaged in correspondence during our first course with Michael Connelly in 1993. Letter writing offers opportunities to grow through reflection, sharing and collaboration, something Darlene demonstrates beautifully in her chapter in this volume. Over the years, our correspondence has enriched both of us enormously, personally and professionally. I believe our letters in this chapter will highlight the significance of this volume and provide a look forward to new seasons in narrative inquiry and teacher education. I also think they will make explicit how we have worked relationally to develop and enact a pedagogy of teacher education (Loughran, 2006) grounded in narrative ways of knowing and experiencing.

To teach teachers authentically and write honestly about the tensions we experience as practitioners requires taking risks and making ourselves vulnerable as educators. John Loughran (2006) writes:

Teaching about teaching should not be confused with modeling teaching practice ... it involves unpacking teaching in ways that give students access to the pedagogical reasoning, uncertainties and dilemmas of practice that are inherent in understanding teaching as being problematic. (p. 6)

Teaching authentically and writing about tensions in our teaching takes courage as it opens us up to criticism by professional colleagues. Our authors demonstrate courage as they are fully present personally and professionally in the narratives they share with readers. In recent years, Cheryl Craig has written honestly in major journals about the tensions of living, teaching and researching in the contested space of Texas schools in the throes of accountability demands (e.g., Craig, 2009a, 2009b, 2010). Stefinee Pinnegar and Mary Lynn Hamilton share narrative fragments in which they, as teacher educator researchers, live through professional and personal tensions. By unpacking these stories in the context of exploring the lives of teacher educators and researchers, they make explicit the challenges faced when we as teacher educators turn our attention to dilemmas of practice.

While I am naturally an introvert, I choose to risk living authentically alongside teacher candidates and peers. Narrative inquiry helped me better understand my personal and professional identities and taught me that experiences are richer when both head and heart are involved. In my chapter on metaphor, and in my teacher education classes, I share my stories as a learner, teacher and teacher educator because I have learned that both teacher candidates and teacher educators are better able to reflect on their personal practical knowledge when experienced practitioners share their stories and make explicit the dilemmas of practice they face. I hope that sharing my metaphor and reflections will inspire other teacher educators to embark on such a journey of self discovery and will provide support for them along their journey. In her chapter, Grace Feuerverger wears her heart on her sleeve as she tells stories of being a child of Holocaust survivors and how these lived experiences have shaped her pedagogical approach to teaching language, culture and identity to graduate students. While the experiences are Grace's alone, her in-depth rendering of her personal experiences and classroom practices offers possibilities to other teacher educators for creating powerful educative experiences by living authentically alongside their students.

One of the biggest challenges in schools and, particularly, universities is to develop collaborative cultures of teaching and research. The chapter by the teacher educators at Kaye College, the ACE team, is both an inspiration and a plotline of possibility for others. It is inspiring to see the shifting, responsive, and relational way in which they have collaborated closely for many years, both as teachers and as researchers. As they lay bare the processes of their shared curriculum making and teaching, and their shared research and writing, they invite us to consider the notion of relationship through multiple and expanded lenses. In their collaboration they inquire not only into the connections between people but also the “connections between people, ideas, practice, knowledge creation, spaces and opportunities for learning” (Turniansky, Barak, Tuval, Gidron, & Mansur, 2010). Relationships between and among people, places, things, processes, and activities truly make their “professional knowledge landscape” both “an intellectual and a moral landscape” (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995, p. 5). These relationships, between and among, raise questions for the ACE team – and correspondingly for all of us as teacher educators – about the messiness of collaboration and the messiness of teacher education.

The journey has included moments of frustration and hardship. It has even forced us to confront dilemmas of practice. I am pleased we have lived this process openly and honestly. It truly has been authentic work – work of the mind and the heart – and the results make the journey worthwhile.

So, in addition to celebrating the cycle of life as the leaves turn, I thank you for being my companions on this wonderful journey. I now turn the page over to Darlene and invite her to reflect on our shared journey.

Sincerely,  
Julian



October 16, 2010

Dear Deb and Julian,

Autumn has always been a turning away from the dog days of summer and a turning toward a hurried routine of work and family life. It also signifies a time of new beginnings: a turn toward a new grade for my children; birthdays and anniversaries to plan and celebrate; the opening of hockey season as well as my children’s tennis tournaments that are nail biters to the bitter end. It also signifies another year turned over, another year of my own university teaching, meetings and service, research and writing deadlines. It is a bustling whirlwind of new activity, always, at this time of year. It is a change of season that puzzles me with end-of-summer breezes one day,

blustery torrential rains another. I often panic in its hurriedness while yearning to bask in its wonder – the “change” happens so quickly for me.

And then, almost always, there is a moment of calm surrender – a cool breeze of fall that is warmed by the sunshine filtering through the tree-lined canopied street in my Toronto neighbourhood. That is where I am today, like the two of you, in my home office. As I look out through my wooden window pane, I see the natural beauty of this season, where cardinals come calling frequently on the big ol’ ash tree in our front yard. The tree is so high and close to my window that I am apt to catch the red of the songbird. The cardinal captures my attention, in my hurried life, turns to me and sings, “Pay attention.” And I do.

Yes, indeed the leaves are falling, turning the drive and outdoor spaces of our home with yellow – a yellow blanketed path of transition, symbolizing the transition of our collaborative work together, as we come to the end of this journeyed path we have been on as editors and writers of this important book. I pause to consider this relational work of ours, as I sit in my study, and I pay attention to the wonders of our journey.

I am proud of our collaborative curriculum making, Deb and Julian. Like Deb, I am drawn back in time to that spring run in San Diego, our unique ‘meeting of minds,’ during a quick pause in our running. We continued our run in opposite directions, only to come together again and again, across the vast spaces of Canada and through various communications in between. I am drawn back to the process of our collaboration, from the inception of this book project, to the ‘living in the midst’ of curriculum making alongside the both of you. In this moment of calm surrender I am drawn to attend to how we gured and re-gured our work in narrative inquiry together and our place on this important teacher education journey, how we paid attention to each other’s stories of experience and to our respective backgrounds with narrative inquiry knowledge, and how we made connections to each other’s work and to the work of our authors.

Thus, Julian, I take up your invitation to consider the narrative threads that run through this book for me. I turn to the three chapters in the section Teacher educators working narratively alongside teacher candidates. My chapter on related literacy narratives, Lynnette and Amy’s chapter on narratively reacting on democratic practices, and Shelley’s chapter on body mapping to narratively inquire into teacher candidates’ music experiences are all storied accounts of how teacher educators live in the midst with teacher candidates. Curriculum making is always in transition, shifting and uncertain at times, as seen clearly in Lynnette’s and Amy’s social studies work with teacher candidates. As Lynnette and Amy delivered a curriculum of social studies

which they anticipated would develop teacher candidates' ability to teach in democratic ways, they bumped against unforeseen events as they lived alongside their teacher candidates' lived experiences of social studies curriculum. Their narrative reactions also shifted and turned their curriculum making alongside their students, and the curriculum of social studies instruction also shifted as time passed. At times uncertain of where their narrative reactions would lead them, they used story to understand their practices and, together with their teacher candidates, they examined and then "re-lived" their social studies curriculum by modeling a democratic way of being and experiencing the world.

In Shelley's work, we also see how a teacher educator's tension with how to alleviate the fear of music teaching for teacher candidates both led to a reaction of her past practice of music education teaching and to a new way of living alongside teacher candidates' view of their musical experiences in order to "interrupt the fear they experience around music teaching." Shelley's account, she says herself, was in the midst as she continued to puzzle and wonder about her dilemma in teaching music education. Her use of body mapping in her music course led to her teacher candidates' awareness, as well as Shelley's realization, that informal and formal music experiences "shape and contextualize curriculum-making in our music education class." The body mapping assignment enabled teacher candidates to both draw and narrate their personal music experiences and eventually deconstruct previously held assumptions about music teaching. Likewise for Shelley, she came to realize that "engaging in this visual and written narrative process with teacher candidates has been foundational to changing [her] practice, enabling [her] to attend to the personal experiences of her teacher candidates."

My own work with teacher candidates and the narrative inquiry method of related literacy narratives enabled me to understand the complexity of curriculum making alongside teacher candidates. I did not lead the letter writing exercises but, instead, offered feedback and insight into what was written about from the perspective of teacher candidates' understanding of our course, their practicum experiences, and their insights along the way about teaching, learning, and schooling. Some might think there was some risk involved on my part as a teacher educator to allow for a 'carte blanche' of writing about the course readings, experiences, and other held beliefs by teacher candidates. On the contrary, although a risk it was, the related literacy narratives, and my reactive responses to the teacher candidates' letters, was an authentic way to live alongside them and to make a living curriculum with them. We see in the stories of these teacher educators that curriculum making is always in transition, shifting and turning, and even uncertain at times. It

is not until we know the lived experiences of our teacher candidates that we can make a curriculum of lives, a curriculum that weaves their personal practical knowledge, and their past, present and future, together with our own. We see the bumping up that sometimes occurs, between people, ideas, beliefs, as we invite the sharing and intertwining of stories of experience in our classrooms. As teacher educators, we make and live curriculum, and, as we narratively inquire into our curriculum making, we remake it and relive it in new ways – as a way of being and experiencing the world, and as a way of teaching.

In this moment of calm surrender, watching the coloured leaves stir as the cardinal moves about in my big old tree, and listening to his call to “pay attention,” I am struck by how, in our narrative inquiries into curriculum making in teacher education, it is both teacher educators and teacher candidates who come to deconstruct previously held assumptions about teaching and learning, about subject matter, about schools and milieus. In all of the chapters in this book, we see the teacher educators’ curriculum making alongside teacher candidates as complex work. We see the risk involved and yet we also see the authenticity as they co-construct a living curriculum together. In this moment of calm, I have a heightened awareness of our lives in constant transition and, yes, in constant motion alongside others. I guess it is only in the hurriedness of everyday life and in the slowed down moments of inquiry, in the gentle breezes and in the torrential rains, that as teacher educators we live amidst these turning points as we make curriculum and live a curriculum of lives alongside teacher candidates.

Warmly,  
Darlene

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October 20, 2010

Dear Julian and Darlene,

Your words resonate with me so strongly –

≈ ≈ tensions, vulnerabilities, complexities

≈ ≈ in the midst of the hurriedness.

Teacher candidates I am currently working with are engaged in their “knowing students and milieu” project, an aspect of their *curriculum of parents* in my language arts methodology course (see Chapter 11). In our class on Monday, some of the teacher candidates informed me that the principal of the school in which they are working asked them to work with students only at the school as he feels it may, in some instances, raise questions of safety if they are in contact with families off the school landscape and that, perhaps, some families, given the complexities of their

lives, may not want such involvement anyway. I know the teacher candidates felt vulnerable raising this concern, caught between the principal's directions and the way I had shaped the project. In that moment I felt vulnerable too; I felt as if my beliefs and practices, my personal practical knowledge, were being called into question. I can only guess at the principal's sense of vulnerability but I suspect, given the decision he made, that he was feeling vulnerably positioned as well.

I called the school yesterday to arrange a conversation with the principal. He chose a meeting time when his vice principal and the teacher coordinating the project could also be present so they could most fully express their thoughts on the project. I spent the rest of the day filled with tension, imagining the many ways our meeting may play out. That place of anticipation is always such a hard place to be in. We had our meeting this morning – and it went well. It did begin slowly, stiffly, tentatively. I listened as the principal spoke of the school, the community, and the families. He listened as I spoke of the course, Schwab's (1978) curricular commonplaces, my hopes and intentions for a *curriculum of parents*. I am pleased to tell you that we found common ground, a way of adjusting aspects of the project to reflect the principal's beliefs and knowledge, his lived experience, *and* my own. We decided on a new way of matching each teacher candidate with a student from the school to provide the teacher candidate with an opportunity to come to know that child as an individual, a learner and language user, *and* as a member of a family and a community. By thoughtfully attending to the particularity and lived context of each individual – the students, their families, and the teacher candidates – and to take time to place them in purposeful partnerships, we were able to structure this experience to enhance everyone's safety and their opportunities to benefit from this experience. For all of that I am happy!

Julian and Darlene, what I want you to know is that words from your letters continued to live within me throughout this whole experience –

≈ ≈ to live relationally

≈ ≈ to teach authentically

≈ ≈ to make sense within the complexity.

It's been interesting to be in a space where I am immersed in making and living curriculum in teacher education and, in the very same moment, immersed in writing about that curriculum making. As I moved between the place of my home office and the pages of this book and the place of the school office and the concerns of the principal, I found myself holding the notion of narrative authority in the forefront of my thinking. For Olson



(2008), narrative authority is “not only what we know, but how we know, how we come to know, and why we choose to know in particular ways” (p. 378). In Chapter 12, Dixie Keyes wrote about turning to Olson’s conceptualization of narrative authority as a way to make sense of “the unharmonious events that challenged [her] epistemological stance as a teacher educator.” In Chapter 10, Ramona Cutri made explicit her dilemma as a teacher educator as she considered how to create a space for teacher candidates to develop narrative authority from their lived experiences with diversity while, at the same time, she felt a need to enact her own narrative authority, ensuring that teacher candidates examined negative beliefs and assumptions about diverse people sometimes at play in their narratives. Like Dixie, I see narrative authority as central to our curriculum making. When I think about my language arts methodology course, and the *curriculum of parents* thread that runs through it, I see that I teach who I am, I teach what I know, I teach what I believe. Like Ramona, I feel the tension when my narrative authority bumps up against someone else’s, especially when that individual has come to know, and chooses to know, in ways quite different than my own. From all of these stories, I see how those moments can be turning points for us in our relationships and in our curriculum making, as we negotiate what knowledge – and whose knowledge – counts.

It has been such turning points, sometimes personal and sometimes professional, that have prompted many of the teacher educators’ shifts or changes in their curriculum making. We see this, as an example, in Shijing Xu’s chapter. As an individual who has experienced *expanded and extended landscapes in transition* as she moved from her rural place of birth, to education and teaching in Chinese universities to education in Canada and, now, to teacher education, Shijing describes one of her teaching purposes as finding ways in her curriculum making by which her teacher candidates come to see cultural histories as relevant to their situation and their cultural landscape as dynamic and in transition. Turning points, points in time in our lived experiences, contextualized by relationships with people, things and events, and situated in place, demarcate those significant points in our lives which call us to attend to what and whose knowledge counts, and why, as we make curriculum of lives in teacher education.

And here we are at another turning point, Julian and Darlene, as we send the leaves of this final chapter to the publisher, and we bring to a close this important work we have engaged in together. Situated in this moment, with a manuscript just hours from being complete, I look backward with pleasure to the shared excitement and interest in teacher education that brought us together to conceptualize this work and I look forward with anticipation to

the future spring season in which our book will move outward and into the hands, and I hope hearts, of fellow teacher educators. Hearing your thoughts about the narrative threads that spoke to you between and among the authors' chapters was such a rich gift to receive at the end of this process. And thank you for responding so thoughtfully to my own musings on the narrative threads that resonated with me in my present time and place.

Now that we've each written individually, I'd love for the three of us to write collectively to our imagined reader, to bring our voices together as one as we think about the future of teacher education and the important ways in which we enrich the research in this field when we inquire thoughtfully, and narratively, into our living curriculum making. You truly have been wonderful to think and learn and write alongside throughout this book project.

With deep care and respect,  
Debbie

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Dear Reader,

As we bring our correspondence to a close, we invite you to think deeply about curriculum reform - or, perhaps more accurately, curriculum re-form. As you know, curriculum reform is typically planned out on a grand scale - at the national level (e.g., *No Child Left Behind* in the United States); at the provincial or state level (e.g., mandated curriculum policy documents); and at the university level (where teacher education programs are developed and revised). As practitioners, it is tempting to simply accept this "provisional version of the world" (Grumet, 2009, p. 27) "generated by the social and material histories of the people who participated in them" (p. 26). Yet, as teacher educators, we have a role to play in challenging the provisional version of the world underlying grand scale reform as we engage in the development of teacher education in our institutions.

For Debbie, this became evident last year during the throes of program renewal in their College of Education. What struck her as profound was how visible the teacher educators who developed the proposed framework were in that framework, both in what they had written in and what they had not. As the proposed framework came forward to faculty, the faculty body was asked to approve the framework, and in so doing, to affirm the narrative authority of the program developers. Faculty were encouraged to adopt for themselves the program developers' provisional version of the world - and to seek a place for themselves in that world. For Darlene and Julian, the shift at their faculty with new hires in the last ve years (including Darlene and Julian) and veteran

faculty members trying to fit into a reform vision of a comprehensive university, has created layers of tension and dialogue around whose knowledge counts and why. As their department lives out a narrative of reform, we turn to other lived stories of re-form (Craig, 2009a) that remind us that knowledge communities focus on the commonality of experience, are supported by a practical view of lived experience, and are meaningful because relationship matters across groups of knowledgeable educators.

As the authors in this book tell stories of their narrative inquiries into curriculum making in their teacher education classrooms, they share competing and conflicting stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 1995) of curriculum reform. Their stories are stories of re-form, of continuously making and living curriculum, remaking and reliving it, in the context of the personal and particular, in the context of lives and how they are lived in relation to others. Darlene thinks of the teacher candidates she currently has in her methodology class. Four of the 35 are male. A group of them speak a language other than English in their lives outside our classroom. They are dancers, artists, musicians, actors, poets and athletes in places beyond their classroom walls. They express a deep concern for social and ecological justice and they commit their time to a diverse range of volunteer activities above and beyond their full time studies. They share deeply their life chronicles of family and school with their peers and they express their worldview in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We share this vivid picture in order to bring up close the personal and the particular. Our teacher candidates have great breadth and depth of personal practical knowledge and of narrative authority. As their lives enter our classrooms and intertwine with our own, as we come to know each other better and our relationships strengthen, our curriculum is formed – and re-formed. We recognize that our re-form is provisional also, just as the grand scale reform is. Perhaps the difference is that we are living our own provisional version of the world, rather than trying to find a place within someone else's.

In curriculum re-form, issues of knowledge and whose knowledge counts don't go away. We saw that in Ramona's tension as she wondered how to position her narrative authority alongside that of the teacher candidates in their stories of diversity. We saw it in Debbie's very recent experience with the principal as they negotiated living out a curriculum of parents in a school context. Perhaps the issue isn't with the tensions, the vulnerabilities, the dilemmas themselves. Perhaps, instead, the issue is whether or not we have an opportunity to negotiate them. In grand scale curriculum reform, we are expected to accept what is developed and mandated. In curriculum re-form, we expect to be always "in the midst." Grumet (2009) asserted that "curriculum innovation ... will always be contested, as it should be" (p. 29). The narrative

inquiries into curriculum making in teacher education, storied in the chapters of this book, are all stories of contesting curriculum. As the teacher educators live and teach authentically alongside teacher candidates, as they work to slow down the hurriedness of the day in order to “pay attention,” to look closely at the messiness and uncertainty, they contest the grand scale curriculum as they make curriculum of lives.

When the three of us began this co-edited book in the spring, we intended to make explicit the use of narrative inquiry by teacher educators living alongside teacher candidates, just as Connelly and Clandinin made explicit their groundbreaking use of narrative inquiry working alongside classroom teachers. Given our intention, we share a quote on reform from *Teachers as Curriculum Planners*, realigned to speak to the work of teacher educators. In curriculum re-form,

there is ... tremendous power and potential in the experience of [teacher educators]. We understand how spirited [teacher educators] may revolutionize their practices through reflection on their own experiences and new ideas, and how they can transform new ideas into powerful curriculum programs through this reective process. (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988, p. xv)

We believe the stories the chapter authors tell of their narrative inquiries into their curriculum making makes this revolutionizing of practices visible. We extend an invitation to you to enter into their curriculum making as you read, to live alongside them, to make sense with them of the messiness and uncertainty, the tensions and vulnerabilities in the work of teacher education – their own and simultaneously yours. We extend a further invitation to you to take up and try out practices of possibility which the teacher educators are finding educative in their curriculum making – body mapping, related literacy narratives, metaphor, intergenerational family educational narratives, learning objects, questioning the author, life history work, establishing the teacher education classroom as a microcosm of the greater democratic society. We know you will imagine many possibilities for these narrative inquiry methods in teacher education as you take them up and as you make curriculum in varied subject matters and contexts.

At the close of Chapter 2, Cheryl Craig noted that narrative inquiry is uniquely positioned to address the most chronic problem in teaching and teacher education: the absence of research attention paid to how prospective teachers are prepared as curriculum makers in teacher education settings. We are especially proud of the chapters in our book because they illustrate how embraced traditions of narrative inquiry contribute to the meaningful examination of curriculum making in teacher education. Our book introduces

teacher educators to many of the ways in which narrative inquirers make sense of the three-dimensional landscape of teaching, while encouraging narrative inquirers to use their methods to improve teacher education practice and scholarship.

We wish you well as you take up this important challenge!

Sincere regards,

Debbie, Julian and Darlene

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## ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

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