

**CATE/ACFE**

**Canadian Association for Teacher Education  
Association canadienne de la formation à  
l'enseignement**

**Conference Keynote Presentations  
2009-2013**

*Les conférences plénières de l'ACFE 2009-2013*

**Lynn Thomas, Ed.**



**The Canadian Society for the Study of Education  
La Société canadienne pour l'étude de l'éducation**

**Published by the Canadian Association for Teacher Education (CATE) /Association canadienne de formation d'enseignement (ACFE), Ottawa, Canada, [www.csse.ca/cate](http://www.csse.ca/cate)**

**CATE/ACFE is a constituent member of the Canadian Society for the Study of Education (CSSE) /Société canadienne pour l'étude de l'éducation (SCÉÉ), Ottawa, Canada, [www.csse.ca](http://www.csse.ca)**

**Copyright © 2016 by Authors**

**The copyright for each piece in this collection stays with the respective author. The authors assign anon-exclusive right to publication to the Canadian Association for Teacher Education and a non-exclusive license to educational and non-profit institutions and to individuals to use their piece in this publication for personal use and in courses of instruction provided that the pieces are used in full and this copyright statement is reproduced. Any other usage is prohibited without the expressed permission of the author.**

**We gratefully acknowledge the kind permission given to reprint the following texts by the respective editors and publishers:**

Springer Academic Publishers for a slightly revised version of Kosnik, C. *Changing practice and identity go hand-in-hand: A self-study of efforts to infuse digital technology into literacy courses* initially published in in A. Ovens & D. Garbett (Eds.) *Being a Self-study Researcher in a Digital World: Future-oriented Research and Pedagogy in Teacher Education*. (pp. n/a) Dordrecht: Springer Academic Publishers.

Western Washington University Press for a revised version of Chinnery, A. *On Pedagogical Responsibility and the Educational Precariat*, initially published as "Precarity and Pedagogical Responsibility," in the *Journal of Educational Controversy* 9(1): <http://cedar.wvu.edu/jec/vol9/iss1/10>

**French translation of the introduction (pp. 4-13) by Leïla G. Blili.**

**ISBN 978-0-9947451-4-9**

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank the current executive of the Canadian Association for Teacher Education (CATE), particularly Julie Mueller, Mark Hirschhorn and Jodi Nickel for inviting me to edit this collection of keynote speeches. I would also like to extend my gratitude to the five authors whose work is contained in this volume. It has been a great pleasure to work with you all and I have appreciated your rapid and gracious responses to my requests. I would also like to acknowledge the work of CATE members Thomas Falkenberg and Alice Pitt in furthering the scholarship of teacher education research in Canada. Dr. Pitt of York University for her work as a member of CATE and for her role as editor of the first volume of collected key notes (2004-2008), and Dr. Falkenberg of the University of Manitoba for his tremendous leadership in building a corpus of literature on research in teacher education in Canada through the creation of the CATE Polygraph series of publications.

We also thank Leïla G. Bili for the translation of the introduction of this volume into French.

This volume is dedicated to all teacher educators in Canada in recognition of their efforts to continually improve their teacher preparation programs and thereby improve the educational experiences of generations of students to come.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Thomas, Lynn</b>	<b><i>Introduction (version français)</i></b> .....	<b>4</b>
	<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Williams, Lorna (2009)</b>	<b><i>Indigeneity in the Academy: Finding Face, Making Space, Having Place</i></b> .....	<b>23</b>
<b>Dillon, David (2010)</b>	<b><i>Building from experience: Factors that make teaching experience effective</i></b> .....	<b>46</b>
<b>Smits, Hans (2011)</b>	<b><i>Is there an historical mission for teacher education? Or is it too late?</i></b> .....	<b>82</b>
<b>Kosnik, Clare (2012)</b>	<b><i>Changing practice and identity go hand-in-hand: A self-study of efforts to infuse digital technology into literacy courses</i></b> .....	<b>122</b>
<b>Chinnery, Ann (2013)</b>	<b><i>On Pedagogical Responsibility and the Educational Precariat</i></b> .....	<b>147</b>

## Introduction

Cette deuxième collection de conférences plénières par CATE fait suite à *Keynotes 2004-2008* (Volume 1 du *CATE Polygraph series*) qui fut édité par la Dr. Alice Pitt et publié au format e-book sur le site de CATE en 2010. Les conférences plénières qui suivent recouvrent les années 2009 à 2013 et sont, dans ce volume, présentées dans l'ordre chronologique. Nous commençons donc avec les travaux de Lorna Williams datant de 2009 et s'intitulant *Indigeneity in the Academy: Finding Face, Making Space, Having Place*, suivi de David Dillon en 2010 sur *Building from teaching experience: Factors that make teacher education effective*. En 2011, la recherche de Hans Smit, *Is there an historical mission for teacher education? Or is it too late?* Puis celle de Clare Kosnik *Changing practice and identity go hand-in-hand: A self-study of efforts to infuse digital technology into literacy courses* en 2012. La conférence plénière de 2013 fut tenue par Ann Chinnery qui présenta un article intitulé *On Pedagogical Responsibility and the Educational Precariat*.

Il apparaît clairement dans le rassemblement de ces cinq textes dans un seul volume, que la recherche en éducation au Canada est diverse et a autant de facettes qu'elle n'est vibrante et rigoureuse. De prime abord ces cinq chercheurs canadiens dans le domaine de l'éducation peuvent être vus comme grandement dispersés du point de vue des sujets, des styles de présentation et d'approches des problèmes en éducation. Trois de ces chapitres décrivent des innovations particulières dans trois universités différentes dans le domaine de l'éducation, bien que, les trois aient écrit sur des changements positifs dans le cadre du cours ou de séminaires de travaux pratiques individuel, les approches prises et les résultats voulus, qui sont, ici,

présentés différemment. Par exemple, Williams décrit un cours qu'elle a créé et instauré à l'université de Victoria comme moyen d'introduction du programme aux futurs enseignants quant aux modes de pensées autochtones, à l'apprentissage et à la compréhension du monde. L'auteure comprend cela comme étant complètement absent des différents organismes d'enseignements où elle a été ou travaillé. Dans la description des paramètres du cours, Williams évoque comment les moyens d'apprentissage autochtones et leurs différences dans la plupart des universités instaurent des attentes quant à la maîtrise des connaissances et renforcent, par la même, le net contraste entre deux mondes et leurs points de vue sur la compréhension du monde et comment les apprenants y sont servis. Dillon décrit aussi un changement dans la manière d'interagir avec ses étudiants en ce qui concerne les points des travaux pratiques au programme. Il décrit les effets d'introduire un espace positif aux apprentis-enseignants comme étant une meilleure compréhension de ce qu'ils apprennent en travaux pratiques comme références tout en instaurant un séminaire prenant place dans une salle de classe plutôt que sur le campus. Dillon délimite sa recherche comme une recherche-action et la situe clairement dans la littérature de la recherche en éducation. Kosnik décrit aussi une expérience personnelle dans le changement de ses pratiques en explorant de façon systématique les résultats de l'intégration de technologies pour les enseignants dans un cours d'alphabétisation. Kosnik est une spécialiste de l'alphabétisation et une experte dans l'auto-évaluation des pratiques enseignantes. Elle décrit l'impact de l'intégration des technologies selon l'apprentissage de ses étudiants et de son propre apprentissage en tant qu'enseignante. Elle écrit, « à mesure que nous gagnions

confiance, nous devenions plus téméraires avec les stratégies d'enseignement. De plus notre enseignement à l'aide des technologies numériques devenait plus fluide, notre identité en tant qu'utilisateurs initiés des technologies numériques a évolué. [En d'autres termes] le développement pédagogique et identitaire vers une aide mutuelle » (p. 130).

D'un autre côté, les chercheurs Smits et Chinnery étudient les enjeux actuels dans la recherche en éducation au Canada en prenant une approche théorique. Smits présente son travail comme étant une médiation en trois parties sur les objectifs de la formation des enseignants dans une perspective historique et en faisant référence à la critique sociale de Slavoj Zizek et à Hannah Arendt. Il pose la question des responsabilités inhérentes à l'entraînement des enseignants. Sa réflexion prend en compte ses expériences dans la création et le démontage final de la conception d'un programme créatif et novateur de la formation des enseignants à l'université de Calgary. Chinnery se concentre aussi sur les responsabilités en éducation en demandant « comment les récentes courses d'études sur la vulnérabilité et la précarité peuvent influencer notre conception des responsabilités pédagogiques dans des classes progressivement plus variées » (p. 137). Elle continue en répondant à la question avec quelques exemples inspirés comprenant les travaux de Guy Standing et de Judith Butler le mouvement Occupons Wall Street et d'autres mouvements de manifestations. En se référant à ces travaux dans le cadre de l'éducation comme prise en compte et inspiration, les mouvements pour une meilleure égalité dans la société en général dans le but de répondre aux besoins des enfants vulnérables et marginalisés par le système d'éducation.

Il est de cette manière, évident dans ce recueil de chapitres de conférences plénières que les chercheurs en éducation au Canada sont préoccupés par les responsabilités de l'éducation et de la formation des enseignants en particulier en ce qui concerne l'injustice historique, la marginalisation, les actuels et futurs besoins des apprenants et ceux qui enseignent. Que ces auteurs prennent une position empirique ou conceptuelle dans l'examen de leurs rôles de formateurs, tous apportent des exemples inspirants d'approches réfléchies reconsidérant comment les différentes instances au Canada préparent les futurs enseignants à leur fonction.

Il est important de mettre en avant que les conférenciers sont invités par le bureau exécutif de CATE par rapport à leur réputation en tant que chercheurs dans le champ de recherche de la formation des maîtres au Canada. Par ailleurs, et dans une certaine mesure, bien que ce ne soit pas toujours le cas, sur leur emplacement géographique dans le vaste Canada. L'objectif est que lorsque la Société Canadienne pour l'Étude de l'Éducation, de laquelle l'Association Canadienne pour la Formation des Enseignants est membre, organise sa conférence annuelle dans diverses villes, les membres de l'exécutif de CATE cherchent quelqu'un qui fait une recherche intéressante dans la ville en question en se demandant « que pourrions-nous apprendre de quelqu'un basé ici, dans cette ville, pendant que nous sommes temporairement transposés ici pour la conférence ? Comment pouvons-nous, en tant qu'association nous engager avec les chercheurs locaux et leurs préoccupations ? » Nous avons ainsi une conférence plénière de David Dillon de l'Université McGill alors que la conférence se tenait à Montréal en 2010, de Clare Kosnik de l'OISE qui ouvrait la conférence organisée à Waterloo, Ontario en 2012 et Ann Chinnery de

l'Université Simon Fraser, à un court trajet en traversière de la ville de Victoria, pour la conférence à cette ville se tenant en 2013.

### **Indigeneity in the academy (*Indigénité dans l'académie*)**

Lorna Williams commence ce volume en expliquant comment elle a apporté les pratiques d'enseignement et d'apprentissage autochtones au sein de l'université dans le cadre d'un cours qui fait désormais partie intégrante de la formation des enseignants à l'Université de Victoria. Elle commence par rappeler le défaut de reconnaissance de l'indigénité dans le programme canadien tous niveaux d'enseignement, de l'école maternelle à l'université et, par-là même du besoin crucial des formateurs à reconsidérer le programme de formation et d'inclure les renseignements à propos des luttes auxquelles les apprenants autochtones font face et des façons d'inclure ces connaissances dans la formation canadienne des enseignants.

Lorna structure son article autour des trois sections de son sous-titre : reconnaissance, faire place et avoir un rôle. Reconnaissance signifie se trouver soi-même dans le système éducatif de façon authentique. Faire place décrit les efforts pour inclure le contenu autochtone et les pratiques autochtones à l'enseignement et à l'apprentissage dans une approche authentique de l'éducation. Avoir un rôle se réfère au sentiment d'appartenance et de connexité au peuple, à la terre et aux ancêtres. Elle illustre chacune de ces sections par des exemples à propos de l'importance de la façon dont ces thèmes ont été intégrés au cours de formation des enseignants et inclus des photos en guise de résultats. Les travaux du Dr. Williams

décrient dans ce chapitre précédent les Recommandations de la Vérité et de Réconciliation ainsi que l'entente sur l'éducation des autochtones du doyen. En faisant preuve de ses qualités de directrice dans le champ d'intégration de l'indigénité de façons réfléchies, novatrices et authentiques. Ce qui contribue grandement à la formation des maîtres pour illustrer comment intégrer les pratiques autochtones de compréhension et de connaissances au sein du cours tenu sur un campus universitaire.

### **Learning from experience (*Apprendre de l'expérience*)**

David Dillon écrit sur l'expérience dans le but de rendre la formation des maîtres efficace. Il propose un cadre conceptuel qui considère et recherche le « comment » de la formation des enseignants basés sur trois facteurs : une longue expérience de l'enseignement comme support d'apprentissage de l'apprenti-enseignant, l'introduction d'une pédagogie qui aide le candidat à l'enseignement à faire sens de et à apprendre efficacement de leurs propres expériences de l'enseignement et le développement d'une communauté d'apprentissage qui fait la promotion d'un apprentissage mutuel aussi bien pour les enseignants que pour les apprenti-enseignants.

Dillon apporte plusieurs visions du candidat à l'enseignement à propos de son apprentissage durant les travaux pratiques incluant un séminaire d'accompagnement se tenant lors de travaux pratiques des mutations dans les écoles. Les coparticipants de son projet de recherche-action décrivent l'importance des séminaires pour les aider à comprendre leur apprentissage concernant le travail

avec des enfants, surpasser les défis dans la salle de classe et prendre les risques nécessaires pour continuer à améliorer leur rôle d'enseignant. Dillon conclut par une approche regroupant les travaux pratiques et les séminaires universitaires dans un cadre scolaire permettant les nouveaux enseignants à clairement comprendre leur apprentissage professionnel et à développer leur identité d'enseignant dans le cadre d'une mobilisation communautaire orientée vers des pratiques scolaires.

### **A mission for teacher education (*Une mission pour la formation à l'enseignement*)**

Dans sa méditation sur la mission de la formation des maîtres, Hans Smits choisi de partager ses remarques sur « une expérience qui a été lié par le temps, l'endroit, les relations et les événements » (p.73) et utilise cette expérience comme une opportunité à refléter un sens plus large dans la formation des maîtres. Il se réfère au développement et à la disparition d'une approche expérimentale à la formation des enseignants à l'Université de Calgary. Dans sa préface il note qu'il était peut-être trop impliqué dans la situation et que sa conférence en est devenue une plainte de la fin du programme dans lequel une compréhension de l'enseignement comme imprégné des besoins à avoir un bon jugement des situations pédagogiques était encouragée.

Smits demande s'il y a une mission historique pour la formation des maîtres étant donné que « nous ne pouvons simplement supposer qu'il y a un monde pour lequel nous pouvons en toute certitude et facilement préparer les futures générations d'enseignants, non pas que nous savons comment procéder » (p. 83). Il met en question les sortes d'autorité par lesquelles, en tant que formateurs de maîtres notre

jugement est soutenu quant à ce qui constitue les bonnes pratiques. De plus, si nous faisons face à nos responsabilités en l'absence d'une compréhension de la nature du monde et des possibilités de renouvellement, il exprime de nouveau ses convictions selon lesquelles la formation des enseignants est centrale au renouvellement du monde.

Du fait de cette méditation Smits écrit qu'il est devenu « moins préoccupé par le contenu du programme et par la pédagogie de la formation des maîtres et plus préoccupé par ce qui constitue notre travail en tant que formateurs de maîtres, nous pourrions délimiter cette responsabilité dans notre collaboration avec les enseignants » (p. 86).

### **Innovation in pedagogy through integrating technologies (*L'innovation en pédagogie à travers l'intégration des technologies*)**

La conférence plénière de Clare Kosnik en 2012 est un compte-rendu du processus d'intégration des technologies dans ses pratiques en tant que formatrice d'enseignants et son propre apprentissage du potentiel des technologies numériques comme support d'apprentissage sur les pratiques d'alphabétisation pour les candidats à l'enseignement. Kosnik a collaboré avec un confrère formateur de maîtres pour l'alphabétisation et aussi avec un collègue expert en intégration de technologies dans les programmes de formation des maîtres. Ensemble ils ont exploré les différentes approches pour encourager l'apprentissage dans la formation des enseignants en alphabétisation.

C'est en tant que professeure expérimentée dans une grande institution qui prend soin d'utiliser des approches intégratives des technologies numériques dans les cours du premier cycle que Kosnik a ressenti le besoin profiter de ces réclamations et a choisi de prendre une approche pro-active dans ses propres cours plutôt que d'attendre des étudiants d'apprendre des technologies pour l'enseignement de l'alphabétisation par un cours proclamé *tech*. Elle partage les procédures aussi bien de l'apprentissage à utiliser les technologies numériques que de l'apprentissage à enseigner avec. Elle décrit comment elle est progressivement devenue plus à l'aise avec un total de 32 technologies numériques différentes incluant *Blackboard*, *Shutterfly* et les wikis en création. Ce, en mettant ces approches dans son cours et durant la deuxième année, les intégrer plus régulièrement, lui a permis, elle et ses collègues, à réexaminer leurs positions pédagogiques et les objectifs de la formation des enseignants. Ils en sont arrivés à des compréhensions plus nuancées de l'alphabétisation et de leur enseignement aussi bien que du changement d'identité en tant que formateurs de maîtres.

**On Pedagogical Responsibility and the Educational Precariat (*Le rôle et les responsabilités de l'éducation pour résoudre la vulnérabilité et la précarité*)**

La philosophe Ann Chinnery fait la remarque selon laquelle le sujet de sa conférence plénière de 2013 s'écarte de ses travaux habituels. Chinnery fut inspirée par la bourse d'étude sur les mouvements de protestation dans les rues qui met à contribution une théorie éthique, sociale et politique. Cette dernière révèle des

similitudes entre ce qui a été écrit au sujet de la précarité dans la société en général et la précarité de nombreux apprenants vulnérables dans nos écoles.

En guise de deuxième thème de son chapitre elle fait un lien entre certains travaux identiques quant à l'importance de reconnaître la responsabilité éthique par une proximité physique et l'importance du rôle de l'école publique en rassemblant des gens aux parcours très différents et aux besoins divers pour créer une communauté d'apprentissage dans des milieux sécuritaires, inclusifs et constructifs. Chinnery apporte un excellent résumé des récents travaux sur les effets d'une répartition inégale de la précarité sociale et fait part d'un argument convaincant afin de, par là-même, tenir compte des apprenants vulnérables. Ce chapitre met clairement en avant la nécessité à reconsidérer les politiques et les pratiques laissant quelques apprenants vulnérables and lance un appel au changement dans les écoles publiques afin d'offrir à tous les apprenants et particulièrement à ceux qui sont marginalisés, de pouvoir faire l'expérience des mêmes opportunités à apprendre avec dignité et humanité.

Ces cinq chapitres réunis représentent cinq perspectives de la formation des maîtres dans différentes institutions basées sur la côte pacifique, les prairies de l'ouest et le centre du Canada révèlent les préoccupations des chercheurs dans la formation des enseignants au Canada. Ces préoccupations relatent la mise en pratique dans la formation des enseignants puisqu'ils se dévoilent en tant que formateurs de maîtres avides d'améliorer la vie des enfants et adolescents par une préparation soignée de leurs enseignants.

*(Traduit par Mme Leïla G. Blili)*

## Introduction

This second collection of CATE keynote speeches follows Keynotes 2004-2008 (Volume 1 of the CATE Polygraph series), which was edited by Dr. Alice Pitt and published as an e-book on the CATE website in 2010. The following key note speeches cover the years 2009 to 2013 and are presented in this volume in chronological order. Thus we begin with Lorna Williams' 2009 keynote entitled *Indigeneity in the Academy: Finding Face, Making Space, Having Place*, followed by that of David Dillon in 2010, *Building from teaching experience: Factors that make teacher education effective*. Hans Smits' presentation *Is there an historical mission for teacher education? Or is it too late?* took place in 2011, followed by Clare Kosnik with *Changing practice and identity go hand-in-hand: A self-study of efforts to infuse digital technology into literacy courses* in 2012. The 2013 keynote presentation was given by Ann Chinnery who presented a paper entitled *On Pedagogical Responsibility and the Educational Precariat*.

What is clearly evident in bringing these five texts together in one volume is that research in Canadian teacher education is diverse and multi-faceted as it is vibrant and rigorous. On the surface these five Canadian researchers in the field of teacher education might be considered to be widely disparate in terms of their topics, presentation styles and approaches to considering issues in teacher education. Three of the chapters describe specific innovations to teacher education in three different universities, and although all three are written about positive changes made to a course or practicum seminar by individuals, the approaches taken, and the results sought and presented here differ widely. Williams, for example, describes a course she created and implemented at the University

of Victoria as a way of opening up the curriculum for future teachers to indigenous ways of thinking, learning and understanding the world, something that she identified as being completely absent in the various educational institutions that she had previously attended or were employed by. In describing the parameters of the course, Williams invokes the ways in which indigenous ways of learning differ from the way most universities set up expectations for the mastery of knowledge and thereby reinforces the sharp contrast between the two world views of understanding the world, and the way learners function within it. Dillon also describes making a change in the way he interacted with his students in relation to the practicum component of the programme. He describes the effects of providing a supportive space for student teachers to come to a much greater understanding of what they were learning on practicum within their terms of reference by setting up a seminar course located in a practicum school rather than on campus. Dillon frames his work as action research and clearly locates it within the teacher education literature. Kosnik also describes a personal experience of changing her practice by systematically exploring the results of integrating technologies into a course on literacy development for pre-service teachers. Kosnik, a literacy specialist and an expert in the self-study of teacher education practices, describes the impact of integrating technologies in terms of her students' learning and her own as a teacher educator. She writes, "As we became more confident we became more adventurous with teaching strategies. And as our teaching with digital technologies became more fluid, our identity as able users of digital technologies increased. [This means that] development of pedagogy and identity were mutually supportive" (p. 130).

In contrast, researchers Smits and Chinnery take a theoretical approach to current issues in Canadian teacher education. Smits presents his work as a meditation in 3 parts on the purposes of teacher education from an historical perspective, and with reference to the work of social critic Slavoj Zizek, and Hannah Arendt, addresses the question of responsibility that is inherent in the practice of teacher education. His reflections take into account his experiences with the creation and ultimate dismantling of a creative, innovative teacher education program design at the University of Calgary. Chinnery also focuses on responsibility in education, asking “how recent scholarship on vulnerability and precarity might inform our conception of pedagogical responsibility in increasingly diverse classrooms” (p. 137). She goes on to respond to this question with several thoughtful examples, including the work of Guy Standing and Judith Butler on the Occupy Wall Street movement and other street protest movements, calling on those in education to take heed of, and inspiration from, movements for greater equality taking place in society at large in order to better meet the needs of vulnerable children who inhabit the margins of our educational systems.

In this way it is clearly evident in this collection of chapters from recent key note speakers that researchers in Canadian teacher education are preoccupied with the responsibility of education, and teacher education in particular, with regards to addressing historical injustice, marginalisation, and the current and future needs of pupils and those who teach them. Whether these authors take an empirical or conceptual stance when examining their roles within teacher education, all provide inspiring examples of thoughtful approaches to reconsidering how various jurisdictions within Canada prepare future teachers for the profession.

It is worth noting here that key note speakers are invited by the CATE executive based on their reputations as scholars in the field of Canadian Teacher Education, but also, to a certain extent, although this is not always the case, on their location within the vast geography of Canada. The idea is that when the Canadian Society of Studies in Education, of which the Canadian Associate for Teacher Education is a member, holds its annual conference in a certain city, the members of the CATE executive look around to see who is doing interesting research in that region, asking themselves the question “What can we learn from someone who is located here, in this place, while we are temporarily transposed here for the conference? How can we as an association engage with local scholars and their preoccupations?” Thus we have a keynote by David Dillon from McGill University when the conference was held in Montreal in 2010, Clare Kosnik from OISE presenting when the conference was held in Waterloo, Ontario in 2012 and Ann Chinnery from Simon Fraser University, a short ferry ride away from the conference in Victoria, held in 2013.

### **Indigeneity in the academy**

Lorna Williams begins this volume with a narrative of how she brought indigenous ways of teaching and learning into the university with a course that is now an integral part of teacher education at the University of Victoria. She starts with a reminder of the absence of acknowledgement of indigeneity in the Canadian curriculum at every level of education, from pre-school to university, and of the therefore crucial need for teacher educators to reconsider teacher education curriculum to include information about

the struggles indigenous learners face and ways to include this knowledge in Canadian Teacher Education.

Lorna organises her paper around the three sections of her subtitle: finding face, making space and having place. Finding face represents finding oneself in education in authentic ways. Making space describes efforts to include indigenous content and indigenous ways of teaching and learning in an authentic approach to education. Having place relates to a sense of belonging and connectedness to the people, the land and the ancestors. She illustrates each of these sections with examples of how these important themes were integrated into a teacher education course and includes photographs to show the results. The work of Dr. Williams described in this chapter predates the Truth and Reconciliation recommendations as well as the Dean's Accord on Indigenous Education, giving evidence of her leadership in the field of integrating indigeneity in thoughtful, innovative and authentic ways. It makes a tremendous contribution to teacher education as an example of how to integrate indigenous ways of knowing and understanding into a course held on a university campus.

### **Learning from experience**

David Dillon writes about building from experience in order to make teacher education effective. He proposes a conceptual framework for both considering and researching the “how” of teacher education based on 3 factors: extensive teaching experience as the base for student teacher learning, the introduction of a pedagogy that helps teacher candidates make sense of and learn effectively from their teaching

experiences, and the development of a supportive learning community that promotes reciprocal learning for both student teachers and teacher educators.

Dillon provides multiple insights from teacher candidates about their learning while on practicum, which includes an accompanying seminar held at one of the practicum placement schools. These co-participants in his action research project describe the importance of this seminar for helping them to understand their learning about working with children, overcome challenges in the classroom and take the necessary risks to continue improving in their teacher roles. Dillon concludes that this approach to bringing together the practicum and university seminars in a school setting permits new teachers to clearly understand their professional learning and to develop a teaching identity within a school-based community of practice.

### **A mission for teacher education**

In his meditation on the mission of teacher education Hans Smits chooses to share his reflections on “an experience that was bounded by time, place, relationships and events” (p. 73), and using this experience as an opportunity to reflect on teacher education in a broader sense. He is referring to the development and demise of an experimental approach to teacher education at the University of Calgary. In his preface he notes that he was perhaps too close to the situation, and that his keynote presentation became a lament for the end of a program in which an understanding of teaching as imbued with the necessity to practice good judgement in pedagogical situations was fostered.

Smits asks whether there is an historical mission for teacher education, given that “we cannot simply assume that there is a world for which we can confidently and unproblematically prepare future generations of teachers, not that we know how to do this” (p. 83). He questions the kinds of authority by which we, as teacher educators, support our judgements about what constitutes good practice, and whether we are facing up to our responsibilities to the public and the public good. Smits states that we cannot enact on our responsibilities in the absence of an understanding of the nature of the world and the possibilities for renewal, and he reiterates his belief that teacher education is central to this renewal of the world.

As a result of this meditation, Smits writes that he has become “less concerned about the content of programs and the pedagogy of teacher education and more concerned with what constitutes our work as teacher educators and we might frame that responsibility in our work with teachers” (p.86).

### **Innovation in pedagogy though integrating technologies**

Clare Kosnik’s 2012 key note presentation is an account of the process of integrating technologies in her practice as a teacher educator and her own learning about the potential of digital technologies for supporting learning about literacy practices for teacher candidates. Kosnik collaborated with a fellow literacy teacher educator as well as a colleague who is an expert in integrating technologies in teacher education programs, and together they explored various approaches to support teacher candidate learning about literacy.

As an experienced professor in a large institution that prides itself on using an integrative digital technology approach to undergraduate courses, Kosnik felt the need to live up to these claims and chose to take a pro-active approach with her own courses, rather than expect her students to learn about technology for teaching literacy through a designated tech course. She shares the process of both learning to use digital technologies herself and learning to teach with them. She describes how gradually becoming more comfortable with a total 32 different digital technologies, including *Blackboard*, *Shutterfly* and building wikis, through firstly laying these approaches into her course, and in a second year, more systematically integrating them, allowed her and her colleagues to re-examine their views of pedagogy and the purpose of teacher education, and come to more nuanced understandings of literacy and literacy teaching as well as their shifting identities as teacher educators.

### **The role and responsibility of education for addressing vulnerability and precarity**

Educational philosopher Ann Chinnery remarks that the subject of her 2013 keynote address is a departure from her usual work. Chinnery was inspired by the scholarship on street protest movements and draws on ethical, social and political theory to reveal parallels between what has been written about precarity in society as a whole and the precariousness of many vulnerable learners in our schools.

As a second theme to her chapter she makes connections between some of the same work on the importance of recognizing ethical responsibility through physical proximity and the important role of public schooling in bringing together people of widely different backgrounds and diverse needs to create learning communities that are

safe, inclusive and positive spaces. Chinnery provides an excellent summary of recent work on the effects of unequal distribution of precarity in society and she makes a compelling argument for considering vulnerable learners in the same way. This chapter clearly points out the need to reconsider the policies and practices that leave some students vulnerable and calls for changes to public schooling to permit all students, but particularly those at the margins to experience equal opportunities for learning with dignity and humanity.

Together, these five chapters, representing five perspectives on teacher education in different institutions located on the Pacific coast, the western prairies and central Canada, reveal that the preoccupations of researchers in Canadian teacher education are related to the practice of teacher education as they position themselves as teacher educators striving to improve the lives of children and youth through the careful preparation of their teachers.

Lynn Thomas

Université de Sherbrooke

Sherbrooke, QC

May 22, 2016

**Indigeneity in the Academy: Finding Face, Making Space, Having Place.**  
*Capitol Connections: Nation, Terroir, Territoire.*

**Lorna Williams, University of Victoria**

Tuxwt'u7 ama st'eqlhkalha xwu7pmintwalh eltsa ti tmiw s ki Anishnabeka ucwalmicw, ti nsnukw'nukw'lhkalha. Wanosts'a ti nswatsihsa, Tilalus ti nsucwalmicswa, lhku7 Lilwatul est'eqan, lakw seswa7 i nsnkw'nukw'7a.

It pleases me that we are gathered here today on the land of the Anishbek people, our friends; Wanostsa7 is my name, I am from the Tilalus family of the Lil'watul.

It is important that I lay the words of my people down on this land, and to introduce myself to the people and to the spirits of this land, to let them know that I come in friendship and I am grateful to be on their land. This way of beginning my talk is in line with the name of this conference, making connections, acknowledging the land, and honouring the unique knowledge and flavor of this land.

This talk will tell the story of how I went about bringing Indigenous ways of teaching and learning into a university setting, why it is an important endeavor and to share the points of contention, and the considerations that are necessary to work and walk in two worlds. In developing and implementing the course called Learning and Teaching in the Indigenous World I had to first look back to my learning experiences in my home community and to draw learn from the stories I heard and experiences I had from my travels to many Indigenous homelands around the planet. It was necessary to ask whether it is possible to learn and teach in a manner that respects the Indigenous way in an academic institution that is based on a Western worldview.



The photograph illustrates the braiding of cattails in the Earthfibres: Learning and Teaching in the Indigenous world course, the second in the series of classes that are offered.

First let me explain the subtitle of this talk “Finding Face, Making Space and Having Place”. “Finding Face” refers to the struggle of Indigenous learners in all educational institutions to find themselves in an authentic way in what is taught in their curriculum or how they are taught or treated in the classroom or school. In some cases the Indigenous presence in educational institutions is represented by Indigenous art work on the walls. If there is Indigenous content in the subject matter it is usually framed from the perspective of the Euro-western world. As a result, when Indigenous learners enter an educational institution they leave their worlds, identity, ways of knowing, and ways of learning outside the building. Inside the schools they are invisible. I have often heard non Indigenous people say, “I went to school in Canada, why don’t I know this?” when they encounter Indigenous knowledge and history from an Indigenous perspective. So this course was designed so that students can experience learning and teaching from the Lil’wat world – the world I grew up in and where I learned from my first teachers, the

elders, my older siblings, my aunts and uncles, parents and peers. In the course very little was explained, and the learners gained their knowledge from their experiences, from reflecting on the experience, observing, listening, and teaching one another. The course was designed for all student teachers, who will teach Indigenous and Non Indigenous learners. Reflection was an important part of their learning, class participants learned from asking themselves questions that arose from their experiences in the class. I remember the day I walked into the education building for my appointment interview, I noticed the building to be cold, concrete and glass, with no trace of human warmth or welcoming. I thought about First Nations long houses and how there were always symbols situating a house to place and ancestors to make people feel welcome and know where they had arrived.

“Making Space”, refers to the effort and modifications necessary to enable Indigenous content and ways of teaching and learning to be offered in the educational institution. The internal and external policies that govern the institution, the buildings need to be taken into consideration – do they need to be modified or reinterpreted to accommodate the course or are their changes necessary. Do those policies govern the practice or are they habits that have become established over time without question? Attitudes of decision makers can determine whether Indigenous knowledge, wisdom and practice will be supported or excluded. In order to teach a course that is mindful and respectful to Indigenous knowledge and teaching and learning needs to find ways to adapt and accommodate areas such as class time schedules. The class experience and activities can’t always adhere to strict time schedules, for example ending the class at 50

minutes for an hour class. Class memberships are another issue: Indigenous learning involves community and it is important to have people of all ages, for example not restrict class membership to age or grade cohorts. In the Learning and Teaching in the Indigenous World the class was comprised of undergraduate students, graduate students – both Masters and Ph.D.’s, faculty from all disciplines, school age students and community members both Indigenous and non- Indigenous; and assessment practices need to be reviewed and to accommodate the Indigenous principle that everyone learns at different rates and all learning is valuable to the self and community. Some learning can be witnessed and felt immediately, while other learning takes time. The course became non-graded or a Pass/Fail designated for undergraduates but the graduate students needed to be graded. Another area of modification necessary was who is deemed to have expertise and whom the institution recognizes as having the necessary qualifications to teach. In these classes I had the institutional qualifications and was responsible for the courses but my teaching partners, those who had the expertise of carving, weaving, singing, and storytelling were not regarded by the university to be equal to me in the courses. For this reason these classes were not part of my merit and promotion reporting, I refused to have the students evaluate only me as the instructor. Establishing a welcoming space takes time, careful tending and a shared commitment at all bureaucratic levels as well as tending to the feelings and attitudes of the entire community. It takes time and generosity to change habits of mind and spirit.

“Having Place” refers to having a sense of belonging and connectedness in the place where we are learning. Time and effort is established to help us feel connected to

one another. In the Learning and Teaching in the Indigenous world class time is taken to acknowledge the people, land and ancestors where we are gathered, to hear what has brought us together, and to introduce ourselves to the community. Who we are, the land we come from, who our people are and what has motivated us to be part of this learning community. In the Indigenous world being mindful of all our relationships helps us to feel connected. Throughout the course Indigenous stories, songs, knowledge, wisdom, practices and histories are shared and woven into all the activities. We begin and end the course in ceremony; ceremonies that take into account the cultural practices and protocols of both the Indigenous world and the world of the university. We consciously bridge the Indigenous world and the world of the university environment.

### **Learning and Teaching in an Indigenous World**

The course is designed for all participants to experience an Indigenous learning process. It attempts to create learning where the learner gains knowledge and understanding from their experience and engaging in practical activities, asking themselves questions, seeking understanding from making connections from their prior experiences and the current situation. The class follows an oral tradition with talking circles for sharing information, thoughts, and feelings; sharing stories and songs. In the local language the word that best describes education is *Eltelniwt* which means ‘to become a whole human being’. That means that learning involves the mind, heart, spirit and body, and learning benefits the self, the family, the community, ancestors, descendants and the land.



The first section in this series was called Learning and Teaching in an Indigenous world: Thunderbird and Whale; Welcoming and Protection pole. Butch Dick a Lekwungen carver, educator and wisdom keeper and Fabian Quocksister from the Liekwelthout a carver and educator of the mid island were co instructors. They were chosen because both are involved in education. Butch is a master carver whose work can be seen throughout the city of Victoria and Fabian is in the early stages of building his carving career. The Island where the University of Victoria is situated is home to the Coast and Straits Salish, Nuuchahnulth and Kwakwaka'wakw First Nations. It was critical that the welcoming pole represents all three First Nations and the Metis and Inuit. One way that students could observe the mentorship/apprenticeship way of teaching and learning was in the relationship between the two carvers. The way they interacted and how they helped each other. This course lent itself to the knowledge and wisdom of the

male world that is reflected on the name of the pole. Schalay'nang Sxwey'ga, Schalay'nang has two meanings – teachings of the ancestors and to be a true history, Sxwey'ga means man. He was named by Butch Dick and is in the Lekwungen language. Throughout the class the pole was referred to as 'the old man'.

The second part, Earth Fibres, Weaving Stories, focused on the world of women's wisdom and knowledge, and the class worked on creating a mural made up of the many textiles made by Indigenous people in BC, Canada and the world. The co instructor was Charlene George of the Ts'ouke First Nation. Other instructors were May Sam, Hul'qumelem - Wool knitting and weaving; Lynn Hemry, Metis – Metis sash weaving; Caroline and Fran. Memnook, Nuuchah Nulth – cedar bark weaving; Gaye Williams Lil'watul – buckskin and beading and Gina Robertson, Kwakwaka'wakw – button blanket making.



*“The mural named XaXe Siam Seetla, (honoured grandmother of many generations) honours our sisters, to bring forward and recognize women’s gifts that are often behind the scenes. The canvas that is the basis of the piece, honours Wakus – the frog who represents the time of change. The honoured Grandmothers welcome us as our mothers would, lifting up their hands to say hychka, thank you for all the gifts that we share. Flowing from the first Grandmother’s hair is the home to keep us rooted in where we came from. The wolf is nearby to remind us of transformation. The 13 moons tell the story of the year and bring awareness of life cycles. The pieces on the first side were beginner’s pieces, humbly made by students in the course. On the other side, pieces have been gathered from across Turtle Island – including a wampam belt woven by Haudensonee students, South America and the island of Borneo. The pieces look simple, but have been put together with incredible skill transferred through the generations. As we continue the traditions and teaching from the past to nurture and enhance what we have today, we honour the next generation to bring that torch forward from the grandmothers. The process gives a concrete translation tool for new teachers so that they carry Indigenous women’s’ wisdom into their own teaching. The piece hangs from a spindle whorl to represent new turning, new twists that we are stepping into. Overall, the mural provides balance with the energy of the Old Man, the house welcoming pole who also resides in the education building. At the end is the canoe, to help us continue our journey with good hands full of intentions from our souls. With one heart, one mind, we move forward.” (told by C. George)*



Weavings from Indigenous peoples Iban from Sarawak, Mik'maq, Otovolo from Ecuador, moose hair tufting from Yukon, wampam belt from Haudensonee, Lil'wat basket.



The third part called Earth songs, focused on singing and drumming. Singing is a way that Indigenous people feel our spirits connecting. The co-instructors were Butch Dick,

Bradly Dick, Lekwungen, John Elliott, Wsanc; Glenn Patterson Haudensonee and Fabian Quocksister, Liekwelthou. The class made a drum and a rattle. At each class they listened to songs from many First Nations to hear the diverse and unique sound of each. Then the class formed a circle and drummed and later, they sang songs. During one class one of the instructors stopped the class and said “stop counting.” He said, “Close your eyes and feel the drum beat in your heart.”



Midway through the course William Wasdan, Kwakwaka’wakw, came for a class to share what he has learned about composition. The aim of the course was for the group to compose songs that would be gifted to the music department of the Faculty of Education so that faculty and students would have songs that they could sing without fearing that they were appropriating First Nations songs. Each co instructor led a group to compose 5 songs for the Faculty of Education. A ceremony was held at Government House so that the Lieutenant Governor, His Honour Stephen Point, Sto:lo witnessed the songs performed in public for the first time. This is what one of the students wrote in his reflection journal about his experience in the class,

*“As mentioned before, the classroom environment is vital to the feeling of value and inclusion within students. I have to say, I have not felt so comfortable to talk to a teacher in a friendly, casual manner than I have in the Earth Songs class. The fact that we all sat in a circle, that we listened to personal stories, that we were honest about our feelings/emotions, whether they were good or bad enabled me to relate to each leader as people who had a lot in common with each student. It seemed that every class, I experienced that idea of Kat’il’a- finding a peace, balance. Walking into class I was often burdened with feeling of stress, anticipation of the busy days to come. It never failed that, somewhere in that three hour class I was able to slow down and connect with something greater. I was consistently reassured that there is more to life than essays and projects. The class challenged me to think about what is really important. Find the life source, whatever it was that connected me to the bigger spirit, the energy of the Earth. Like Richard Wagamese alludes to in Keeper’n Me, I was finding the heartbeat of the world through the beating of our drums.*

*Finding a balance through drumming was also achieved at home. After the idea was said in class, I decided to meditate using my drum. I am no stranger to meditation, but on that particular day I was preoccupied and struggled to still my mind. Using the drum opened a whole new realm of solace and peace. It felt that all my negative energies and wandering thoughts tunneled out of me and released through the steady beats of the drum. I felt rejuvenated. Naked but empowered. This was definitely what I relate to being Kat’il’a. Since then, drumming has become for me a way to connect with the Earth and all that inhabits it, a way to connect with our energy, our spirit. It is the communication*

*with that which cannot be spoken in words. It is the heart beat of all the people of the land, past, present and future.*



#### Story Stick: Learning and Teaching in an Indigenous world

In this part of the course undergraduate and graduate students worked alongside artists-in-residence and wisdom keeper/mentors to witness, experience, learn the story traditions of Indigenous peoples. The learning community engaged in hearing the traditional stories and songs from Indigenous peoples throughout North America and around the world. It was vital for students to experience the cadence and quality of the storytelling voice. Students also practiced telling stories. Students experienced the principles of traditional Indigenous ways of teaching and learning such as: mentorship and apprenticeship learning; learning by doing; learning by deeply observing; learning through listening and telling stories and singing songs; and learning as a member of a team; learning by sharing and providing service to the community. Graduate students assumed the leadership role for a small group of students, as older siblings would in a

family and in a community. The entire class community planned and organized all the ceremonies and celebrations such as class opening and closing; mid-course celebrations and included the wider community and university community. Brigid Skelton, BFA, teacher candidate reflected:

*“The Story Stick Class: Learning and Teaching in an Indigenous World was a class unlike any other I’ve ever attended at University. We learned by example and by experience in a warm and accepting atmosphere, with no text books, no tests and almost no questions.”*



My instruction to the students was to go to their favorite place, such as place they like to walk or spend time – in the woods or their yard or a park and to slow down and to look around and select a stick that stands out to them, that they will bring to class. Some of the students wanted me to specify the size of the ‘right’ stick - length, thickness and shape. In response, I said that they would need to carry it to class and that they would

know it was the right one. It was interesting to listen to their stories about the process of selecting their stick: some saw a stick that stood out and they picked it up, others selected a number of sticks and held them for a while, before discarding them and finally choosing the one that they felt was right, while others picked a wide selection of sizes. This is one way in which each member of the learning community begins to appreciate that each person is a unique individual, and that when we honour the gifts and uniqueness of each individual, the community is stronger and richer.



Each of the above classes was guided by the following Indigenous ideas, thoughts, concepts and principles of teaching and learning. They are drawn from what I learned from my Lil'wat world and from talking with and observing other Indigenous peoples around the world. These are in no particular order of importance.



Kamucwkalha (Lil'wat) means acknowledging the felt energy indicating group attunement and the emergence of a common group purpose, individuals feel safe and free to express their views. When the Lil'watul gather to make decisions, they first spend time visiting, telling stories, often funny ones so everyone is laughing. They might share some food and they have time to catch up with everyone. There can be singing and drumming. There is no particular order to events; it is time for connecting. Then the meeting begins, with someone describing what is bringing the group together. I did this at the first class, following the way that I experience it in the Indigenous world. Kamucwkalha refers to the energy that flows through the group, we wait to feel this energy, when it is present we know we can work together to achieve what brings us together. The students in the 'pole' course felt it when we moved the rough-cut log from outdoors into the education building. We moved the pole using only poles and rolling logs, so everyone was needed to work together. Although Butch and Fabian were leading the whole process, and they brought all we needed to do the job, they 'led by doing' and expecting the class to do what was needed. This meant that everyone needed to be

observant and watchful and to step up to do what was needed. Learning is individual but takes place in a group. Every task requires the combined gifts of a group. We need to practice learning to read the environment and our surroundings. The group needs to know that their learning affects and is affected by the whole community and beyond. In the class we learn by being in service to the community.



Emhaka7 - to have good and clever hands

Emhaka7 is the word we use to indicate that each person does the best they can at whatever the task, and keeps an eye on others to be helpful. To work respectfully and with good thoughts is reflected in having good hands. It means each person developing their unique skills, learning about how each person approaches and completes tasks. It means being aware of one's state of mind. When we went into the forest to gather cedar roots with the elders, we stopped before entering the forest to clear our minds and hearts

of any feelings of anger, upset, worries or excitement. This was so that our hands and bodies would be gentle and respectful in our approach to digging up the cedar roots. The elders would say, ‘otherwise the roots will hide’.



Celhcelh – each person is responsible for their learning

Celhcelh means finding and taking advantage of all opportunities to learn, and to maintain openness to learning. Each person must take the initiative to become part of the learning community by finding their place and fitting themselves into the community. It means offering what knowledge and expertise each has to benefit the communal work being carried out. It relates to knowing how to take initiative to act and to be self-directed in learning. This is a quality that was always pointed out and commented on when elders sat together and watched the young people working.



Cwelelep – being in a place of dissonance and feelings of uncertainty  
in anticipation of new learning

The word Cwelelep describes ‘to spin like a dust storm’ in Lil’wat. We all feel the excitement in the pit of our stomachs when we are on the verge of doing something we want to do but it is new and we aren’t sure we can master it, like pushing off the first time we are going to try going solo on a bicycle. When we are learning we need to make friends with that energy, make use of it to do what is new to us. In the Earthfibres the class experienced it when Charlene brought bulrushes into the class to make small mats, her instruction was for the class to share the bulrushes, take what they needed to make a small mat similar to the one she brought to class as a model. Pandemonium broke out as everyone grabbed, shoved and made sure they got their bulrushes. They didn’t think of others, only themselves. Some didn’t get their materials, bulrushes were broken and scattered around the room. It was a great activity for gaining insights into how easily we forget the learning community and think of only ourselves.



Kat'il'a - finding stillness and quietness amidst our busyness and quest for knowledge.

Learning to keep oneself calm is necessary on the land and for living in close quarters with a large group of people. We learn this when we listen to stories, when we work on projects like carving, or drumming.



Self-reflection is an important tool for learning in the Indigenous world. The one writing assignment in the class was for students to keep a reflection journal, they were

encouraged to write about their class experience after every class, midway into the course the whole class community had an opportunity to share what they had learned to that point, what stood out for them about learning in an Indigenous world. At the end of the course they looked at their journals and wrote an essay about their experience. All the instructors too had an opportunity to share their reflections with the learning community. They shared what they learned and appreciated about their experience.



Ceremony is critical to the experience of learning so in each of the courses, ceremony was built into the curriculum. In the ‘pole’ course a group was assigned to organizing the ceremonies. One of the challenges was how to honour the protocols and values of the entire community and context. For example, in the ‘pole’ course we needed to honour the land of the Lekwungen, the land on which we were meeting and Butch Dick’s people; we needed to honour Fabian’s people the Leikwelthout because in the final ceremony his family was involved in the planning and the ceremony, and it was the

first time some of their family songs were performed away from their land. They needed to make sure that it was done in a respectful and conscientious way. Because it was a University of Victoria course taking place at the university involving the university community we also needed to be cognizant of their protocols. Ceremonies help us to connect with one another in community, and to remember that our actions and our existence is part of a bigger picture in place and time. It is a time to include our ancestors and to remember our descendants.



Fun and humour – it was important in the class to have fun, to be playful and to laugh. When you watch gatherings of Indigenous people you will witness many times when people tell jokes, tease each other, and tell funny stories to provoke laughter. If people are serious or working intensely then there is an interruption for laughter to break the tension. In the Indigenous world, it is important to always maintain balance and harmony.



We are all related – everything we do reminds us that we are related and connected to everything; we are not alone. Giving thanks and gratitude in ceremony helps us to keep this in mind. Our learning is not only for us alone, it is for the community, our ancestors and for those yet to come.

The course was designed to learn by experiencing, and although each class focused on a cultural activity, carving, weaving, drumming and storytelling, the main purpose for the course was for the learning community to experience how Indigenous people go about teaching and learning. It is not easy to describe or to write and explain in words only. It is important that we respect that each person will take from the experience what they need at the time; that learning needs to settle in our minds, body and spirit and we draw from the experience what we need when it is needed. A version of the course continues to be offered in the Faculty of Education at the University of Victoria from time to time, but the Lil'wat concepts of teaching and learning are incorporated into many courses on campus by the faculty who attended my series.

Photo credits: Michele Tanaka, used by permission.

## References

- Pitts, P. (2006) First Nation's pole is focus of unusual education course. *The Ring*. 32(1).
- Sanford, K., Williams, L., Hopper, T., McGregor, C. (2012). Decolonizing Teacher Education: Indigenous Principles informing Teacher Education. *In Education* 18(2), <http://www.ineducation.ca/>
- Williams, L; Tanaka, M; Leik, V; Riecken.T. (2014). Walking side by side: Living Indigenous ways in the academy. In *Learning and Teaching Community Based Research: Linking Pedagogy to Practice*. Etmanski, Hall & Dawson (Eds.), Toronto: University of Toronto Press

Note: Tim Hopper, a faculty colleague who joined the Storystick class organized a website so that you can hear the Lil'wat words and provides a phonetic pronunciation guide.

<https://sites.google.com/site/lulwatprinciples/home>

## **Building from teaching experience: Factors that make teacher education effective**

**David Dillon, McGill University**

### **Overview**

I am honoured and humbled to address you today. However, I find that I am a strange choice for this role for two reasons. First, after a long career in language and literacy education, I have come to the field of teacher education research only recently and am still working to establish my own scholarship in this area. Second, the story of my career as a teacher educator is one of continuously working hard to improve my teaching, yet generally failing to have much influence on the subsequent teaching practice of my students. Oh, students enjoyed my courses and generally evaluated them highly, but I simply had too much anecdotal evidence from their student teaching and their early years of teaching to confirm my very limited impact on their professional practice.

It is only in the twilight of my career that I have finally learned to be more effective as a teacher educator, although I have had to step outside of the usual system, with the agreement of my students and partner schools, in order to do so. Either I am a slow learner or there are problems in the usual ways in which we do teacher education. The sources of my learning have been two-fold. First, I have been fortunate to have had some leeway in my workload that has allowed me to explore alternate, school-based approaches to teacher education over the past six years. Second, I have immersed myself a good deal in the literature on teacher education in general, a literature with which I was sadly not well acquainted. My goal today is to share with you my learning from these two sources as a prompt for further discussion about how we do teacher education.

Linda Darling-Hammond (2006) claims that it is the “how” of teacher education (as opposed to its “what”), that is the greatest challenge for teacher education in making programs effective, and even powerful. Such a claim is not new, as Fieman-Nemser & Remmillard (1996) noted some time ago: “Unfortunately, we know even less about the processes of learning to teach than we do about the content.” (p. 78)

By “effective” (or even “powerful”), I mean that teacher candidates learn to practice the research-based guidelines for teaching that make up the content of their programs. According to Darling-Hammond, achieving that outcome means that programs must overcome three major challenges:

- The powerful effects of students’ “apprenticeship of observation” (Lortie, 1975)
- The major hurdle of the “problem of enactment” (Kennedy, 1999)
- The need to experience “the complexity of teaching” (Darling-Hammond, 2006).

She also offers an operational definition of effective programs:

- Students highly rate their preparation through their programs
- Schools seek out graduates of these programs for hiring
- Graduates of these programs have a good track record of establishing strong learning programs in their classrooms during their early years of teaching.

In fact, I judge the success of my own recent efforts by these operational factors, as well as by the strong competence which my students tend to develop.

Darling-Hammond may well be correct about the major challenge of the “how” of teacher education, judging by the results of so much research which has revealed the general ineffectiveness of so many teacher education programs. The evidence is long-standing (e.g., Zeichner & Tabatchnik, 1981) and wide-spread (e.g., Wideen, Mayer-

Smith, & Moon, 1998; Korthagen & Kessels, 1999; Clift & Brady, 2005). Such results tend to confirm Schön's (1983) long-ago critique of the shortcomings of many university-based professional programs based on "theory-to-practice" principles.

Yet, in the midst of this gloomy picture, I find much hope in the results of recent research on alternative approaches to teacher education and particularly in several recent analyses of effective teacher education programs:

- Korthagen's (2001) rationale and description of the "realistic" teacher education program in which he teaches at the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands.
- Beck & Kosnik's (2006) survey of several American and Australian programs, as well as their own cohort at OISE/UT, that are based on socio-constructivist learning.
- Darling-Hammond's (2006) survey and analysis of several exemplary American programs.

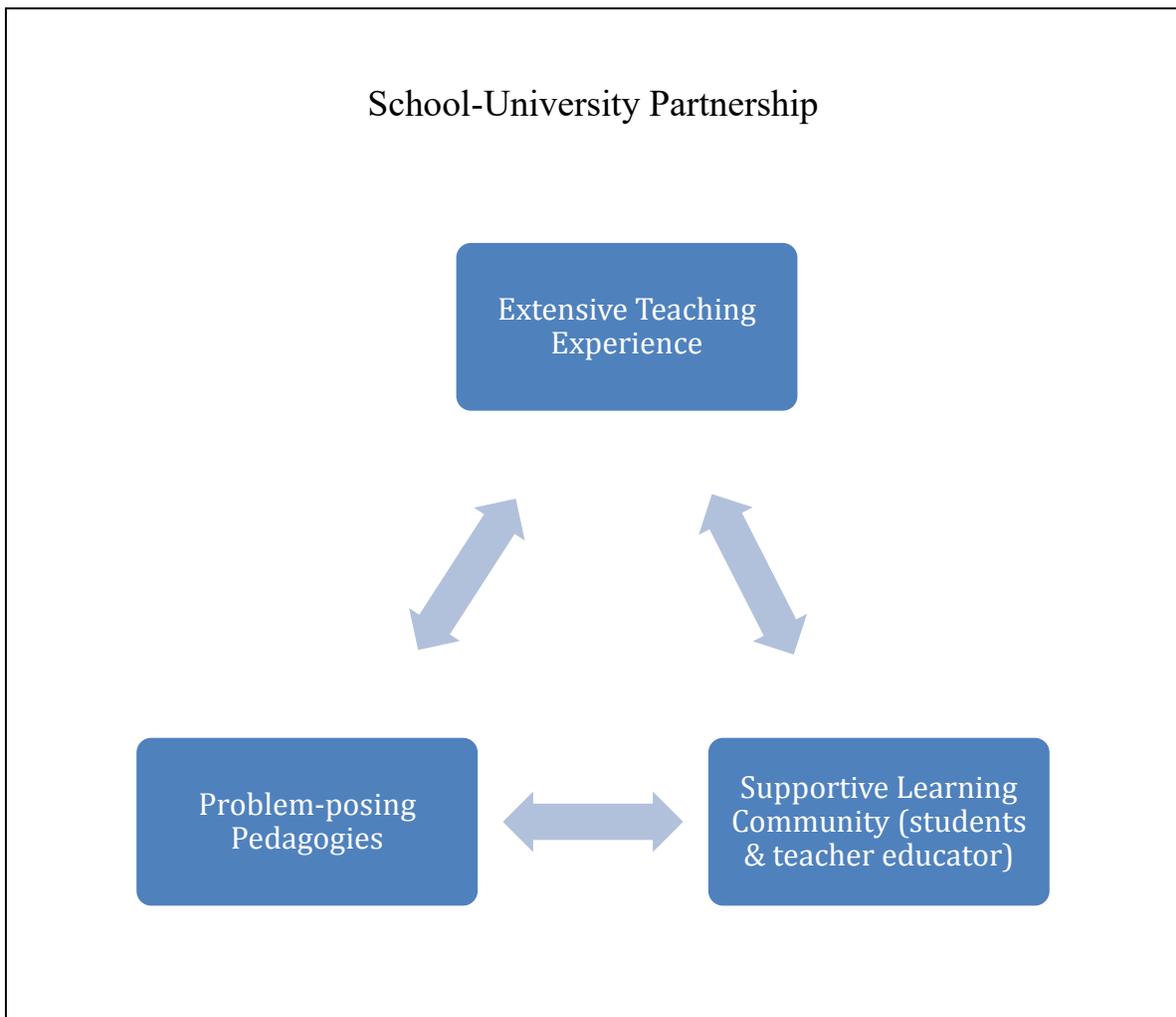
Together this work provides helpful and hopeful ways forward in our practice.

My goal in this presentation is to examine a constellation of key and interrelated factors, or dimensions, that seem to make the "how" of teacher education effective. That is, while each factor is important in itself, it is the interrelated synergy among them that can lead to powerful results. I draw on two sources of information in developing this perspective:

- A targeted review of recent research in teacher education, which will provide a general picture from a teacher education perspective.

- The results of action research on my own recent alternative teacher education work, which will provide a more specific and complementary view from the perspective of teacher candidates.

The result is a conceptual framework for considering and researching the “how” of teacher education which I portray schematically in the following diagram:



Within the larger context of school-university partnerships, the diagram identifies three key factors that seem important in making teacher education effective. First is

extensive teaching experience as the base for candidates' learning. Second is pedagogy that helps candidates make sense of and learn effectively from their teaching experience. Third is a supportive learning community that allows candidates, and the teacher educator, to learn even more effectively together from their teaching experience. I will examine each factor separately in that order and then consider the important synergistic interrelationships among all three. The result will be a panoramic view that will provide more breadth than depth.

### **School-University Partnership**

However, I first wish to make a brief preliminary comment about the importance of the larger context of school-university partnership in which I locate these three key factors. Because of the base of extensive teaching experience in this framework, teacher education programs would need to be reformed in true partnership with participating schools. Such a true partnership implies shared decision making, reciprocal learning from each other, and so on, which is a relationship that is often difficult for universities to develop with schools. While a great deal of the outcomes for teacher candidates depend on the quality of their experience in participating schools and the ongoing efforts of school staff to mentor them, I have developed this presentation from the perspective of the teacher education side of the school-university equation. Such a perspective reflects my own struggle to discover how I, as a teacher educator, could be a helpful and influential part of the process of candidates' development.

## **Teaching experience: early, extensive, and interspersed**

I begin with the factor of extensive teaching experience as a necessary base for effective learning in a teacher education program.

### Research in teacher education

Some individual research studies (e.g., Carlson, 1999) reveal the ineffectiveness of a “practice-to-theory” approach to teacher education. Other research evidence indicates that course work in a teacher education program is generally more effective for students if they have had student teaching experience prior to or concurrently with the course work (Baumgartner et al., 2002; Denton, 1982; Denton et al., 1982; Henry, 1983; Ross et al., 1981; Sunal, 1980).

Analyses of effective teacher education programs highlight the importance of extensive teaching experiences throughout a program:

- One of the key factors identified by Darling-Hammond (2006) in her survey of exemplary programs was “extensive and intensely supervised clinical work integrated with course work using pedagogies that link theory and practice” (p. 300). In fact, she concludes that 30 weeks of field experiences throughout a program would be minimal for a program to be effective. Indeed, a number of the programs she surveyed had field experiences of one semester to as long as one year. While such a goal may seem difficult to achieve in the many Canadian teacher education programs of only one or two years length, I submit that it is feasible. As an example, I note the two-year program at College Universitaire Saint-Boniface of the University of Manitoba that involves 30 weeks of field experience.

- While Beck & Kosnik (2006) focus primarily on a socio-constructivist pedagogy in teacher education courses, they point out that an inquiry approach to learning absolutely requires an extensive and continual base of experience throughout a program. “. . . inquiry involves movement back and forth between theory and practice: neither can be developed effectively without the other. An inquiry-oriented pre-service program, then, has to deal constantly with questions of practice as well as theory, linking the campus program closely with the practicum” (p. 61).
- Korthagen’s (2001) approach to “realistic” teacher education also views student knowledge about teaching as constructed, and he also points out that “an important prerequisite for this type of knowledge is that someone have enough proper experience.” (p. 27) Notably, the one-year program in which he taught at the University of Utrecht until his recent retirement provides a total of 28 weeks of part-time field experience, stretching across most of the program.

### My own action research

The third-year fall semester of our four-year elementary B.Ed. program consists of 6 credits of course work and 8 credits, or 40 days, of field experience. Prior to this semester, students have had only two brief field experiences of 12 days and 15 days. My alternative approach to the semester follows a key principle of immersing students as much as possible in the experience of the targeted learning of teaching. Thus, students spend the entire semester working and learning in local schools, resulting in 15 to 17 weeks of field experience that allows them to take on a teacher role to a large extent.

My action research on this alternative approach to the semester indicates that one of the major factors in preparing teachers more effectively was the longer-than-normal time in a school (as well as starting at the very beginning of the school year).

- Students take on teaching duties in a more gradual progression than is normally the case in student teaching. *“A key component is that I had time to grow out of a passive role as a trainee and began to attempt to improve the quality of education in the classroom. I became very comfortable and proficient in that role. . . This speaks to the confidence that the program promotes through the extended field study.” “It allowed us to really go at our own pace. So I didn’t feel rushed into having to do 50% of the teaching or 75%. So when I was ready to go to the next step, I’d move to the next step.”*
- Students feel safer in making mistakes and learning by trial-and-error since they have a longer time period in which to improve and progress. *“This semester was an opportunity for me to try things at my own pace, first with a lot of support. Some things did not work, but I had the opportunity to return and try something different and attempt new strategies and see results. This improves confidence and skills. It gives me a chance to improve from my experiences. . . By the end I was running the class myself.”*
- Students develop their professional abilities to an advanced level that results in a higher degree of confidence. *“You get over that excitement of teaching—‘the honeymoon phase’—and begin to understand the long-term trials of teaching. . . . If you can do one whole semester, I think you can do a whole year.”* However, they also develop a realistic assessment of the stage of their development as

teachers. *“Through this program I realized how much more I need to learn, how much more is ahead of me. . . . I think that is an advantage.”*

- Students enjoy a broader professional experience than is normally possible in student teaching—having more contact with parents, experiencing much more of a teacher’s larger involvement in school duties (e.g., staff meetings, committees, social events, etc.), taking a much larger and more determining role in report cards, having more opportunity to work with related professionals in the school, school board, and community (e.g., resource teachers, behaviour specialists, board consultants and psychologists, as well as social workers, police, community groups, etc.) *“I am finally able to understand the structure and culture of the school in real time; it is a well-rounded experience that enables me to implement my ideas in a real context with confidence.”*

### **Problem-posing pedagogies: building from teaching experience**



I use the term “problem-posing” as an umbrella term to refer to various pedagogies that are based on the teaching experiences, problems, issues, and questions of candidates, such as socio-constructivist, self-reflective, inquiry, among others. This factor of pedagogy is of equal importance with the first factor of extensive teaching experience, since simply providing students with more extensive field experiences may simply result in socialization into the status quo of schools and work against transforming practices in schools (Cole 1997, Tigchelaar and Korthagen 2004). Note the warning in the title of Britzman’s (2003) book about student teaching, *Practice Makes Practice* rather than “practice makes perfect.”

#### Research in teacher education

Analyses of effective teacher education programs reveal the importance of the nature of the pedagogy employed and its relationship with candidates’ teaching experience:

- Another key factor noted by Darling-Hammond (2006) is “. . . a tight coherence and integration among courses and between course work and clinical work in schools . . .” (p. 306). She found that these exemplary programs continually interwove courses and practica across the entire program, virtually all course work involved applications in classrooms, and pedagogies were used that confronted the problems of teaching and that fostered reflection on teaching (e.g., logs/journals, research inquiries, autobiography and self-reflection, etc.).
- Beck & Kosnick (2006) identified one of the key factors in their survey as a pedagogical approach which they call inquiry—as opposed to traditional transmission of expert knowledge. They characterize the approach as non-

- authoritarian, that is, involving “constant dialogue and co-learning, extensive opportunities for students to reflect, give input, and develop their own ideas” (p. 24).
- Korthagen’s (2001) “realistic” approach to teacher education begins, not with theory, but with problems faced by student teachers. Through a constructivist learning process, “the student develops his or her knowledge in a process of reflection on practical situations, which creates a concern and a personal need for learning.” (p. 15)

### My own action research

The second principle which I have explored in my own teaching is helping students make sense of and transform their teaching experience. To do that, I engage students in a weekly regional seminar which has both open space for student issues, questions, etc. as well as a developmentally appropriate topic to explore together. The seminar is also linked with students’ development of a professional teaching portfolio during the semester.

My students found a socio-constructivist and self-reflective pedagogy in their weekly seminar and portfolio assignment to be a factor as equally important as their extended teaching experience.

- The weekly seminar provided a valuable chance to step back from their professional work, to reflect on it, and to build knowledge in interaction with me and other students in the project. *“I look forward to the seminars as it is a time I*

- can relax, step back, share my experiences and learn from David and the other student teachers.”*
- The approach responded to the actual experiences and needs of the student teachers in their classrooms. *“The timing of it [seminar] is genius as the seminar topics seem to coincide with the developing experiences in my classroom.” “It’s immediate, something happens in the classroom and half an hour later I am in the seminar talking about it and that works really well for me. . . . For me the seminars are key; it’s ideal.”*
  - Students valued the responsive role of the teacher educator in a socio-constructivist approach to their learning in the seminar. *“He isn’t the kind of teacher to give you an answer. He’ll say, ‘OK, let’s brainstorm, let’s problem solve together about this’ and that’s very helpful.” “David provided us the opportunity to discuss strategies among one another. So instead of just saying, ‘OK, you can do this or you can do that, try using this method or that strategy,’ instead of using his own personal experience, he had us work together to talk about our different strategies that each of us could possibly come up with. So the emphasis was more on the student teacher.”*
  - The seminar interaction influenced students’ subsequent teaching. *“I remember one time we were talking about classroom management and we were discussing different ways of doing it. I remember, in my own teaching, I said, ‘Let me try this technique or that technique that we talked about in our seminar.’ So you change, you fine-tune your teaching based on what you talked about in the seminar. That was very helpful.”*

- Students came to value self-reflection as a normal part of teaching experience. *“What’s overlooked in our program about reflection and the teaching process is that you can’t really reflect on teaching unless you’re actually teaching in the classroom. The fact that you’re actually teaching for three months, you can actually reflect on it.”*
- The development of a professional teaching portfolio through weekly tasks served to extend the weekly seminar into their daily learning in their classrooms. *“I felt that it made you more aware of what you were doing, the purpose for doing those lessons, or your ideas. It made it more meaningful to document them.” “Not being forced to, but David, by bringing up the subjects and pushing the discussion, it really forces you to think about it, because otherwise it might be just ‘Yes’ or ‘No.’ But to be in the moment and to think about it was really important.” “It was really gradual and you got to appreciate each nuance of teaching, in a sense. For example, evaluation. You could take a week to really analyze and think about what it means to evaluate your kids.’*

Notably, the approaches surveyed here are examples of the kind of “reflective practicum” that Schön (1987) proposed for educating reflective practitioners by fostering reflection-on-action and eventually reflection-in-action.

## Community of learners: students and teacher educator



While research on the above two key factors of teaching experience and problem-posing pedagogies and their relationship is relatively recent, a fairly substantial body of research has been developed and, thus, my analysis so far may sound familiar. This next factor of a healthy and supportive community of learners has been less studied thus far. As a result, I will examine this dimension in more depth.

As Beck & Kosnick (2006) state, “. . . in a socio-constructivist view, community is not just a frill; it is fundamental to effective learning” (p. 74). That is, if as learners students are to work collaboratively, take risks in their learning, disagree with the group, and feel safe enough to reveal vulnerability, then they must develop trusting, respectful, and supportive relations within the group.

### Teacher education reform

Recent teacher education reform has usually turned to the notion of student cohorts—groups of students who spend all or part of their program together—to achieve this

supportive group relationship. However, while a good deal of recent research indicates generally positive outcomes for student cohorts, a substantial body of work reveals mixed results.

- Dyson & Hanley (2002) compared cohort and non-cohort groups in a Canadian teacher education program and found no advantage for the cohort group in regard to the targeted outcomes of student social adjustment and academic achievement.
- Mandzuk Hasinoff, & Seifert (2003), using the conceptual framework of social capital, conclude that the cohort model served some students better than others in another Canadian teacher education program.
- Radencich et al. (1998) surveyed a number of cohort groups in a teacher education program and found that, while some succeeded well, others did not. In fact, they describe their results as bimodal, meaning, “on the whole very positive or almost pathological.” (p. 112).
- Sapon-Shevin & Chandler-Olcott (2001) suggest that as teacher educators we know little about the effects of ruptures or critical incidents within cohorts that can result in cohort groups becoming “dysfunctional families.” (p. 350)

In summary, as Sapon-Shevin and Chandler-Olcott (2001) comment, “Many teacher educators shared with us stories of cohorts gone wrong. Colleagues expressed puzzlement about what makes a good or a bad cohort and how that might be affected by factors within or outside their control” (p. 351).

### Research in teacher education

A very important and helpful step recently has been research that has begun to inquire into how “cohorts” become “communities” by studying successful cohorts. For example:

- Beck and Kosnik's (2006) survey of effective programs identified common practices that fostered community (and provides an excellent discussion of these practices):
  - ✓ appropriate conditions for community,
  - ✓ a core program,
  - ✓ varied sub-groupings,
  - ✓ explicit discussion of community,
  - ✓ collaborative learning activities,
  - ✓ orientation events,
  - ✓ community-building strategies, and
  - ✓ modeling community.
  
- Ross et al. (2006) report the strategies used by students to make their teacher education cohort work well as a community:
  - ✓ keeping an academic focus,
  - ✓ pulling ones' own weight,
  - ✓ taking care of the community,
  - ✓ being willing to move outside one's own comfort zone, and
  - ✓ including everyone.

### My own analysis of the research

Successful cohort experiences seem to usually be based on students' teaching experience (Beck & Kosnick, 2001, 2006; Bullough, Clark, Wentworth, & Hansen, 2001; Connor & Killmer, 2001; Dinsmore & Wenger, 2006; Rainer & Guyton, 1998). As

Bullough et al. (2001) note, “Cohorts and students’ experience within them seem to evolve in relationship to their experiences with pupils in the schools in which they worked” (p. 99). However, this factor is often not taken into account in the research on cohorts. In fact, Sapon-Shevin & Chandler-Olcott (2001) noted a number of worrisome difficulties in the relationships within their cohort over several semesters. However, they noted that the relationships among the students become much more positive—and professional, rather than academic—once student teaching started! Indeed, simply facing the challenge of field experience together seems to create strong bonds within a group. As noted by one of the students in the cohort studied by Bullough et al (2001), “I really do feel really strongly about the people that I teach with. They are very, very, very helpful. We joke a lot together.... We have grown close together knowing that we are all in the same boat and that we are all having a hard time” (p. 106-107). Thus, it seems that communities of learners may best be developed as “communities of practice” (Wenger et al., 2002). As Bullough et al. (2001) comment. “This study suggests that a rethinking of the nature and value of field work within the program is needed and a reconsideration of the cohort concept in relationship to its recognized but not fully realized educational potential” (p. 105).

### My own action research

In my alternative approach, there are three nested levels of cohort: the level of the entire alternative project (40-50 students in 10-12 schools), regional seminar groups (15-20 students drawn from 3 to 5 nearby schools), and school groups (3 to 8 students placed in one school). The smaller groupings by seminar group and individual school were the

most important and salient for students, as Bullough et al. (2001) also discovered in a similar program. The base of my students' teaching during the semester not only drove the content of the weekly seminars, but also caused students to value each other's experience and their potential for helping each other improve their teaching, thus fostering a community of learners.

- Students' teaching experience drove the content of the seminars. *"The seminars feel like I am doing real professional development with other teachers."*
- The pedagogical approach assisted students in feeling comfortable to share experiences and to build ideas together about teaching. *"I have never felt like I am on an island. We are learning as a group and I feel like I am not alone when something goes wrong."*
- Students valued their peers as important resources to develop their professional knowledge and practice. *"You are not out there alone, because of the seminars and our group here at the school, you feel supported and I rely on my fellow student teachers for advice a lot"*
- The groups of 3-8 students at individual schools also played an important role in students' development on a daily basis. *"You really see how we as a group have gelled, I think about the last time we were driving to the seminar, four of us, and we were sharing stories about our class and supporting each other...have we ever come a long way!"*
- A final factor in fostering a strong sense of community among the cohort was a sense of having faced a challenging semester, having come through it well, and feeling proud together of what they had all accomplished, a notion similar to

Lortie's (1975) "shared ordeal" (p. 267), an important aspect for community which he felt tended to be missing in teacher education programs. *"There are various support groups or ways of getting the assistance you need. So you can get through those challenges! So it's not like they drop you in this ultra-difficult school and say, 'OK, fend for yourself. Good luck!' The support is there. And so, with that, you get through it and it becomes a valuable and enormously . . . I don't even know how to say it . . . it's inside that you really change and you grow."*

Importantly, such group learning experiences in teacher education programs foreshadow the kind of professional learning communities among teachers that have been encouraged as the basis for school reform.

#### The teacher educator as a member of the learning community

I introduce this topic as a relatively new aspect of the notion of a community of learners in teacher education programs, since almost all the above research on community focuses on relationships among students, studied by the teacher educator from "outside" the group. Indeed, the "pedagogical relation" (Van Manen, 1991) between teacher educators and their students is a topic that is largely unaddressed in teacher education research. Over time there have been several models and "calls" for what is usually referred to as a "care-centered approach" to teacher education (Goldstein, 2002; Noddings, 1986; Rodgers & Webb, 1991).

Yet, little research on actual practice exists in higher education and less still in teacher education, despite the fact that such relationships are apparently an important factor in student learning.

- Goldstein (1999) draws on previous theoretical work to suggest that when teacher and student enter the “relational zone” in a caring and positive way, intellectual transformation occurs.
- Thayer-Bacon and Bacon (1996) describe a model of teaching that posits the importance of caring on the part of professors and suggests that students learn more from caring professors.
- In regard to teacher education more specifically, Goldstein (2002) goes so far as to claim that students need to have a caring experience in their pre-service program if they are to become caring teachers in a fully developed way.

Van Manen (1991) himself laments, “In most of the literature about teaching and education, the intuitive side of life has been seriously underestimated and neglected.” (p. xii)

### My own action research

I must admit that a final—and surprising—realization from my action research was the importance of the positive and supportive nature of my relationship with my students, and the realization that I too was a member of the community of learners. In the absence of other research results, the results from my own research begin to reveal the potential effects of a positive and supportive relationship between teacher educators and students on the quality of students’ learning and development. (Note that some of the following comments also refer to the helping supervisors who comprise the team that is responsible for the alternative semester.)

First, these results help us begin to see what positive care and support from a teacher educator looks like from the perspective of teacher candidates.

- Being taken *seriously*, with a great deal of *importance* placed on them, their growth, and their work. That importance is revealed partly in the *time and effort* that a teacher educator invests in working with students.
- Being “*actively*” *observed and listened to* and, thus, feeling seen, heard, and known. This stance positions a teacher educator to *respond* sensitively and appropriately to students’ needs and development.
- Sensing that the teacher educator is *accessible and open*, in order to develop a sense of *trust* with students.
- Being dealt with *honestly*, especially about their performance and behaviour, yet also *supportively and constructively*.
- Connecting with *positive, but also realistic, energy and enthusiasm* on the part of the teacher educator. At its fullest expression, students experience a teacher educator’s *passion* for teaching.

All these aspects of pedagogical relation seem to be components of Van Manen’s notion of pedagogical tact as “the practice of otherness.” (p. 139)

Most important, however, are the apparent effects that this kind of “pedagogic relation” has on students’ development.

- Students feel more like a colleague, more of a professional, than a student. “*I was made to feel like a professional teacher, a colleague.*”
- Students felt not only heard and known, but also “engaged” in the relationship. .  
“*The key is to get to know the student teacher; understand their personal ideals,*

- visions, and goals; what makes them tick; to create a relationship that engages both participants. This is what is happening here.”*
- *Students feel more motivated and positive. “I am taken more seriously as a student teacher and therefore I take it more seriously.” “His natural spark gets you excited and motivated; it affects us all.” “David is one of the few truly positive people and it’s hard to be negative around positive energy. He would just brighten up the room when he came in, even when everyone was in a bad mood.”*
  - *Students felt supported in having their needs met. “He won’t give you the answers to anything. He’ll kind of guide you along, which is what teachers should be doing. He’ll give you resources if you need it. He’ll find the right places to go if you want it.” “He has this air about him that you feel like you would be taken care of because he cares about students and he cares about their progress and their learning.”*
  - *Students felt a reduction of tension and anxiety. “I felt prepared before I arrived [at the school]; there is a lot of materials and support available; this helped me get ready because I was really nervous.” “He lessens the tension of things, because you can go and approach him about anything. You feel, ‘I need some help with this and I’m going to go speak to David about it.’ And you’re not afraid to do it, and you certainly don’t feel any less of a teacher.”*
  - *Students acknowledged growth, both professional and personal. “The evaluation process is positive in ‘how’ I am being observed. This speaks to the quality of the people who supervise me as they provide positive and meaningful criticism that makes me a better person and teacher.”*

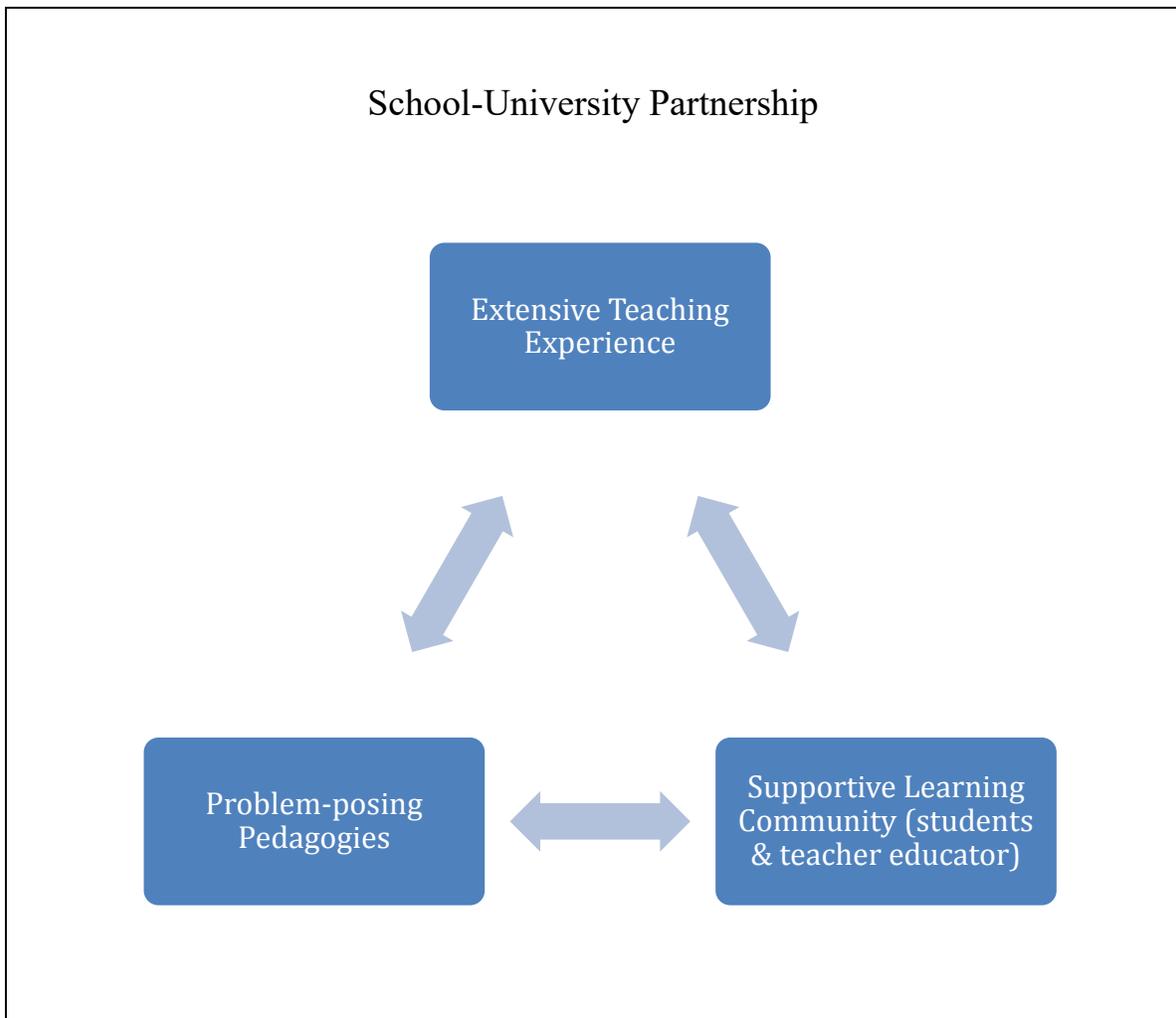
- Students develop because of the teacher educator's vision and behaviour. "*Many of us feel like we share common ideals concerning education and revel in the opportunity to discuss and debate education with him.*" "*You really see and feel what it is to be a good teacher as a result of working with David. . . . He models how to be a good teacher.*"

While such results are quite limited and preliminary, they suggest that this topic is a potentially important factor in teacher education programs. Furthermore, I submit that it is the base of teaching experiences in this conceptual framework that makes the issue of the relationship between teacher candidates and teacher educators so important. Unlike students' experience of most course work in a program, the experience of student teaching often creates anxiety in students, since they realize how important it is for success in their program and subsequent career. In addition, as students encounter the inevitable problems and challenges during their student teaching experience, they often undergo difficult times emotionally as they struggle to improve their practice, resulting in a need for greater understanding and support than would normally be the case during course work. Finally, the recent trend in Canada for tenure-track faculty not to be directly involved in work with student teachers may reduce the importance and salience of this factor for us, as both teacher educators and as researchers, but not for our students.



### **Interactions among the Factors**

While each of the above three factors is important in itself, what seems most important is the synergistic and reciprocal interaction among them that makes the whole greater than the sum of its parts. In returning to the schematic model I proposed at the beginning of my talk, I will attempt to tease out these interactions (represented by the bidirectional arrows), starting with those involving the important base of teaching experience for students and concluding with the interaction between pedagogy and community.



Teaching experience—Pedagogy interaction

- Teaching experience drives the content of simultaneous/subsequent courses, resulting for students in a relevant and valued curriculum, as well as an experiential base for learning.
- A problem-posing pedagogy helps transform students' teaching experience into professional knowledge and fosters transformation of subsequent teaching by students.

### Teaching experience—Community interaction

- Teaching experience drives the interaction among a group of students professionally and helps foster a sense of community among them, including the teacher educator.
- The development of a sense of community fosters support and learning among students, and with the teacher educator, during their teaching experience.

### Pedagogy—Community interaction

- A problem-posing pedagogy fosters the development of a professional learning community, including the teacher educator.
- A sense of community enhances the process of a problem-posing pedagogy and thus its effectiveness.

## **Outcomes**

My emerging hypothesis is that when these three key factors can work together in conjunction with each other, the outcomes for teacher candidates can be quite effective, even powerful. On the other hand, when some factors are lacking or unrelated to each other, students' learning experiences will be far less effective. For example, I have met resistance from students when I tried to use a problem-posing pedagogy in on-campus courses, since students had no or little teaching experience to draw from. In addition, I have also experienced an atmosphere of competition, rather than collaboration, among student teachers in a school when there was no simultaneous seminar to help build community among them. Finally, I have heard numerous complaints from student

teachers about the ineffectiveness of simultaneous course work that did not use a pedagogy based on their concurrent teaching experience. In sum, the conceptual framework seems to work like a three-legged stool. That is, it works very well with all three legs, but not very well at all with only one or two legs.

In sum, what are those powerful outcomes for teacher candidates? One example is Jennifer Willshaw’s (2009) Master’s degree project that studied the process by which one of my seminar groups became a professional learning community during last fall semester and the effect on students of that experience. At the end of the semester, she asked the group of 17 students to contrast that semester’s experience with the previous two years of their B.Ed. program (largely course-based in a “theory-to-practice” approach). She portrayed the main themes of students’ responses in the following chart:

Traditional vs. Alternative Approaches to Teacher Education

<b>Regular program</b>	<b>Alternative semester</b>
Absorbing information	Living through the experience
No/limited sharing of experience	Weekly debriefing, analyzing, and problem solving of our experiences
Assignments focus on theories and what profs are expecting of us	Assignments focus on our experiences
No self-reflection on teaching	Self-reflection on teaching
Rigid schedule of topics	Open for suggestions, flexible re topics

Lecture-style	Discussion
Large and ineffective class sizes	“Small individual school groups are our little families and seminar groups are our bigger families. If you want practical advice on how to run a classroom, then it’s easier in smaller groups.”
Are told what to think	Learn to think for ourselves
Feel like students	Feel like teachers
Teaching us to be students	Teaching us to be teachers

The following are typical summary comments by my students after their experience in this alternative semester.

- *“As a beginning teacher, yes, I still have lots to learn, but I feel ready. I feel confident.”*
- *“I can think about teaching in a more realistic way. I understand what is doable for me as a teacher. It helps me to have more ideas and to feel more as a beginning teacher and less as a student.”*
- *“At the end I felt successful as a teacher. In the other field experiences, you’re waiting for the grade or the evaluation from your CT [cooperating teacher]. In this experience, you found success in yourself. I didn’t care what I got in the end.”*

*I knew that I could do it. And that made me want to be a teacher more than a hundred A's would."*

I summarize Willshaw's contrasting chart as the difference between an academic experience and a professional experience, with a concurrent shift in identity from "student" to "teacher" as a result. As such, this kind of alternative experience contains aspects often associated with the first year of teaching.

I share this data not to put our regular program in a bad light or my efforts in a good light. Remember that I spent most of my career working within the structure of the regular program and contributing to those regular program outcomes. I share this data, rather, to indicate how important are the decisions we make about "how" we do teacher education. Those decisions on our parts have a major impact on the outcomes of our programs for our students.

## **Conclusions**

### As researchers of teacher education

- The multidimensional and interrelated picture of teacher education which I have portrayed in this talk suggests that we address these key factors in our research, since the body of research on them, while emerging, is still relatively limited, particularly in regard to the issue of relationships among students, as well as with teacher educators.
- It also suggests that we utilize research questions and approaches that can study all these factors and their interrelationships holistically, since most of the research that I have surveyed focuses on just one of the factors separately.

As developers and implementers of teacher education programs

- Our challenge is to try to achieve the nature and especially the outcomes on the “alternative” side of the above chart. I hope that the conceptual framework that I have created will offer some ways forward in reconsidering “how” we do teacher education, as well as how we research it.
- However, as Darling-Hammond (2006) and Beck & Kosnick (2006), as well as other researchers (e.g. Labaree, 2008), point out, there is a formidable array of barriers in the contemporary university context working against this kind of a “how” of teacher education. In the modern era of teacher education, I believe that we have never had a clearer sense of a way forward, yet we have never faced a more challenging context in which to implement it.
- Yet, if we cannot meet this challenge, we pass on the problem to schools that need to set up mentoring and induction programs to support—and try to retain—less-than-fully-prepared new teachers. In addition, we fuel the discussion about the uncertain future of university-based teacher education programs (e.g., Zeichner, 2006). The stakes are high.

I conclude with this well-known quote as both a summary of my own journey as a teacher educator as well as a metaphor for the choices we all face about “how” we do teacher education.

Two roads diverged in a wood.

And I, I took the one less traveled by,

And that has made all the difference.

Robert Frost



## References

- Baumgartner, F, Koerner, M., & Rust, F. (2002). Exploring roles in student teaching placements. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 29, 35-58.
- Beck, C., & Kosnik, C. (2001). From cohort to community in a preservice teacher education program. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 17 (8), 925-948.
- Beck, C., & Kosnik, C. (2006). *Innovations in teacher education: A social constructivist approach*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Britzman, D. (2003). *Practice makes practice* (second edition). Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Bullough, R., Clark, C., Wentworth, N., & Hansen, J. M. (2001). Student cohorts, school rhythms, and teacher education. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 28 (2), 97-110.
- Carlson, H.L. (1999). From practice to theory: A social constructive approach to teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 5 (2), 203-218.
- Clift, R., & Brady, P. (2005). Research on methods courses and field experiences. In Cochran-Smith, M., & Zeichner, K. (Eds.), *Studying teacher education: The report of the AERA panel on research and teacher education*. Washington, DC: AERA and Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Earlbaum.
- Cole, A.L. (1997). Impediments to reflective practice. *Teachers and Teaching, Theory and Practice*, 3 (1), 7-27.
- Connor, K., & Killmer, N. (2001). Cohorts, collaboration, and community: Does contextual teacher education really work. *Action in Teacher Education*, 23 (3), 46-53.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2006). *Powerful teacher education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Denton, J. (1982). Early field experience influence on performance in subsequent course work. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 33 (2), 19-23.
- Denton, J., Morris, J., & Tooke, D. (1982). The influence of academic characteristics of student teachers on the cognitive attainment of learners. *Educational and Psychological Research*, 2(1), 15-29.
- Dinsmore, J. & Wenger, K. (2006). Relationships in pre-service teacher preparation: From cohorts to communities. *Teacher Education Quarterly*. 33(1), 57-71.
- Dyson, L., & Hanley, B. (2002). Testing the effect of a cohort grouping model as a form of instructional grouping in teacher education. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, 32 (2), 27-46.
- Fieman-Nemser, S., & Remillard, J. (1996). Perspectives on learning to teach. In F. B. Murray (Ed.). *Teacher educator's handbook: Building a knowledge base for the preparation of teachers*. (pp. 63-91). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Goldstein, L. (1999). The relational zone: the role of caring relationships in the co-construction of mind. *American Educational Research Journal*, 36 (3), 647-673.
- Goldstein, L. (2002). *Reclaiming caring in teaching and teacher education*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Henry, M. (1983). The effect of increased exploratory field experiences upon the perceptions and performance of student teachers. *Action in Teacher Education*, 5 (1-2), 66-70.
- Kennedy, M. (1999). The role of preservice education. In L. Darling-Hammond & G. Sykes (Eds.), *Teaching as the learning profession: Handbook of policy and practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Korthagen, F. (2001). *Linking practice and theory: The pedagogy of realistic teacher education*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Korthagen, F., & Kessels, J. (1999). Linking theory and practice. Changing the pedagogy of teacher education. *Educational Researcher*, 28(4), 4-17.
- Korthagen, F., Loughran, J. & Russell, T. (2006). Developing fundamental principles for teacher education programs and practices. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 22 (8), 1020-1041.
- Labaree, D. (2008). An uneasy relationship: the history of teacher education in the university. In Cochran-Smith, M., Fieman-Marcus, S, McIntyre, J., & Demers, C., Eds. *Handbook of research on teacher education: Enduring questions in changing contexts*. New York: Routledge.
- Lortie, D. (1975). *Schoolteacher: A sociological study*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Mandzuk, D., Hasinoff, S., & Seifert, K. (2003). Inside a student cohort: Teacher education from a social capital perspective. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 28 (1&2), 168-184.
- Noddings, N. (1986). Fidelity in teaching, teacher education, and research on teaching. *Harvard Educational Review*, 56 (4), 496-510.
- Radencich, M., Thompson, T., Anderson, N., Oropallo, K, Feege, P., Harrison, M., Hanley, P. & Gomes, S. (1998). The culture of cohorts: Preservice teacher education teams at a southeastern university in the United States. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 24(2), 109-127.

- Rainer J., & Guyton, E. (1998, April). *Teacher change: The strategies and effects of a constructivist teacher education program*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA.
- Rogers, D., & Webb, J. (1991). The ethic of caring in teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 42 (3), 173-181.
- Ross, D., Stafford, L., Church-Pupke, P., & Bondy, E. (2006). Practicing collaboration: What we learn from a cohort that functions well. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 29 (1), 32-43.
- Ross, S., Hughes, T., & Hill, R. (1981). Field experiences as meaningful contexts for learning about learning. *Journal of Educational Research*, 75 (2), 103-107.
- Sapon-Shevin, M. & Chandler-Olcott, K. (2001). Student cohorts: Communities of critique or dysfunctional families? *Journal of Teacher Education*, 52 (5), 350-364.
- Sunal, D. (1980). Effect of field experience during elementary methods courses on preservice teacher behavior. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 17 (1), 17-23.
- Thayer-Bacon, B.J., & Bacon, C.S. (1996). Caring professors: a model. *The Journal of General Education*, 45 (4), 255-269.
- Tigchelaar, A., & Korthagen, F. (2004). Deepening the exchange of student teaching experiences: implications for the pedagogy of teacher education of recent insights into teacher behaviour. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 20, 665-679.
- Van Manen, M. (1991). *The tact of teaching: The meaning of pedagogical thoughtfulness*. London, ON: Althouse Press.

Wenger, E., McDermott, R., & Snyder, W. (2002). *Cultivating communities of practice*.

Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Wideen, M., Mayer-Smith, J., & Moon, B. (1998). A critical analysis of the research on learning to teach: making the case for an ecological perspective on inquiry.

*Review of Educational Research*, 68 (2), 130-178.

Willshaw, J. (2009). *Progression through professional learning communities*.

Unpublished Master's degree project, McGill University.

Zeichner, K. (2006). Reflections of a university-based teacher educator on the future of college and university-based teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 57(3), 326-3340.

Zeichner, K. & Tabachnik, B. R. (1981). Are the effects of university teacher education washed out by school experiences? *Journal of Teacher Education*, 32, 7-11.

#### Acknowledgements and thanks

-My colleague Kevin O'Connor who helped me research and understand my efforts, with the help of a grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

-My network of partner schools, and my team of helping supervisors, who have chosen to work with me and have helped me develop and refine this alternative approach.

-My students who have chosen to work with me and, thus, gave me the opportunity to transform my work as a teacher educator and from whom I have learned so much.

*Is there an historical mission for teacher education? Or is it too late?*

**Hans Smits, University of Calgary**

**Foreword to the original presentation**

Following this foreword is a slightly revised version of my 2011 CATE keynote presentation. The original keynote was intended as a kind of meditation in three parts on what I was trying to understand about the purposes of teacher education in an historical context and attempting, not fully adequately as I read it now, to address the question and meaning of responsibility inherent in the practice of teacher education. However, with the benefit of hindsight it would be a bit disingenuous to say here is what I really meant. So it is only more honest, I think, to leave the text stand as a reflection about my work at a moment of time and hope it served, or can serve, as a contribution to the ongoing conversation about the work of teacher education.

It may be appropriate nevertheless to provide a bit more context for what I was trying to come to grips with in the keynote. The question I posed in the title is one that suggests the importance of understanding teacher education in an historical context and was offered as an example of working through historical consciousness. As Ricoeur (2004) put it evocatively historical consciousness is not simply an accounting of our work or ourselves: “one does not simply remember oneself seeing, experiencing, learning; rather one recalls the situations in the world in which one has seen, experienced, learned” (p. 36). Hence in the keynote, I was attempting to say something about what I had learned within a particular situation of teacher education. It was not a history of a program, nor my own history as a teacher educator. Rather it was about attempting to

understand a certain kind of experience that was bounded by time, place, and particular relationships and events, but which nonetheless offered a compelling opportunity for reflection on teacher education in a broader sense.

Looking back on it now, I realize that I may have been too close to reflecting on what I had experienced as a teacher educator when I was asked to deliver the CATE keynote. The immediate context for the presentation was the quite abrupt demise of a teacher education program at the University of Calgary premised on the idea of learning teaching as a form of practical judgement, a program to which I had dedicated a good part of my time, effort and commitment for a dozen years; at literally the snap of a finger that program, all of the effort that went into it and what it represented in terms of ideas and approach, was delegated to the history's dustbin.

So when I prepared for the keynote presentation, I was feeling pretty raw in emotional terms. You might say that the tone of the keynote, as I read it now, was an expression of melancholy. Melancholy is associated, in psychoanalytic terms, with feelings of loss: “the trauma of the loss of an object of love and desire” (White, 2000, p. 98). White points out that melancholy can become disabling and can be experienced in dysfunctional ways, preventing what he identifies as the work of mourning, which signifies a movement away from blame or resentment, to “the idea of turning, working, cultivating oneself in different direction” (p. 100).

Part of this “turning” was to engage in an extended conversation with some colleagues about our experiences of working as teacher educators in the program (Lund, Panayotidis, Smits, and Towers, (2012). In one of the sections of that book, I attempted to raise the importance of memory in the face of loss of attachment to what we felt was

an important, imaginative and brave approach to teacher education. Why the importance of memory in relation to the experience of that program? In part, it was to argue that there is more to “programs” than what is apparent in the courses and structures through which we practice the preparation of teachers. Differences in teacher education programs represent only alternative ways of organizing approaches to teacher education, perhaps betraying a too intense focus on the (although arguably necessary) techniques and processes of realizing a curriculum for teacher preparation, but then omitting intentionally or not questions of purpose, judgement and commitment to the project of education in a larger sense. What our program at the University of Calgary offered briefly, I would still contend (and is reflected in the keynote) was a deeper sense of what it means to be a teacher in complex and difficult contexts. For me, a focus on practical judgement (Dunne, 1993) complicated our thinking and practices of teacher education, signaling a commitment to fostering an understanding of teaching as something that is not an instrumental practice, but one deeply imbued with the necessity to practice good judgement in pedagogical situations.

Of course, a quality of mourning about what I experienced as loss also entailed an acceptance of finitude, in that any of our endeavours are limited by our capacities, the contexts in which we work and the ways that understanding and interpretation of what constitutes “good” teacher education is always contested. It would be dishonest as well to deny that the program in which I worked and forms the background for the keynote was not without its problems and faults. But, the program was a particular kind of project, situated in a particular time and place and for a time offered enticing glimpses of thinking differently about the practice of teacher education.

Elsewhere, I have written about the “tragic” dimension of teacher education as a way of alluding to the idea that “programs do not ever complete the project of education to which we are in the first instance committed” (Carson and Smits, forthcoming). That is perhaps what I was trying to imply with the question of “is it too late?” Following Hannah Arendt’s notion of belatedness, education is always too late in the sense that the realities of the world exceed our ability at any point to fully achieve our hopes and intentions within our work and institutions. The critical thing for us as educators, however, is a commitment to education as a project that is always incomplete, something requiring a radical openness and the courage to venture forth guided by ends we may not ever fully realize. Perhaps, with our postmodern sensibilities, we may recoil at the idea of “mission” but on the other hand the commitment to education, and teacher education, as a “beautiful risk” as Biesta (2014) evocatively terms it, is our mission.

## **Part 1**

*We are always educating for a world that is or is becoming out of joint, for this is the basic human situation, in which the world is created by mortal hands to serve mortals for a limited time as home. (Arendt, 1969, pp. 192-193)*

*An education for the world cannot proceed as though the “world” has a hold on us, which is why educators must take seriously the phenomenon of world- alienation. (Levinson, 2010, p. 485)*

In accepting the invitation to speak today, not without trepidation I have to admit, I did so with the utmost respect for the work that teacher educators do across faculties in the country. While my aim today is to offer a critical view on teacher education it is certainly not to denigrate the important and necessary work that we do. Indeed, I hope that I will leave you with the impression of the absolute necessity of teacher education

and I accept your invitation to speak as an opportunity to contribute, albeit in a small and limited way, to a conversation about the horizons which frame our work and what allows us to speak the truth of teacher education.

My question, in a way, is about what constitutes the good in good teacher education. This is a contentious question, I will argue, because of how the “good” can be framed, with competing epistemological perspectives on what constitutes teacher practice, as well as the ontological and ethical questions about teachers’ place(s) in the world. I have no hesitation in claiming that teacher education is central to the renewal of the world; working with others in schools and communities teacher educators stand at a mediating point in not only renewing the teaching profession, but also to promote images of good education and practice. Not to put this in overly dramatic terms, I nonetheless would want to assert that this question of purposes has become more difficult. I am referring particularly to the problem of the public, and the way that teacher education has historically been related, in however a complicated fashion to the question of what can be construed as public and the public good. I would argue that this is particularly so today when what is occurring is an historic assault on what we have understood historically as the public and public interests. The discussion of what constitutes the public includes the place of [public] universities themselves, and what seem to be the increasingly blurred boundaries between public interest and the increasing valorization of private interests in terms of where the university orients its responsibilities and accountability.

The Slovenian social critic Slavoj Žižek (2010) has suggested that we live in “end times” which I think is bound up with the question of the public and, in some complex ways, our work. He writes,

...the global capitalist system is approaching an apocalyptic zero-point. Its “four riders of the apocalypse” are comprised by the ecological crisis, the consequences of the biogenetic revolution, imbalances within the system itself (problems with intellectual property; forthcoming struggles over raw materials, food and water), and the explosive growth of social divisions and exclusions. (p. x)

In terms of the latter point, in case you find this characterization of “end times” overly dramatic, recent events in Greece and other southern European countries suggest that a whole generation of today’s young people may be simply written off in terms of achieving productive and sustainable careers. That may sound distant still from our hopes for the young in Canada, but here too there are alerts, with talk of pension reform, for example, that in terms of economic security suggest that things will be more difficult for succeeding generations of young people.

Notwithstanding the increasing financial burden for post-secondary students, there is evidence of decreasing utility of traditional university degrees in terms of longer-term meaningful careers (this is not to argue against the value, let’s say, of a liberal arts education, but even that is not offered as an affordable route to creating an informed citizenry). And we know how vulnerable teaching jobs are to the whims of government spending.

The crises Zizek identifies are of a material nature but they also point to the limitations we have for making sense of the situations in which we find ourselves. There is I would argue a crisis of thought and language, which includes the weakening of public institutions and the paucity of intellectual resources available to make sense of those crises. In April 2011, I attended AERA, which was held in New Orleans. It seemed to

me to be a forceful symbol of a world in crisis—a living symbol of what Slavoj Žižek calls “living in the end times.” Against or within the context of New Orleans, one could not but be overwhelmed by flagrant contradictions. AERA, symbolic of the ongoing modernist hope that our knowledge and ideas will right the world, represented by its sheer size—seventeen thousand people—and a program with the weight and volume of a medium sized city’s phone book (when we still had phone books!), staged a few blocks from neighborhoods still lying in ruin from the devastating hurricane and floods of 2005. The AERA program was replete with reports on research, much of it exemplifying admirable courage and ethical intent in the hopes of improving education, schools, teaching and learning, and ennobling our tasks as teacher educators. At the same time, I heard stories of lament, particularly in the American context, of the continued attacks on and erosion of support for public education. The world, with all its difficulties, and indeed the seeming indifference to the truth of how things ought to be in terms of how we conduct our teaching and research and to what ends, persists, perversely so it seems, in the realities Žižek identifies. One could leave New Orleans feeling hopeful that so many people are so committed to the good in education, or with equal emotional resonance, defeated by the disconnect between volumes of research and the stubborn resistances to its messages.

For the sake of argument today, I would concur with people like Žižek that if not living in “end times,” we are living in times that throw into question the way that we live and think in the world and the legitimacy of our institutions. In making this claim, I am not subscribing to an end of the world eschatology, but what may be interpreted as “dark times,” a term used in a title of essays (Berkowitz, Katz and Keenan, 2010) commenting

on the relevance of Hannah Arendt's thought to our contemporary situation. The notion of dark times can be understood as both the overwhelming sense of tragedy that is befalling the world at almost any time and the general sense of precariousness that such events occasion in our experiences, even where we are nominally safe; but also darkness in Arendt's terms as our collective and individual inability to respond more fully to such disasters [disaster—literally “to lose one's star”, as John Caputo (2010) put it], to be able to recognize and “frame” them in ways that can narrate hope and possibility. It is to recognize that we live in a time when there are fundamental shifts occurring—politically, socially, economically and ecologically—that challenge our current abilities to fully understand and respond to them, and to which education, while essential, is also vulnerable in terms of its current institutional and paradigmatic forms.

Certainly one of our challenges then is to think through this darkness, to open up questions of our own paradigmatic status in speaking the truth of education. For example, we are all familiar now with the enlightenment's confidence in endless progress: defined as “a process” as Foucault (1984) wrote, “that releases us from the status of 'immaturity’” and “defined by a modification of the pre-existing relation linking will, authority, and the use of reason.” The reliance on reason (and here I would emphasize not reason in any form, but reason as has been valorized as the application of science to practice) was conceived as a way to become more fully human and engaged in the world through the exercise of will and freedom and along a teleological movement of history. Such a way of thinking has been central to the modernist project and has been indispensable to our work in education.

However, as postmodernists, for example have asserted, such narratives have over the past century faltered as foundations for guiding human action and judgement in progressive and remedial ways. Notwithstanding those critiques, the promise of more research and the flowering of practice as the outcome of research has become an increasingly powerful impetus in faculties of education as we continue to seek legitimacy in the academy (and sometimes I would argue, literally at the cost of sustaining vibrant teacher education programs). But bothersome questions of purpose and subjectivity persist; they cannot escape questions of history nor psychic significance despite our confidence in the outcomes of research and the efficacy of programs.

The heart of the postmodern critique was a bold questioning of that modernist project, disturbing our certainties about education, its narrative arc of purpose, and the possibilities for engendering sustainable meaning and action in the world. However, thinking about that almost retrospectively now, the postmodern view of things also represent a kind of darkness, a lament for, or melancholia about, engendering strong subjectivities in a failing world. What constitutes this lament is a questioning of the foundations for teaching, that is, whether it can be contained as the culminating product of science and research within the conditions that make teaching and learning possible or not in the first instance.

Following this line of thinking, in a published conversation about the nature of teaching practice Joseph Dunne (MacIntyre and Dunne, 2002) comments on a statement Alisdair MacIntyre wrote in an earlier work:

“the moral content of our educational system is simply a reflection of the moral content of our society,” and that “the task of the educator is to stand against a

current which will in fact probably overwhelm him”; This was written forty years ago, and later MacIntyre wrote that “teachers are the forlorn hope of the culture of western modernity...the mission with which they are entrusted is both essential and impossible.” (p.1)

In the conversation Dunne asks MacIntyre, given this rather bleak view, how teachers are to “find truth...in this characterization of their task to respond to *both* sides of it?: that is, what is “both essential and impossible”?

One way to interpret what MacIntyre and Dunne are referring to as both “essential and impossible” has to do with a larger crisis: in Arendtian terms, “the crisis of world estrangement” or alienation. Exploring the work of Hannah Arendt and its import for education, Natasha Levinson (2010) and others in an issue of *Teachers College Record* a couple of years back, emphasize Arendt’s notion of world-alienation as deeply and historically embedded in Western culture and societies: world alienation having to do with humans’ increasing estrangement from the world through forms of knowledge and organization that have marked the historical development of our societies. Arendt was also concerned with the quality of public life, and the extent to which thoughtful “action” is fully possible, when much of life and work has become oriented in instrumental ways—and the ensuing sense of “worldlessness”, a condition where the possibilities for intersubjective discourses have become more limited.

MacIntyre defended his pessimism in part on the kinds of conditions in which teachers have to work, the constant forms of insecurity, for example, around adequate resources for schooling, and the many conflicting expectations for teachers’ work and the ways in which student achievement may be narrowly conceptualized. My reference to

living in “end times” only would add I’m sure, to MacIntyre’s pessimism, and the folly of assigning too much hope to education as a solution to the world’s ills.

The problem of “world alienation” and what MacIntyre noted as the difficult, if not impossible “task of the educator to stand against a current which will in fact probably overwhelm him” has been intensified, I would argue, by more recent historical developments in Canada and other Western societies, namely the development of globalization in its current forms, and the adoption of “neoliberal” economic and social policies.

As the sociologist Richard Sennett (2006) has argued, neoliberal policies have severely constrained possibilities for forms of association and human action other than oriented to individual and economic gain. Discussions by various authors of the dominance of economic and instrumental thinking have identified not only questions of the commodification of educational services, but also a greater stress on quantifiable forms of productivity, testing, competition, and narrowed standards of accountability. In practical terms, neo-liberal government policies mean decreasing public resources for schools and universities and increasing dependence on so-called private solutions. The “worldlessness”, in Arendtian terms, occasioned by neo-liberal policies and their impacts on life, would refer then to the limits created on possibilities for human flourishing, and the narrowing of, for example, teaching and learning to more instrumental and economic ends, or ends that emphasize private over public goods, and in the contexts of widening inequalities and further fragmentation of the public sphere.

The discussions about world alienation and the limiting of possibilities through narrowed economic interests throw into question the kind of world for which we educate

and realizing possibilities for engendering good teaching. If we accept, or at least are willing to consider Arendt's historical framing for education and MacIntyre's pessimism about the possibilities for teachers to make the world better, we are left with fundamental questions about the historical role of teacher education. In other words, however arguable our perspectives and interpretations of the current world and what the future might hold, there is nonetheless always the imperative to situate our purposes and to articulate what those might be, to always "think anew" in Arendt's terms, and what that would mean, not only for what teachers need to know, but also for what kinds of persons they need to think about becoming and with what kinds of capacities or capabilities required to engage their own students in the process of what Arendt calls natality or renewal.

Whether we conceive this in terms of immediate or longer-term crises, Arendt's worldlessness suggests that even if we could assume that schools and university programs are stable social entities with uniformly accepted aims and purposes, in fact we cannot simply assume that there is a world for which we can confidently and unproblematically prepare future generations of teachers. Arendt's counsel, then, is to think more historically and to ask what our own, contemporary, world offers or not for the purposes and practices of education and curriculum, and how we should make our way, together, to renewing that world. My main point, and I am cautious about putting this too simply, is nevertheless that this is a question that cannot be answered with an appeal only to science or through an unthinking application of better technique.

Whether or not it is presumptuous to talk about an historical mission for teacher education (an argument can be made that teacher education is simply a vocational

function, and our responsibility is simply to turn out competent teachers), I nonetheless want to align myself with a position that holds that teacher education has a responsibility to some sense of a public, and public good, but that it has become more precarious in terms of asserting an historical mission in those terms. But, to follow Arendt, regardless of our actual historical conditions, preparing teachers for some future ends is always problematic. First, we always come at this belatedly, in a sense, as my title suggests, too late. And second, it is not clear at all for what kind of world we are preparing new teachers, for what kinds of schools, and for what purposes in general for public education. My overly simplistic sketch of our historical challenges nevertheless suggests Arendt's concern about worldlessness: that there is not a stable and predictable world that offers clear directions for our sense of purposes in education. Discussing Arendt's notion of world alienation, Stephanie Mackler (2010) provocatively names this as a kind of barbarism, a kind of fragmentation that discourages more concerned and concerted care for the world and each other.

The conditions and discourses about those conditions complicates teacher education's historical mission. Part of the complication, to follow Arendt as well, is that it makes more challenging the exercise of judgement in relation to our responsibilities as teachers and researchers. To offer judgement about something, to make an appeal in terms of the semantic origins of the word judgement, is fraught with difficulty and uncertainty. Thus one of the questions I'm raising concerns the nature and legitimacy of the authority with which we might make appeals and exercise judgement in our work as teacher educators, and the kinds of authority by which we can support our judgements about what constitutes good practice.

If not entirely or always persuasive nor consistent, arguably our practices and programs that have evolved out of certain forms of thinking and rationality appeal to a certain construal of science and theory, and its presumed relation to practice. To cite Hans-Georg Gadamer (1989),

Theory has become a notion instrumental to the investigation of truth and the garnering of new pieces of knowledge. That is the basic situation in terms of which our question, What is practice? is first motivated. But we are no longer aware of this because in starting from the modern notion of science when we talk about practice, we have been forced in the direction of thinking about the application of science. (p. 69).

Such appeal to science as determinative of practice is also an appeal to certainty, as John Dewey (1929) noted. That quest or desire for certainty can still act as a siren call for our programs and practices.

But, to fix science as a determinant of practice and practice as beholding only to science can deny change and flux, and how our work always resides within and against the grain of historical time. We create programs, do research, develop theories, and invest our trust in institutions and forms of authority as ways to legitimize our work and research about practices. Yet as my own recent experience of working in a “new” teacher education program illustrates, permanence can be illusory despite our best intentions and hopes. We would like to hold fast to things, but as John Caputo (1987) emphasizes, there is an obligation to resist succumbing to the denial of difficulty and virtue in recognizing the fragility of our historical experiences. Such resistance is difficult: Caputo asks whether or not “anything can survive the flux,” and wonders “how is it possible to build

up unities of meaning and stable objects in and through the flow of time?” (p. 3).

Given the nature of our work in faculties of education we cannot deny the necessity Caputo indicates to build up unities of meaning and stable objects. Our programs and research reflect the desire to create meaning from challenges experienced in our everyday work as teacher educators, and to “fix” things in order to improve practices and the experiences of teacher education for our students. Yet it is in the recognition of the uncertainties inherent in teacher education and the obligation to always renew our understandings, to remain in the flux to paraphrase Caputo, where judgment is called for.

So although I grant their importance and centrality, in what I have to say today I am less concerned about the content, programs and specific pedagogies of teacher education, and more with the question of what constitutes the responsibility of our work as teacher educators, and how we might frame that responsibility in our work with teachers. In my earlier life as a junior high teacher I recall going to workshops on the latest knowledge on how the brain works, and thinking, albeit with some fantasy, that would be the key for successful teaching and learning. More prosaically, I recall hoping that only if I had the right methods of organizing learning, validated by scientific research, then my students could become more successful. But, as was always the case, when I returned to the classroom after what seemed to be exhilarating flashes of possibility, what I saw in the faces of children was a much different, less certain, and, paraphrasing Joseph Dunne (1993), a much rougher ground for engendering practices of learning. This wasn't a sense of being defeated by that rough ground, but, without a language and understanding to give expression to it, a sense that there is always

something larger, less tangible, but equally or even more important about the work that we do as teachers.

Despite that rough ground of taking up our responsibilities, there is an enduring narrative about science and its siren call for engendering certainty in practice. That notion is echoed in terms like “evidence-based practice”, which implies that we need more research which can inform and improve practice, and that teacher education needs to become more like medicine for example, where there is ostensibly a more obvious link between research and practices (putting aside the question of the exercise of professional judgement there as well).

My title was intended to signal less a focus on questions of the content of our programs, however, and which are remarkably similar across jurisdictions, and stubbornly resistant to reform, despite the fact that many of us have been engaged in reform efforts. For purposes of discussion, I will align myself with the view that the complexity of teacher practice, its essentially relational and contextual qualities, and the unpredictable and indeed capricious nature of defining it—and perhaps even the impossibility of it, to cite Freud’s famous dictum about the profession of teaching, requires that we take a deeper and longer view about the work that we do—an attunement to the conditions that frame our efforts.

In asserting that position, I do not want to be interpreted as being against science or research, or that knowledge that is generated by the diverse forms of educational research is not important to informing teaching practices. However, it is to say, as the Italian philosopher Gianni Vattimo (2011) writes, citing Heidegger, that “science doesn’t think” (p. xxx). In his *Farewell to Truth*, Vattimo argues that we cannot simply ascribe

the truth of our practices to science or the application of science without appealing to what he terms “the paradigmatic horizon within which every correspondence is verifiable” (p. xxxiii). In asserting that science doesn’t think, Vattimo echoes Gadamer’s defense of practice in terms of phronesis, which means that we cannot simply take theory (or “research”) as the truth of things without a careful attunement to the very contexts that demand careful attention and understanding. Justifying his title, “a farewell to truth,” Vattimo explains, “leave is taken of truth as the objective mirroring of a datum that, to be adequately described, must be fixed and stable” (p. xxxii). Science, or research, does not think, “because [it] does not query the horizon (the paradigm) that envelops them and because they ignore the totality of the dialectical relations that condition their objects.”

The dialectical relations to which Vattimo refers, is what I understand to be the larger contextual, historical, questions within which we frame our work and identities, and which not only ascribes legitimacy to it, but also its limits and possibilities. Hence, in asking about teacher education’s historical mission, if I can use that term, means that as much as our immediate assertions of the truth of practice, we also have to ask to what larger horizons—or paradigm or paradigms—create possibilities for understanding the truth of our work, and its place in the larger landscapes of education in our world. This is not just an epistemological question, which would entail asserting what is the correct knowledge for engendering teachers and teaching, but also a question of what constitutes our responsibilities in the kind of renewal of the world that is so central to our work. I know and appreciate that as teacher educators and curriculum thinkers, most of us share that concern about responsibility, but it is still worth asking what that would mean for our research and practices.

## Part 2

In the second part of my presentation today, I will provide an overview of three projects with which I have been involved over the last few years, and which have focused on teacher education and teacher education research, and which I hope exemplify some of the challenges which I raised in the first part, which has to do with issues of uncertainty, the historical embeddedness of teaching and questions of purpose. The examples of the research are not intended as examples of the kinds of research we might take up, but rather to illustrate the kinds of complexities around questions of preparation and the relationship of research to practice.

*I.* The first project I will mention was a collaborative research project in collaboration with the Alberta Teachers' Association (Smits, 2010). The Association was interested in the question about teacher preparation and to what it should be oriented in the context of historic transformations in Alberta, which include resource dependence; environmental crises; globalization; broadening learning opportunities; centralized government authority; fluid personal identities; youth and technology. The overall question, which guided our research, was "*What is required of teachers in today's (and tomorrow's) schools?*" The research involved focus group sessions with teachers and principals of varied experience in terms of years of service. The question was posed in terms of the influences impacting teaching as a profession, and how teacher identity may change, or need to change within historically changing circumstances.

Participants in each of the sessions were asked to respond to the following six questions:

1. *Can you think back to when you were a beginning teacher; were you prepared for what you faced in the classroom? Why or why not?*
2. *What did you find was the most difficult in those early years?*
3. *Have things changed in the classroom/school since you began? If so, what and how? Are there different qualities required of you now than when you began? What might those be?*
4. *What do you think has endured over time in terms of being a good teacher?*
5. *If you could predict 20 years into the future, what do you see will be required of teachers and principals?*
6. *For what do you think prospective teachers ought to be prepared? What kinds of learning experiences do you think will best prepare beginning teachers?*

Significant responses to these questions included the recognition of the complexity of “preparation.” It has become a commonplace finding in both research and everyday experience that university preparation always seems to be out of step with what is required in practice. However, the discussion in the focus groups was more complex than simply asserting the commonly expressed gap between theory and practice. In general the responses included recognition of the complexity of the lived experiences of classroom and school life, the reality of diversity in terms of students’ identities, backgrounds and differences, and the kind of learning that cannot be fully developed in advance of practice.

While a majority of the participants admitted to “not being prepared,” that seemed to be understood not as a condemnation of their teacher education programs, but rather the complexity of the actual life of the classroom and school that academic preparation, while important, could not help them foresee what the experience of teaching would be. As some expressed it, teacher education can never fully prepare a person to take on the complexity of teaching. Indeed the recognition of *complexity* in classrooms and schools was a key theme emerging from the interviews.

Further, there was a remarkable consistency in the responses to the question about difficulty, falling into three large categories of experience: personal identity and managing one's life overall as a teacher with the challenges of developing a sense of agency and purpose in one's practice; secondly adjusting to the realities of diverse learning needs; and thirdly, the challenges of fostering relationships with colleagues, students, and parents.

Other respondents also talked about the challenges of managing time and maintaining a balance between work and "life." Again, this struggle around time and workload is a common lament in the literature about experiences of teaching. However, what emerges from this research is that this experience of time is wound up with issues of self-efficacy and identity as a teacher: not being able to be as creative as one hoped, lack of feeling growth of professional strengths as a teacher and in general, coming to terms with the complex demands of teaching which include academics, but often overwhelmed with for example, "dealing with students who had bigger issues than I can deal with," as one respondent put it.

Secondly, if there is one overarching theme that seemed to emerge from the interviews it was the experiences of multiple forms of *diversity* and how that challenged both teachers' own self-identities, but also their preparation. Learning about teaching in pre-service programs seem to provide beginning teachers with some confidence in curricular and subject area knowledge, but such knowledge is different from responding concretely to diverse student needs and demands in practice, and as several respondents noted, finding "a balance between curriculum and understanding students."

A powerful theme that emerged from the interviews had to do with the quality of, and in many cases the absence of, meaningful and strong relationships with colleagues, administrators and parents. Several respondents talked about their beginning experiences of teaching and “not having anyone to discuss things with and feeling isolated.” In the focus group discussion participants affirmed that the quality of relationships are often structural in quality: for example, being in departmentalized high schools, distant administrators, and lack of access to and time for professional development and growth. The sense of relationships and their importance was also expressed in terms of knowing how to communicate well with students and parents.

In responding to questions of change, there were complex, but generally consistent responses in terms of the recognition of four large areas of experience: the increasing emphasis on the use of computer technologies, greater experiences of cultural diversity in schools (“kids coming in from all parts of the world”), the greater stress on certain kinds of accountability including standardized testing, and generally what is experienced as the impact of certain forms of leadership and administration, increasing experienced as being bureaucratic and top-down in how it is experienced.

What is interesting from the interviews is that external changes experienced by teachers do challenge the kinds of capacities required for on ongoing efficacy as a teacher, and that so-called innovations were often experienced in fragmentary ways. For example, there was recognition that new technologies might provide interesting opportunities for learning, but (apart from differential access and resources) technology is not well integrated in terms of the experiences of curriculum and learning. In the contexts of the new technologies, cultural diversity, more knowledge of complex learning

approaches, respondents suggested the need for different sets of skills, including organizational and collaborative capacities. Yet what has endured, in our respondents' experiences was an understanding of teaching as oriented to caring for children in terms of learning and meaningful engagement.

The discussion related to the question of what teachers should be prepared for, as we know, is a contested issue, within and among teacher education institutions, teacher associations, school boards and teachers themselves. Nonetheless, what is hopeful in the responses from the initial focus groups was the recognition that teacher preparation has to be understood in more complex, relational, inquiry-based terms, and that teaching as a practice is one requiring the development of good judgment and dispositions for change and learning. Respondents also identified that what is required given that new challenges are not just changes in individual teacher practices, but also in the structures of classrooms, schools and forms of administration;

Preparation for teaching then, as suggested by this initial and exploratory research project speaks much more to nurturing enduring capabilities, a sense of practice that is more aligned with the idea of what some philosophers have termed "practical judgement." Harkening back to MacIntyre's statement about what is "both essential and impossible" what emerged from this research project is that teachers and principals see as the future of teaching in terms of their responsibilities in relation to children, curriculum, and coming to terms with issues of accountability, diversity, and technology as critical elements of practice. As well, what is perceived as probable is contained in what teachers identify as the enduring qualities of being a teacher that is a hopeful pedagogic care about students and their learning. Thinking about preferred futures, our research

seemed to suggest requires that we need to consider not how we change teachers, but how we think about the conditions that make teaching possible.

2. The second project with which I have been involved is a series of four national conferences and ensuing monographs on research in teacher education, initiated by our colleague Thomas Falkenberg of the University of Manitoba. The conferences and monographs have focused on such questions as what kinds of research are necessary for teacher education, how research supports or justifies program changes, research on field experiences and what constitutes good field experiences, and questioning the nature of research itself in terms of its relationship to teacher education practices.

We are starting to develop what might become a rich archive—and a living and hopefully ongoing one—on various projects of research that has the possibility of informing our practices in teacher education across jurisdictional boundaries. It is significant that a great deal of the interest in this project has revolved around program reform in teacher education, as many of us have experienced in our faculties. We have responded, I think individually and collectively, to the Deans' Accord on teacher education from a few years back, the language of which served, I think, to valorize the mission, and legitimacy, of university-based teacher preparation.

In the four conferences we organized, our participating colleagues have contributed discussions and papers dealing with responding to new challenges to teacher education, such as cultural diversity and changing social landscapes, the overall framing of teacher education in terms of its knowledge base and underlying philosophical assumptions, an examination of the knowledge and practices related to field experience programs, and most recently, an attempt at a critical discussion of the nature of research

underlying attempts at teacher education reform (Falkenberg and Smits, (2011). I want to especially focus on what seems still to lie at the margins of that body of research-- and in the reform process—which is a motivating element for our research and what counts as research, which we attempted to address more rigorously in our latest monograph.

At one level, the overall content focus and content of the conferences and manuscripts demonstrate the deep commitment of Canadian teacher educators to strengthening teacher education as both academically rigorous and committed to the larger responsibility to good practices of teaching and learning in our schools and communities. I think the work we have been doing has, as a background, the historical question that I am raising today, namely, what our work means in a changing world and that we need to understand professional teacher education as existing in relation this world.

Secondly, the conferences push at the limits of our language—or languages—of concepts and research. I was provoked into thinking more about this by Jonathan Lear’s (2006) book, *Radical Hope*. The question in terms of research, would go something like this: what if the concepts and ideas on which we typically depend and work with, no longer make sense when the culture and circumstances in which we live have significantly changed? There are several parts to this question. For example, in teacher education, we are still “forced” in a sense to work with the language of practice that (e.g., that set out for certification purposes) which in and of itself does not adequately address the kinds of challenges in changing contexts of teaching and the kinds of worldlessness to which I referred earlier.

A second part of that question is how we sustain good practice in the contexts of work. As the research project with teachers exemplified, teachers can often feel “betrayed”—not by the university and their own education, nor necessarily by the schools in which they work, but rather the disjuncture they experience between images of good practice and what is possible, and what is actually expected and allowed in schools as practice,

The meaning of this disjuncture as a space between conceptualization and actual context is an urgent question for research. The disjuncture also points to the question that Arendt posed about education, and the challenge of belatedness on the one hand (how do we negotiate between the past, present and future, with responsibility for each); and secondly, how do we begin to understand practice not just as work, but indeed as more thoughtful action, with its qualities of openness and possibility? Research on and in teacher education then, is not just about how we build better programs and better practices, but also about the language, concepts, and forms of thinking in relation with others that can address the complexities of our historical situation and conditions.

3. The third project with which I have been involved is a collaborative one with three colleagues at the University of Calgary (and initially included Anne Phelan, now at the University of British Columbia). Over about a decade, we have presented and written four papers based originally on the theme of “provoking curriculum”, the umbrella theme of the biannual conference sponsored in part by CACS (Lund, Panayotidis, Smits, and Towers, 2012; see also Lund, et.al., 2003; Lund, et.al., 2006; Smits, et.al., 2008; Smits, 2012). In that research, we have attempted, based on our immediate experiences in the program, to raise critical issues about teacher education. In spatial and temporal terms,

the research was bounded by the context of a teacher education program at the University of Calgary which was conceived on principles of inquiry-based learning, oriented to practice in schools, and philosophically guided by the idea that teaching is best understood as a form of practical judgment or wisdom, which challenges the paradigm of scientifically or technically conceived theory into practice approach. The program itself became a provocation, and likely a factor in its demise but it also provoked my colleagues and I to think and write about our experiences: in Paul Ricoeur's (1991) terms, we were provoked to try to create some "readability upon action" and to transpose "the texture of action" into text (p. 195).

It is in this sense of attending to "the texture of action" that required recognition of the historical embeddedness of action and the situations in which we were given cause to think about and narrate our actions. As Ricoeur (2004) has noted about the exercise of memory, the kind of research and writing in which we were engaged was not simply about our work or ourselves as teacher educators: rather, "One does not simply remember oneself seeing, experiencing, learning; rather one recalls the situations in the world in which one has seen, experienced, learned" (p. 36).

Indeed the situations in which we found ourselves have been provocations to our thinking and writing. The first was around the question about how we might best relate deeply resonant emotional experiences, and whether and how narrative can represent those experiences of being teacher educators. The second chronicled our struggles to understand the challenges in representing—*narrating*—difference and diversity in teacher education, and how we might take up our responsibilities with regard to issues of recognition and identity in ethical ways. The third set of papers reflected our evolving

understandings through our practices of teaching and learning in an inquiry-based program, the complexity of inquiry as an approach to professional learning, and the embodied modalities of inquiry as in the experiences of our students and ourselves as professors. That installment suggested approaches to professional teaching and learning in teacher education which supplement cognitive and knowledge based courses and programs, and brought to the fore inherent challenges in preparing teachers through an approach was that based on nurturing practical reason.

A common thread that runs through all the papers, culminating in the most recent paper we wrote, is the historical provocation to our experiences in teacher education, a challenged to prevailing norms and approaches to teacher preparation, which historically have largely been based on theory into practice (technical-rational), and on rather narrow views of vocationalism and the emphasis on administrative efficiencies.

As Dunne (1993) has emphasized, technical rational and vocational approaches have not sufficiently attended to the inherent complexity of teaching as a profession: that teaching practice is necessarily contextually sensitive, emotional, unpredictable, and a practice requiring certain kinds of dispositions that cannot be learned only through forms of knowing that rely on the application of abstract knowledge. The forms of research and program designs that have emerged in the professionalization of teacher education programs in the university, and the structures and norms that assign legitimacy to research to such programs of research and teacher education, have not attended well, arguably, to the more context sensitive nature of learning to teach, nor to the more complex dispositions of what some are calling capabilities rather than skills (Deneulin,

Nebel and Sagovski, 2006) required for developing practical reasoning as a fundamental quality of teaching.

What is then the issue of responsibility in terms of our research and practices? In raising the question of responsibility, I refer not only to what is required of our work in institutional terms, although how one enacts formal responsibility as a scholar/researcher in a teacher education faculty is of course an important question in itself. However, limiting the question of responsibility to formal institutional requirements may risk commitment to explore possibilities beyond the constraints of thinking and practice that are offered within programs and institutions. Citing Derrida's distinction between the "law" and "justice" John Caputo (2010) emphasized the obligation to remain open to possibility, to other than what might be; law, he emphasized denotes what is given and possible, but justice is impossible, in that it is "always a structure of something that is to come." "Something that is to come" echoes as well Arendt's (1969) emphasis on the possibilities offered by natality: that the responsibilities that inhere in our actions are not simply to maintain what exists, but also to attend to the re-creation of the world in which we work and labour.

The structure of attending to practice as "something that is to come" speaks to the notion of capabilities in teaching: that teaching (whether in schools or our own teaching in universities) requires certain kinds of capacities for ongoing inquiry into "alternative combinations of things a person is able to do or be" as some writers on the capability approach have noted (Deneulin, Nebel and Sagovski, 2006). In our series of "provoking papers", we have therefore attempted to address the question of responsibility in terms of the complexity of practical reason in our work, as represented through the plurality of our

common and individual experiences and reflection on how practical reason was manifested in our own practice within limits the limits and boundaries offered by the program in which we worked.

The research represented by our series of “provoking papers” speak to our attempt to understand the responsibility of being teacher educators within a certain kind of historically conceived program. If we think of teacher education programs as offering boundaries for practice, we also inquired into how such boundaries may limit alternative forms of understanding and action. Programs can limit and shape the exercise of responsibility, as Caputo, noted above, suggests. Programs as structures of practice can themselves be considered just or unjust and hence the actions of any individual cannot be attributed only to the actions of that individual.

In terms of teacher education, the way that practice is understood, and the representation of understandings of practice through research has been, historically speaking deeply influenced through the structures that evolved in university-based teacher education. As I am suggesting, one of our responsibilities as teacher educators is to engage in research oriented towards understanding practice in such contexts; and also as I am suggesting, such work requires practical judgement or wisdom. On the one hand, practical judgement requires finding a language that gives expression to our experiences. However, as Ricoeur (1991) emphasizes, a fuller notion of practical reasoning—which he and others, following Aristotle, have called “practical wisdom”—extends beyond discursive forms, that is, not limited to writing about experience. As well as giving reasons for actions, practical reasoning requires initiative and discernment, an orientation to acting well in the world in relation to others and taking up responsibility for our own

understandings in the exercise of our discursive and indeed practical responsibilities. In the effort to exercise such a form of reasoning there is also then a necessary attention to the qualities of the historical. That is to say, we cannot simply enact our responsibilities in the absence of understanding the nature of the world around us, and what it offers for our understanding and for the possibilities of renewal. This has been, I would say, the central pre-occupation of our ongoing research into our experiences of working in what was a unique program.

### **Part 3**

Perhaps more than any political philosopher, Arendt spoke to the notion of how practical reason is necessarily embedded in history, but always with the necessity to exercise responsibility through thinking and acting out the critique of our own practices and the situations in which we find ourselves, to exercise, in other words, practical judgment, the power of which as Arendt suggests, is to establish the link between thinking and acting.

As I alluded to in my experience of working in the program at the University of Calgary, part of our struggle was to keep open possibilities for change and renewal in ways that reflect forms of thought and practice that orient us to taking up responsibility for the world as it is and for what is not yet realized. Enacting our responsibilities as teacher educators/scholars entails I would argue, an attempt to reveal how discursive power “functions by concealing the terms of its fabrication and hence its malleability and contingency” (Brown, 2001). And, following Arendt it is also possible to recognize that simple formulas and explanations cannot reliably guide our judgments about how we

should best exercise our responsibilities, but realizing that we can never do this with any degree of comfort and certainty. As Arendt noted,

“particular questions must receive particular answers, and if the series of crises in which we have lived since the beginning of the century can teach us anything at all, it is, I think, the simple fact that there are no general standards to determine our judgments unfailingly, no general rules under which to subsume the particular cases with any degree of certainty.” (Arendt, as cited in Kohn, 2003, p. vii)

As you probably know, the Master of Teaching (MT) program is no longer the University of Calgary’s teacher education program. Not without ongoing challenges, but nonetheless in interesting and indeed provocative ways, the program existed for about fifteen years. The program was most “radical” in several respects, including its emphasis on inquiry-based learning, orienting to field experiences as a places of inquiry, encouraging interdisciplinary learning, and attempting to have students focus on what it means to learn as teachers-to-be. The program looked very different from other more traditional teacher education programs: inquiry and professional tutorials, field seminars integrated with field experiences, small seminars, credit/non-credit evaluation, and significantly, and a high degree of involvement by tenured faculty in the teaching of the program, including field experiences.

The program in which I worked was itself an historical provocation. What it brought to light were deeper questions of the nature of teaching and learning, but also the difficulties of challenging the boundaries of how we might think about teachers and teaching practices, the nature and purposes of research in teacher education and, perhaps

most significantly, what would constitute the responsibility of teacher education in a world that does not always welcome such challenges.

Despite the forlornness I cited by MacIntyre above, thinking about spaces for possibility in terms of what both exists and what might be possible can be productive in our work of imagining the futures we would wish for. But that also suggests a very different orientation to the “preparation” of teachers and how we understand the work of teaching. In large part the question of preparation and understanding of teaching implies the need to more fully assume an historical perspective. Harkening back to second part of my title, following Arendt, we *are* always too late: we are always educating for “a world out of joint” and that preparing for the world as it is risks foreclosing on the responsibility to also change that world.

This raises difficult questions for the purposes of teacher education and our work. Preparation and the skills that teachers require cannot simply be for the purposes of adapting to the demands of the present, or the assumed way that things are. To set the world anew in Arendt’s terms, means taking seriously the opportunities we can create for both teachers and learners in not just laboring well within existing structures and forms of practice, but participating in thinking about what is both needed and what is possible. We are often in a hurry to introduce new methods, new programs and the production of more research. But what we need, critically I think, is a focus on what Alain Badiou (2008) calls “the conditions of existence rather than just improving its methods” (p. 28). And, if we rarely if ever fully realize what we may hope and strive for, it is the striving that is important when it allows us to learn and as well build regard for others. “It is precisely the uncertainty of things” Caputo (1987) writes, “which links us indissolubly,

which commits us to the dispersal of power structures which think they have the final word” (p. 288).

All of this is not to deny our shared and legitimate interests in making programs work, and in doing so exploring our own vulnerabilities around what constitutes the knowing and skill aspects of being good teacher educators. The precariousness of the work within which we were engaged is not necessarily due to a lack of skill or knowledge, although of course that is always a challenge. Rather, the challenge is to address the conditions of existence, how to live well in our chosen fields of endeavour, but as my experience taught me, in contexts not always hospitable to thinking differently.

It is interesting, looking back on the program in which I worked that our own writings illustrate that we were not able to escape dominant forms of thinking defining the institutional fabric of teacher education programs: wittingly or not we often fell back on a reliance on technique to solve problems, and a focus on the individual as a locus of inquiry and learning rather than as a quality of community. It is not that we were unaware of the contradictions in our work, but the point is that it is difficult to escape the very boundaries that we attempt to push against.

In her comments on one of our chapters, Madeleine Grumet (2012) raises cautions about how we understood, for example, the practice of inquiry. She noted that rather than seeing our students as the locus of change, we have a responsibility to address the conditions in society and institutions, which create obstacles to creating conditions for fuller human flourishing.

Such a project has become even more urgent in a world that is arguably, “living in end times.” As a project, then, we ought to legitimately raise the question of teacher

education's place in the world and what would best prepare new teachers to take up the difficulties of renewal with which they will be entrusted. As Arendt (1969) wrote, the notion of crisis is always present in that there is never respite from the responsibilities and uncertainties inherent in education: that we have to take on the world as it exists, but also be prepared to renew it.

It can be trite to say that we have to foster hope as an aspect of our work, but there are ways that we might think more deeply about that. In his book, *Radical Hope*, Jonathan Lear (2006) writes about a hope that arguably can speak to our struggles to define the purposes of teacher education research and, in Arendtian terms, address the questions about what may foster renewal, responsibility, and richer public life in the contexts of our work as teacher educators. The question of hope, Lear writes, has to do with questions such as, "*For what may we hope?*" and "*What ought I to do?*" These questions define a "radical hope," Lear argues, because they "*are directed to future goodness that transcends the current ability to understand what it is*" (p. 103; italics in original).

Lear's discussion has to do with severe "breaks in narrative" that happen historically, either to us individually or as a culture, and when such breaks happen, the concepts with which we are used to defining—for example *purpose*—seem inadequate to the task, and yet concepts and narratives are critical in defining our wanting and doing. Teacher education research is often on the one hand about failure in practice, but change and reform are always promised in the call for further research. What may be occluded missed is indeed the historic mission of teacher education and what ought to be its deep connection to what Hannah Arendt (1958/1968) identifies as the "human condition" and

what may contribute to its project of freedom, emphasized by Anne Phelan (2012) in her reflections on one of the chapters of our book.

Implicit in the foregoing discussion is a kind of enduring challenge: How ought we to address the questions of how to live well in the difficulty that is always present? This question, rather than pointing to already fixed ends, asks instead about the sources for our responsibility. How should we come at this responsibility and what would that work look like? What is the work, then, of teacher education and research?

One of the issues is perhaps the precarious subjectivity of being a teacher educator and how that is manifested in our practices of teaching and research. The question might be phrased as: *How might we in education imagine ourselves otherwise?* As we emphasized at the start of this introduction, teacher education is challenging and difficult work and it can exact a psychic toll on those teacher educators who venture to express the possibilities of what may be other than what is simply sanctioned or persists as historically bounded norms and practices. In the reflections on the demise of the teacher education program in which I worked, there is an undeniable tone of melancholy in our writing, and a tangible sense of mourning over something lost.

We are enjoined, however, to think differently about melancholy only as loss or as individual pain; as Phelan (2012) wisely counsels, “we are rendered dependent on the very forces that, in action, we sought to transcend... Perhaps the most difficult lesson of the MT Program was that the meaning of my actions lay outside of me.” Yet, the necessity for change is crucial if teacher education is to thrive as a living organic entity that represents our contextual and contingent realities and our deeply held social and cultural values of the good, our sense of justice.

Of course I recognize that change is difficult and the conditions we struggle within are both malleable and contingent. The very capriciousness of historical change makes us vulnerable to the feelings of melancholy and mourning. A melancholic reaction can take the form of a feeling of loss of self in the experience of the loss of a revered object (White, 2000, p. 99). That sense of loss can persist as melancholy, a sense of loss that is “hard to tolerate or explain” (Sanchez-Pardo, 2003, p. 215). Melancholy can turn into self-blame, or inaction, or even more frenetic activity. But the solution to the kinds of issues that we identified here cannot come only through fortifying certain forms of individualized subjectivity, or striving for even better methods and programs. Acting and thinking in concert in the face of the difficulties we face suggests a way that melancholy may be transformed into mourning (White, 2000). It is legitimate to mourn loss in terms of accepting the knowledge that things can never fully be what we expect, but also mourning can be an impetus to continue thinking and conversing together about the way things might be, and to know that it is necessary as a way to hold ourselves and others accountable to things that glimmer as possibility.

In Hannah Arendt’s (2003) memorable words, in emphasizing the need to both think and act in the world, “the activity of knowing is no less a world-building activity than the building of houses;” and “the need to think can be satisfied only through thinking, and the thoughts I had yesterday will satisfy this need only to the extent that I can think them anew” (p. 163). Arendt’s counsel to think and maintain openness to what is not yet realized captures the historical mission of teacher education, and it is never too late for that kind of work.

## References

- Arendt, H. (1958/1998). *The human condition*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Arendt, H. (1969). *In between past and present. Eight exercises in political thought*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Arendt, H. (2003). *Responsibility and judgement*. (J. Kohn, Ed.). New York: Schocken Books.
- Badiou, A. (2008). The communist hypothesis. *New Left Review*, 49, 29-42.
- Biesta, G. (2014). *The beautiful risk of education*. Boulder CO and London: Paradigm Publishers.
- Berkowitz, R., Katz, J. & Keenan, T. (eds.). (2010). *Thinking in dark times. Hannah Arendt on ethics and politics*. New York: Fordham University Press.
- Brown, W. (2001). *Politics out of history*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Caputo, J. (1987). *Radical hermeneutics: Repetition, deconstruction, and the hermeneutic project*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Caputo, J. (2010, June 23-25). *Symposium on radical hermeneutics*. Canadian Hermeneutic Institute. Toronto, ON.
- Carson, T. and Smits, H. (forthcoming). After the future in teacher education. In J. Jagodinsky (Ed.). *The Precarious Future of Education* (Palgrave).
- Deneulin, S., Nebel, M., & Sagovsky, N. (Eds.). (2006). *Transforming unjust structures. The capability approach*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Springer.
- Dewey, J. (1929). *The quest for certainty*. New York: Minton, Balah and Co.
- Dunne, J. (1993). *Back to the rough ground. Practical judgment and the lure of technique*. Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press.

- Falkenberg, T. & Smits, H. (2011). (Eds.). *The question of evidence in research in teacher education in the context of teacher education program review in Canada* (2 vol.). Winnipeg: Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba.
- Foucault, M. (1984). "What is Enlightenment ?" ("Qu'est-ce que les Lumières ?"). In Rabinow, P. (Ed.). *The Foucault Reader*, (pp. 32-50). New York: Pantheon Books.
- Gadamer, H.-G. (1989). *Reason in the age of science*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Grumet, M. (2012). Toward a curriculum of curiosity. In Lund, D., Panayotidis, L., Smits, H. & Towers, J. ). *Provoking conversations on inquiry in teacher education* (pp. 75-77). New York: Peter Lang.
- Kohn, J. (2003). Introduction. In Arendt, H. *Responsibility and judgement* (pp. vii-xxix). (J. Kohn, Ed.). New York: Schocken Books.
- Lear, J. (2006). *Radical hope. Ethics in the face of cultural devastation*. Harvard University Press.
- Levinson, N. (2010). A "more general crisis": Hannah Arendt, world alienation, and the challenges of teaching for the world as it is. *Teachers College Record*, 13(2), 464-487.
- Lund, D. E., Panayotidis, E. L., Phelan, A. M., Smits, H., & Towers, J. (2003). Teacher education provoking curriculum: Curriculum provoking teacher education. *Educational Insights*, 8(2). Retrieved from <http://www.ccfi.educ.ubc.ca/publication/insights/v08n02/contextualexplorations/ provoke/teachered.html>
- Lund, D. E., Panyotidis, E. L., Smits, H., & Towers, J. (2006). Fragmenting narratives: The ethics of narrating difference. *Journal of the Canadian Association for*

*Curriculum Studies*, 4(1), 1-23.

Lund, D., Panayotidis, L., Smits, H. & Towers, J. (2012). *Provoking conversations on inquiry in teacher education*. New York: Peter Lang.

MacIntyre, A., & Dunne, J. (2002). Alasdair MacIntyre on education: In dialogue with Joseph Dunne. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 36(1), 1-19.

Mackler, S. (2010). And worldlessness, alas, is always a kind of barbarism: Hannah Arendt and the challenge of education in worldless times. *Teachers College Record*, 112(2), 509-532.

Phelan, A. (2012). Solomon's gift: reflections on the renewal of teacher education. In Lund, D., Panayotidis, L., Smits, H. & Towers, J.). *Provoking conversations on inquiry in teacher education* (pp. 16-20). New York: Peter Lang.

Ricoeur, P. (1991). Practical reason. In P. Ricoeur, *From text to action. Essays in hermeneutics,II* (K. Blamey & J. Thompson, Trans.; pp. 188-207). Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

Ricoeur, P. (2004). *Memory, history, forgetting*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Sanchez-Pardo, E. (2003). *Cultures of the death drive: Melanie Klein and modernist melancholia*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Sennett, R. (2006). *The culture of the new capitalism*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Smits, H., Towers, J., Panayotidis, E. L., & Lund, D. E. (2008). Provoking and being provoked by embodied qualities of learning. Listening, speaking, seeing and feeling (through inquiry) in teacher education. *Journal of the Canadian*

- Association for Curriculum Studies*, 6(2), 43-81.
- Smits, H. (2010). *The future of teaching: possible and probable futures*. Presented to the Alberta Teachers Association. Banff, AB.
- Smits, H., Towers, J., Lund, D. & Panayotidis, L. (2012). Historical provocation: responsibility in teacher Education. In Lund, D., Panayotidis, L., Smits, H. & Towers, J. (Eds.). *Provoking conversations on inquiry in teacher education*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Vattimo, G. (2011). *A farewell to truth*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- White, S. (2000). *Sustaining affirmation: The strengths of weak ontology in political theory*. Princeton, CT: Princeton University Press.
- Zizek, S. (2010). *Living in the end times*. London and New York: Verso.

## **Changing practice and identity go hand-in-hand: A self-study of efforts to infuse digital technology into literacy courses<sup>1</sup>**

**Clare Kosnik, OISE/University of Toronto**

*With contributions from Lydia Menna, OISE/University of Toronto & Shawn Bullock, Simon Fraser University*

### **Introduction**

This presentation is based on a self-study of three teacher educators: two who integrated digital technology into their literacy methods courses and one who shared their journey as a critical friend. In the first year of the study the literacy teacher educators simply layered digital technology onto the existing course, in part because they were very ad hoc in their planning and did not have a repertoire of technology-related strategies upon which to draw. In the second year they were more systematic in using technology to support student learning. Throughout the process, the critical friend offered feedback and found that his own pedagogy changed in response to many ideas offered by his colleagues. Over the two years of the study, our identities shifted as our pedagogies became richer, our use of technology more fully integrated into our courses, and we received validation from others and from each other.

---

<sup>1</sup> Originally published in A. Ovens & D. Garbett (Eds.) *Being a Self-study Researcher in a Digital World: Future-oriented Research and Pedagogy in Teacher Education*. (pp. n/a) Dordrecht: Springer Academic Publishers

As teacher educators, we often need to teach in ways that we did not experience as students, or in ways that we most likely did not use when we were classroom teachers. This paper discusses the experiences of three teacher educators; two of whom substantially changed the way that they taught regarding the use of digital technology (DT) in their teacher education courses and one who was encouraged to reframe his understanding of the role of digital technology in teacher education as a result of the collaborative self-study. We, Clare and Lydia, were not experts in digital technology but we wanted to revise our teaching to include a greater use of technology. On the surface this may seem like a straightforward initiative but this paper shows how our efforts were not always successful, and were at times muddled and counter-productive, and therefore benefitted greatly from a collaborative self-study process. Shawn, our critical friend through the process, has devoted a considerable amount of research time over the past few years to investigating the ways in which digital technologies might be used to help student teachers analyse their teaching and learning experiences in teacher education courses (Bullock, 2011).

At the start of the study, we developed three research questions, which we returned to regularly as our work evolved.

1. How did our use of technology in our literacy courses change over a two year period 2010- 2012?
2. How did a greater focus on technology change our identities and practices as teacher educators?
3. What problems (technical) of practice (our own skills) did we encounter?

## **Context of the Study**

Clare and Lydia teach a year-long literacy methods course in a two-year post baccalaureate program in at the University of Toronto. Although there is a specific technology course, all professors are expected to infuse digital technology into their courses because we are supposed to be modelling teaching with DT so that we are considered a “cutting” edge program and we are to prepare student teachers to use DT in their practice teaching placements. However, there is very limited professional development support for instructors. At the time this research was conducted, Shawn was an assistant professor of science education at a small university with a special commitment to the use of technology across all programs and faculties.

Clare has been teaching literacy methods courses for 15 years, is an active researcher, and a full professor. Lydia is a doctoral student conducting research that examines how student teachers construct and enact literacy pedagogy during their teacher education program. Shawn is an early-career assistant professor with a focus on science and technology education. We share a commitment to the power of self-study research for reframing our pedagogies of teacher education. The use of digital technologies, as pedagogical tools in the literacy education courses co-taught by Clare and Lydia, was limited, although they were comfortable using technology for writing and communication. Their literacy courses consistently received high evaluations but a recurring comment by students was the need for more technology integration. For convenience, this paper uses the term “we” to refer to Clare and Lydia’s discussion of their literacy methods course. It is important to note, however, that this paper is about a shared journey among the three authors, which includes insights into ourselves, our

practice, our identities as literacy and technology teacher educators, and our collective learning about that elusive goal of integrating technology into teacher education.

## **Literature Review**

### **Digital Technology and Teacher Education**

Teachers are being asked to conceptualize and teach literacy in ways they did not experience as students and most likely did not learn about in their teacher education preparation (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Kirkwood, 2009). Like many teacher educators around the world, we feel tacit and explicit pressure to integrate digital technology into teacher education programs for a number of reasons: the acknowledgement that fluency with digital technology is essential for day-to-day living; the pervasive assumption that student teachers fit into Prensky's (2001) concept of digital natives despite a lack of research evidence for the framework; the push to prepare students for a technology-driven world (National Council of Teachers of English, 2007); and the proliferation of communications technologies in contemporary culture (Kress, 2010; New London Group, 1996). Despite the seemingly overwhelming push to meaningfully integrate digital technologies into teacher education coursework, Mitchell (2012) highlights several reasons why "digital literacy poses a particular challenge to the research-led university," not least of which is the academy's reliance on "a scriptural economy that prioritises the printed word" (p. 1).

Despite a growing number of policy initiatives, attempts to incorporate DT into teacher education literacy programs are proving challenging (Kirkwood, 2009; Otero et al., 2005). If we accept the premise that the meaningful integration of digital technologies

in teacher education is both crucial and timely, then it is important to examine the ways in which teacher educators have responded to the challenge. Kay (2006,) notes that “many faculties of education use the single-course strategy to teach technology,” which results in the predictable shortcomings associated with learning about digital technologies in isolation. A more reasonable idea seems to centre around finding ways to meaningfully integrate digital technologies within teacher education curricula, perhaps through collaborative ventures among Faculty, teachers, and student teachers (p. 388). The effective integration of technology can, however, present various challenges for faculty. For example, often use of digital technology is an afterthought, something tacked onto a course (Bullock, 2011).

Within the context of teacher education we concur with Boling (2005) who noted: “research has revealed that teacher educators do not always have the knowledge, skills, or dispositions necessary for meaningfully integrating technology into their classes” (p.3). Moreover, we would argue that there is a paucity of studies that focus explicitly on the challenges that the use of digital technologies might pose to teacher educator’s professional identities.

Butler and Sellbom (2002) identified several barriers to the use of technology that likely ring true for many Faculty: reliability; time to learn the technology; knowing how to use the technology; concern that technology might not be critical for learning; and the perception of inadequate institutional support. Otero et al. suggest, “... knowing how to use the technology involves the technical skills of operating the tools as well as understanding the pedagogical purpose of its use” (2005, p. 10). One factor that complicates the ability of teachers to incorporate DT into their literacy teaching is their

own identity as “digital immigrants” (Prensky, 2011). This affects their capacity to see *how* DT can be used even among students in their classroom who appear at ease with technology, and to understand the importance of teaching DT to so-called digital natives. We need to learn more about how teacher educators are able to make the transition from teaching as they were taught to an orientation that integrates DT (Cervetti et al., 2008). Selwyn maintains that “questions which explore digital technologies in schools from the lived experiences of those using (and those *not* using) them should be at the forefront of any educational technologist’s mind” (2011, p. 40).

## **Research Methodology**

### **a. Self-study Research**

We, Clare and Lydia, began a self-study of our efforts to infuse technology into the literacy courses we co-teach. We were attempting to understand and improve the kinds of opportunities teacher education can create for student teachers to explore literacy in their lives, their classrooms, and the lives of the students they will be teaching. According to Samaras and Freese (2006), self-study involves “our personal stories and our teaching stories that arise out of our own challenges, frustrations, and dilemmas” (p. 2). La Boskey’s premise is also relevant to this work: “Research in teacher education is attempting to answer questions about how best to prepare new teachers and facilitate ongoing teacher development. Typically, when teacher educators raise such questions, we are deriving them from our practice” (2004, p. 818).

Self-study research is particularly helpful for this work because we realized that we needed to deepen our understanding of our pedagogy before we could improve it.

Drawing on the work of Hamilton and Pinnegar (1998) we can see that the “critical examination of the self’s involvement both in aspects of the study and in the phenomenon under study” (p. 240) is applicable to our work where we are studying both our practice and ourselves. We understand that there are often many layers in a self-study: ourselves as instructors, the course content, and the work of the student teachers. “Thus, the purposes are layered and multifaceted with overlapping objectives and with the key purpose of refining, reframing, and renewing education” (Samaras & Freese, 2006 p. 14).

One of the benefits of self-study research methodology is that the researcher can frame and reframe a problem or situation. Reframing is important in self-study because it provides an opportunity for the researcher to think about things differently, change how he/she looks at what’s going on in classrooms, and ultimately change one’s practice (Hamilton et al., 1998, p. xii). During self-study researchers are encouraged to reframe their work as new findings emerge. Having a critical friend is an important aspect of self-study research. Costa and Kallick (1993) defined a critical friend as “a trusted person who asks provocative questions, provides data to be examined through another lens . . . [while taking] the time to fully understand the context of the work presented and the outcomes that the person or group is working toward” (p. 50).

### **b. Data Gathering**

Our data sources were:

1. After each class, we debriefed and wrote reflective notes on our practice.
2. We kept a running tally of our efforts to incorporate technology into the courses.
3. Our detailed lesson plans.
4. At the end of the courses, we each wrote reflections on our efforts and responded to

each other.

5. We had on-going discussions (f2f and online) with our critical friend, Shawn.
6. The student teachers gave us weekly feedback through a ticket out the door (TOTD) form.

Self-study methodology is exemplar-based, so we chose to evaluate our practice using Ottenbreit-Leftwich et al.'s (2010) six different ways to incorporate technology:

1. information delivery,
2. hands-on skill building activities,
3. practice in the field,
4. observations and modeling,
5. authentic experiences,
6. reflections ( p. 20).

In order for this study to be more than just a reflection on our efforts we had to ensure that we were attending to issues of validity and reliability. To this end, we went through a multi-step process in our data analysis. To help us understand some of the challenges we used the barriers identified by Butler and Sellbom (2002) when analyzing the data; for example, time to learn the technology and inadequate institutional support. All of the barriers were present in our data.

To study how our identities as literacy teacher educators shifted we identified key insights and/or turning points (e.g., feeling more competent) and then matched each finding to specific concrete actions (e.g., presenting at a conference). It was not sufficient to simply claim that we were more comfortable with the integration of technology into our courses we had to have evidence from our practice. At the end of the first year, we

decided it was important to see how our identity and practices changed; therefore, we wrote detailed reflections under two main headings: how I see myself and changes in practice.

To chart changes in practice it was not sufficient to conclude that our practices had changed (e.g., more nuanced use of technology). There had to be evidence to support this claim through examples in our lesson plans (e.g., specific discussion questions on the video shown in class). It was very difficult to support any claims about increased student learning because we did not have pre- and post- data. However, in the weekly “Tickets out the Door” feedback forms we regularly asked the student teachers to comment on their comfort level with digital technology, as well as our use of digital technologies in our teaching. We recognize this was a self-report; although not as rigorous as we would have liked, we did feel this was giving us some sense of student growth and their response to our work.

We used a grounded theory approach, which is a strategy used to generate theory that is grounded in the data (Punch, 2009, p. 130). The theory is developed inductively from the data using a set of techniques and procedures for collection and analysis (Punch, 2009). Throughout the analysis, we first identified key themes before working together to select the themes that we felt captured our work. Some of the themes were connected to Ottenbreit-Leftwich et al.'s (2010) framework while others emerged because the topic/issue was commented upon repeatedly. Some were identified when we “stepped back” and asked ourselves what the broader issue playing out in the data was. Frequency of a type of comment (e.g., comfort level) indicated this was a relevant theme. Lydia and Clare did the initial analysis and discussed the findings with Shawn, who often brought in

ideas from literature from the fields of history and sociology of technology. Both the discussion with Shawn and his feedback helped us refine the themes. As Strauss put it (2003), “The basic question facing us is how to capture the complexity of the reality (phenomena) we study, and how to make convincing sense of it” (p. 16).

## **Findings**

### **Year One**

In the first year of the self-study we incorporated 32 different elements of digital technology into our courses. For instance, the *Read, Write, Think* website, the use of Blackboard as a communication platform, the creation of a photo history of the program posted on Shutterfly, and the viewing of websites of authors whom we read in class. Some of these were very basic but others were slightly more sophisticated. Nevertheless each was a new effort for us. In the next two sections we analyze our efforts.

#### **a. Overlooking Student learning**

Self-study research requires the use of exemplars because the methodology is grounded in the importance of challenging one’s prior assumptions. Applying Ottenbreit-Leftwich et al.’s (2010) framework revealed that the majority of our efforts were in information delivery and observations and/or modelling formats. Only five items were directly related to student teacher learning. We had simply presented information through another modality such as Powerpoint or a website. Our efforts to model and identify digital resources did provide student teachers with some information but the key revelation was we had not intentionally focused on student learning. Two faulty assumptions had blindsided us; namely the superficial assumptions that if we use digital

technology, (*more*) learning will occur, and that use of the technology was an end in itself.

In the analysis of our narratives, we realized that part of the reason for this superficial use of digital technology was that we had a very ad hoc approach. In planning for each class, we tended to surf the Internet looking for “something.” This non-systematic approach helped us become more familiar with the affordances of the web but did not substantially enhance our courses. We had become very good at using the web for the “Wow Factor”. For example, as an introduction to content area literacy (i.e. all teachers are literacy teachers) we used a You Tube clip of a young man poetically recounting the experience of being unable to read, and yet pushed through the school system on account of his talent in basketball (e.g. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lByDfPOG0LA>). We came to realize however, that beyond “grabbing” student teacher attention the viewing of the video seem to have minimal educational value. Regarding self-study we see that we were only at the first stage of looking at our practice. Our focus was completely on practice – not on our identity.

### **b. Acting and Feeling like Novices**

Developing skills required by the various technologies we used is only part of the story (Otero et al., 2005). Our written narratives and reflections helped us understand our “selves” in the process. Since we believed that our student teachers were digital natives (fully conversant with both the hardware and software), and we were at best digital immigrants, we felt intimidated from the start. As we examined our reflections we noticed a significant number of troubling comments: “What if this does not work?” “I am

really feeling out of my league.” The terms digital native and digital immigrant almost haunted us, and perhaps this is part of the reason why we felt so insecure.

Identity is, in part, how one thinks one is perceived by others; feeling like novices affected what we did as our own insecurities caused us to doubt ourselves, anguish over decisions, and focus on our failures. In many ways, we did not realize that our identity was going through a shift along with the revision in our pedagogical practice. We had not yet fully realized this shift in our identity because we were still in limbo regarding ourselves as literacy teacher educators who could capably use digital technologies. It was not until Year Two that we even became aware of this emerging facet of our identities.

At the end of the summer of 2011 we returned to our self-study research questions. Although humbled by our limited efforts we realized that we had made progress – we had started. We no longer were complete digital novices. Consistent with self-study methodology, we reframed some of our work and continued to be improvement-oriented. As a result of conversations between ourselves and with our critical friend, we decided to reframe our work to have a greater attention to student learning.

## **Year Two**

During the summer we reviewed our course outlines to see where and how we could use digital technology to support student learning. Although we were not sure what to do, we at least had a destination in mind even if we were missing the road map. Developing the road map was done in fits and starts. No longer were we trying to simply layer digital technology onto our courses, we were trying to embed it into the design of the courses. To assist, we created a table with four columns: goal of the class; readings;

large and small group activity; and digital technology. This organizing tool made our work more systematic and the “concreteness” of it made our initiative more tangible. In this section we describe three initiatives and the analysis of each.

**i. Drawing on Our Strengths as Teacher Educators.**

Our first step was reframing our courses around the question: What does it mean to be literate in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? This put us on familiar turf (typical academic course structure) but pushed us to rethink literacy practices in light of the influence of digital technologies on contemporary communication (Kress, 2010). We had one foot in the familiar (being teacher educators) and one in the less familiar realm (digital technology). We returned to this overarching question repeatedly in the course in both formal and informal ways. To support student learning, we expanded our readings to include articles about adolescent literacy (Alvermann 2010), chapters on multiliteracies (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000), and texts on Web 2.0 (Davies & Merchant 2009). With our student teachers we were exploring and refining our understanding of being teachers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Given our planning in the summer, our work became much more nuanced; instead of inserting a video or website at the last minute, we began to draw on our strengths as literacy teacher educator (e.g., facilitate discussion) while using digital technology purposefully. For example, in the first class of the course as a group we generated ways we communicate in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, followed by a very effective video about communicating in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. After viewing the video, we returned to our initial question about contemporary communication, discussed issues of access for all students, as well as the potential implications for teachers and language use (e.g. digital

abbreviations-LOL). This was a far more seamless integration of digital technology than our previous efforts and capitalized on what it could offer us as teacher educators. Shifting between familiar and unfamiliar worlds gave us the confidence to move forward

Our lesson plans were much longer in the second year because they included much more detail. For example, we included notes on what we were trying to accomplish in each literacy class (something that Clare had not done for years). As noted in the literature review both in the self-study and digital technology sections, planning for improved courses takes substantial time. Looking over our lesson plans, we can see that they were much longer and had more detail as we explicitly merged our knowledge of literacy pedagogy with our emerging knowledge of digital technologies to facilitate student learning. This level of integration was missing in the first year of the study.

## **ii. Building a Wiki.**

In the first year of our self-study we had the broad goal of integrating digital technology into our literacy methods courses. Although a laudable idea, it was far too vague with no specific learning goals. In the second year, we became more focused – we wanted to use digital technology to support student teachers as literacy teachers. One of our strategies was mounting a course Wiki; since it is referred to so frequently in the literature (Reich et al. 2012), we assumed this was something we *should* be doing, which is a very superficial reason but it reflects our initial stage of development – very naïve. In Kosnik et al. (2012a), we discussed the importance of building a wiki for our course at length. It was clearly an important feature of our journey, but time and space away from our original articulation has helped us situated this pedagogical approach in a new way.

Ottenbreit-Leftwich et al.'s (2010) levels of technology use framework provided not only a good analytic tool but, it also provided us with a language to articulate for our efforts (e.g., authentic experiences). This prompted us to determine why we wanted to create a Wiki. Stating the reasons for creating a Wiki proved to be a challenging, multi-step process. In our reflections after our first work session on creating the Wiki, we realized that we were not sure why we were creating a Wiki. Guided by the self-study process and grounded theory we decided that we needed to return to the literature. We had to determine how the Wiki would improve our teaching and student learning. It took us many hours to define goals for the Wiki but this process gave us an insight into our practice because we were learning how to use digital technology as a pedagogical tool rather than an end in itself. Our goals for the Wiki were:

- be a repository for materials related to literacy.
- demonstrate for students a way to organize materials.
- an on-going site to access and share materials, which students could use after graduation.
- model for students a way to use a Wiki in their classrooms with children.

(Kosnik et al., 2012a)

Knowing that we would face a number of the challenges identified by Butler and Sellbom (2002) we wanted to start small, learn to use the technology, study to see how students use it, and then re-evaluate. As novices we were unsure if we could master the technology; therefore, we did not want to launch an initiative that failed, thereby reinforcing our self-images as digital novices. Our Wiki grew over the year as we along with the student teachers contributed more and more information.

Our reflections show that launching the Wiki was a turning point for us; we felt like we had mastered the technology (improvement in practice), and there was a shift in our identity (more competent users of technology). Further when one of the IT staff in our university asked to be given access to the site because it was the best educational Wiki he had ever seen we were overjoyed because it was a form of external validation from an acknowledged expert in our institution. In terms of student teacher learning we noted that student use of the Wiki spiked during practice teaching.

### **iii. Working Collaboratively With Our Students.**

We were initially hampered by the pressure to be experts on the integration of digital technology, which was exacerbated by our limited repertoire of activities and lack of focus. In our reflections, we noted that we often monopolized the “discussion” or air-time. Clare noted this frustration in one discussion with Lydia where she lamented, “I either feel defensive or like I am proselytizing. I am not like this with other topics but when it comes to digital technology I seem to go into a different mode.” Over time, we stopped assuming that we had to be experts who were fully responsible for teaching student teachers “everything” about digital technology; rather, we had to learn in partnership with them. Creating space in the course for student teachers to explore the potential use of digital technologies as pedagogical tools happened in a number of ways. Some instances were quite deliberate while others were more spontaneous. For instance, we encouraged students to share examples of digital technology they were using in their practice teaching classrooms and in their own lives. To meet the criterion of supporting student learning we had to be more purposeful. In our reflections we see that we really struggled with this goal. We had a number of false starts (e.g., using podcasts from the

*Read, Write, Think* website that were a total failure). Eventually, we took the productive step of revamping the final assignment that required student teachers to respond to a text on writing. In first semester they had to respond to a text on reading in an essay format. In the second term rather than use the traditional essay format we changed the modality. Student teachers were in small groups of five to seven students where they presented their response to the text using a digital technology, including an explanation of why they chose this particular technology.

The student teachers loved the assignment because they got to learn about five-seven different texts on writing, and also experience a number of ways to teach using digital technology. Since student teachers were teaching their peers, they had a much bigger investment in the assignment. The range of programs used was extensive: Prezi, Facebook, Twitter, BitStrips, voting using our smartphones, and so on. We extended the experience by discussing the differences between writing an essay and doing a presentation using a digital technology. The presentations were masterful; they were focused, organized, and engaging. Many student teachers took risks using a program with which they were unfamiliar. Many commented that they had seen us experiment with new programs so they felt comfortable trying out an unfamiliar technology. Most importantly for Lydia and Clare we learned a great deal from our students.

## **Discussion**

Our two-year journey was punctuated with highs and lows. We see that the integration of DT was much more than a tinkering with our practice; it had profound effects on our identities as teacher educators. Our view of ourselves changed from novice to modestly competent. We were surprised to the extent that our own self-image had to

change if we were to fully embrace technology as a learning tool. Putting our practice under such close scrutiny and the weekly documenting of our efforts and reflections, allowed us to see the complexity of the task we had undertaken. In terms of practice we now appreciate that the use of digital technology does not replace us, the instructors. We cannot discount our many prior skills as literacy teacher educators. Edwards (2012) noted the stages that teachers go through when integrating digital technology, we see that we also went through a series of stages which we identified in Figure 1.

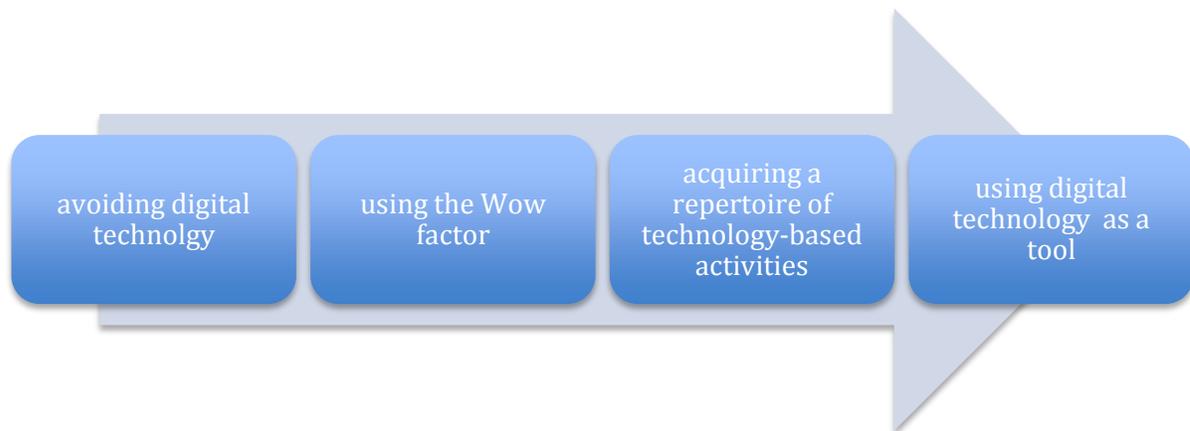


Figure 1: Stages of Integration of Digital Technologies

As we received positive feedback from others (e.g., our students, our critical friend) and presented at conferences (Kosnik et al., 2012a, 2012b), the external validation of our work strengthened our identity. Gee describes this as *discursive identities* (2002); socially constructed based on people's interactions with each other, how they interpret those interactions, and how they view those interactions in relation to the models of identity that exist within the community (Brown & Ryoo, 2008). By the end of the second year of the study we began to see ourselves as fairly competent users of technology. At the

end of the second year not one student complained on the course evaluations that they wished there had been more attention to digital technology. Figure 2 shows how our new identity emerged over time.

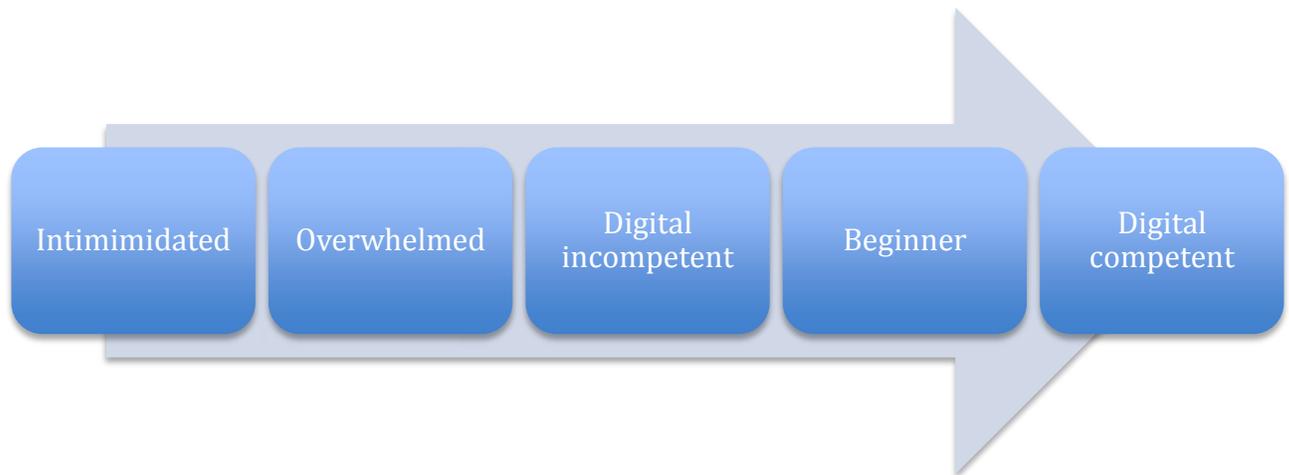


Figure 2: Stages of Identity Development as Technology Users

Although we have presented two charts above the development of our pedagogy (integration) and identity as if they were distinct but in fact they were not balkanized. As we became more confident we became more adventurous with teaching strategies. And as our teaching with DT became more fluid, our identity as able users of DT increased. Development of pedagogy and identity were mutually supportive.

Although the terms digital native and digital immigrant (Prensky 2001, 2011) are catchy and the idea that growing up with access to certain technologies might result in a higher comfort level with using technology as a tool for teaching and learning, we began to realize it is an unhelpful and not fully accurate dichotomy. Our figures suggest a continuum, rather than a dichotomy. Although we did not grow up with certain digital tools, focusing on our access to technologies over the years overlooks what we know about being effective literacy teacher educators. Teacher educators need to recognize

their own strengths, not get caught up in the edu-babble, and develop a repertoire of technology-related pedagogies. They have to prioritize what student teachers need to know and develop a plan on how to reach that destination, which many do very capably with aspects of their literacy courses. We went on an assumption that our student teachers being digital natives could teach using digital technology. In their self-reports after practice teaching many revealed that they too struggled to incorporate digital technology into their teaching (e.g., technical difficulties, lack of knowledge of quality resources).

The three of us formed a small learning community where we could discuss our successes and challenges. Just writing to our critical friend about our work and getting Shawn's feedback, further enhanced our identity – "hey, we are working with a leading expert in digital technology." We started to feel that we might be members of the "junior" digital technology club. In our reflections, a number of times we noted, "... thank goodness for each other." Advice we would give to others is: start small, get over the technical hurdles, have clear goals for what you are trying to accomplish, read the literature, do this work with others, and develop a road map with at least a vague destination in mind. Shawn felt that it was important to collaborate with other teacher educators because he valued learning about how technology might be implemented in an area outside of his expertise and because he believes, like Selwyn (2012), that it is important to "be certain only of the uncertainty of it all" (p. 214). Listening to how Clare and Lydia navigated challenges in their literacy course provided a fresh perspective on challenges he faces in his science education courses, particularly their use of class Wikis for community-building. In particular, Shawn noted that the Wiki represented the kind of *networked public* conceptualized by danah boyd (who spells her name in lowercase letters). Network

publics are a new kind of public space, one that is characterized by persistence (content remains online for a long time), visible (available to a wide audience), spreadable (content can be shared easily) and searchable (boyd, 2014, p. 11). It was enormously useful to him to participate in Clare and Lydia's discussions about the use of their Wiki as a way of understanding the implications of boyd's work (which is ostensibly about youth culture) for teacher education.

## **Conclusion**

It has been a demanding process to revise our courses and reconceptualise our identities. As our repertoire of digital tools expanded and our self-study research unfolded, our practice became more focused and nuanced. We are now at the point where we are drawing on our strengths as academics. Our personal use of digital technology (Clare's use of Skype and Lydia using Twitter), professional practice (teaching), and research methods (e.g. NVivo9) became mutually supportive. We know we will continue to develop. As Dewey (1916) observed "the educative process is a continuous process of growth, having as its aim at every stage an added capacity for growth" (p. 63). We have grown and will continue to grow!

## References

- Alvermann, D.E. (2010). *Adolescents' online literacies: New literacies and digital epistemologies*. New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishing Inc.
- Boling, E. (2005). A time for new literacies: Who's educating the teacher educators? *Teachers College Record*, <http://www.tcrecord.org> ID Number: 11742, Retrieved: June 18, 2012.
- boyd, d. (2014). *It's complicated: The social lives of networked teens*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Brown, B., Reveles, J., & Kelly, G. (2005). Scientific literacy and discursive identity: A theoretical framework for understanding science education. *Science & Education*, 89.
- Bullock, S. (2011). Teaching 2.0: (re)learning to teach online. *Interactive Technology and Smart Education*, 8(2), 94-105.
- Butler, D.L., & Sellbom, M. (2002). Barriers to adoption technology for teaching and learning. *Educause Quarterly*, 25(2), 22-28.
- Cervetti, G., Damico, J., & Pearson, P. D. (2008). Multiple literacies, new literacies, and teacher education. *Theory into Practice*, 45(4), 378-386.
- Cope, B. & Kalantzis, M. (Eds) (2000). *Multiliteracies: Literacy learning and the design of social futures*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Costa, A. L., & Kallick, B. (1993). Through the lens of a critical friend. *Educational Leadership*, 51(2), 49-51.
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2006). Constructing 21st-century teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 57(3), 300-314.

- Davies, J., & Merchant, G. (2009). *Web 2.0 for schools: Learning and social participation*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and Education*. New York: The Macmillan Company.
- Edwards, A. (2012). *New technology and education*. New York: Continuum.
- Gee, J. P. (2000). Identity as an analytic lens for research in education. *Review of Research in Education*, 25(1), 99-125.
- Hamilton, M.L. & Pinnegar, S. (1998) Conclusion. In J. Loughran, M.L. Hamilton, V. LaBoskey, & T. Russell (eds.), *International handbook of self-study of teaching and teacher education practices* (235-246). Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Kay, R. H. (2006). Evaluating strategies used to incorporate technology into preservice education: A review of the literature. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, 38(4), 383-408.
- Kirkwood, A. (2009). E-learning: You don't always get what you hope for. *Technology, Pedagogy and Education*, 18(2), 107-121.
- Kosnik, C., Menna, L., & Bullock, S. M. (2012a). Diving into social media: Using digital technologies to support teacher learning. In S. Van Nuland & J. Greenlaw (Eds.), *Social media and teacher learning* (pp. 47-60). Oshawa, Ontario: UOIT E-Press.
- Kosnik, C., Menna, L., & Bullock, S. (2012b). No longer digital novices: Integrating technology into our literacy methods. In J. Young, L. Erickson, & S. Pinnegar (Eds.), *Proceedings: The eighth interference on self-study of teacher education practices, Herstmonceux Castle, East Sussex, England*, Salt Lake City: Utah.
- Kress, G., (2010). *Multimodality: A social semiotic approach to contemporary communication*. London, U.K.: Routledge.

- LaBoskey, V. (2004). The methodology of self-study and its theoretical underpinnings. In J. Loughran, M.L. Hamilton, V. LaBoskey, & T. Russell (eds.), *International handbook of self-study of teaching and teacher education practices* (817-869). Dordrecht: Kluwer
- Mitchell, P. (2012). Digital literacy and the spaces of academic discourse. In P. P. Trifonas (Ed.). *Learning the virtual life: Public pedagogy in a digital world* (pp. 1-14). London, U.K.: Routledge.
- National Council of Teachers of English. (2007). *21<sup>st</sup> century literacies: A policy research brief*.  
<http://www.ncte.org/library/NCTEfiles/Resources/Magazine/Chron110721CentLitBrief.pdf> Retrieved January 4, 2015.
- New London Group (1996). A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures. *Harvard Educational Review*, 66, 60-92.
- Otero, V., Peressini, D., Meymaris, K., Ford, P., Garvin, T., Harlow, D., Reidel, M., Waite, B., & Mears, C., (2005). Integrating technology into teacher education: A critical framework for implementing reform. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 56(1), 8-23.
- Ottenbreit-Leftwich, A., Glazewski, K., & Newby, T. (2010). Preservice technology integration course revision: A conceptual guide. *Journal of Technology and Teacher Education*, 18(1), 5-33.
- Prensky, M. (2011). Digital wisdom and homo sapiens digital. In M. Thomas (ed.), *Deconstructing digital natives* (15-29) London, U.K.: Routledge.
- Prensky, M. (2001). Digital natives, digital immigrants part 1. *On the horizon*, 9(5), 1-6.

- Punch, K. (2009). *Introduction to research methods in education*. London: Sage.
- Reich, J., Murnane, R., & Willett, J. (2012). The state of wiki usage in U.S. K-12 schools : Leveraging web 2.0 data warehouses to assess quality. *Educational Researcher*, 41(7), 7-15.
- Samaras, A., & Freese, A. (2006). *Self-study of teaching practices*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Selwyn, N. (2011). *Education and technology: Key issues and debates*. London, U. K.: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Selwyn, N. (2012). Ten suggestions for improving academic research in education and technology. *Learning, Media and Technology*, 37(3), 213–219.
- Strauss, A. (2003). *Qualitative analysis for social scientists* (14<sup>th</sup> Ed.). New York: Cambridge University Press.

## On Pedagogical Responsibility and the Educational Precariat<sup>2</sup>

Ann Chinnery, Simon Fraser University

### *Introduction*

First, let me extend my thanks to Susan Elliot-Johns, Mark Hirschhorn, and Julie Mueller for their kind invitation to deliver this year's keynote address. This paper marks a bit of a new direction in my work in teacher education. What I'm wrestling with here is how recent scholarship on vulnerability and precarity might inform our conception of pedagogical responsibility in increasingly diverse classrooms—and I want to position my talk within the theme of this year's Congress, “@ the edge.” In the words of the Congress organizers,

“@ the edge” focuses on the key social challenges of inequality, the need for inclusivity, and the acceptance of diversity ...challenges that demand *intentional* solutions that will *address the marginalization of those at the edges of society* through the tools provided by creative interdisciplinary research activities in the humanities and social sciences.

My entry point is some of Judith Butler's recent work (Butler, 2010, 2011a, 2011b, 2012a, 2012b) on the Occupy movement and other political street protests in which she emphasizes two key themes that emerged in and from these movements. The first theme is precarity (the condition of living without security or predictability),<sup>3</sup> and the

---

<sup>2</sup> A revised version of this keynote address was published as “Precarity and Pedagogical Responsibility,” in the *Journal of Educational Controversy* 9(1): <http://cedar.wvu.edu/jec/vol9/iss1/10> Thanks to the editors for granting permission to reprint a substantial portion of the article here.

<sup>3</sup> Butler first addressed the notion of precarity in the title essay of her collection *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (2004), in which she draws on the work of the philosopher Emmanuel Levinas to argue for a recognition of our shared vulnerability as the key to unlocking a recognition of our

second is the lived experience of bodies coming together in shared space, in what she calls experiences of “up-againstness.” The paper is structured as follows: I first give a brief description of vulnerability and other related terms, and the ways in which these terms relate to the category of students we currently call *vulnerable learners*. Next I say a bit about “up-againstness” and the implications of that experience for day-to-day life in schools. Finally, I attempt to bring the two strands together in order to investigate how we might begin to rethink pedagogical responsibility, especially for those students who live on the margins of Canadian society and of classrooms within our society. Throughout, I draw primarily on ethical, social, and political theory rather than on the psychological discourses that currently hold so much sway in education. For the discussion on precarity and vulnerability I refer to the work of British economist Guy Standing (2001a, 2001b), rhetorician and activist Judith Butler, and political scientist Isabell Lorey (2011); and for the discussion on bodies coming together in public space I draw mainly on Butler, political theorist Hannah Arendt (1959, 1963, 1961), and philosopher George Yancy (2012).

### **Vulnerability**

One of the key differences that separates Butler, Lorey and Standing from their counterparts in psychology is their conception of vulnerability. From a psychological perspective, vulnerability is seen as a trait or problem of particular individuals that can be remedied by those individuals developing resilience so they can overcome whatever obstacles are standing in the way of their success. This individualized conception of vulnerability appears in the educational literature at least as far back as the “child-saving”

---

ethical responsibility to and for precarious others. I will return to that connection in the last section of the paper.

movements of the late-19<sup>th</sup> and early-20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Platt, 2009), through the work on “at-risk” students in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Wotherspoon & Schissel, 2001), and, more recently, in the discourse on “vulnerable learners” (e.g., Stormont Espinosa, Knipping, & McCathren, 2003). However, for the scholars I will be using here, vulnerability is neither an attribute of particular individuals, nor is it a problem to be solved; rather, it is an inescapable feature of the human condition. Vulnerability is what makes us open to being affected—to being touched, moved, and potentially wounded by the other. But there is an important difference between the shared existential condition of vulnerability that characterizes all human lives and the material ways in which some people are rendered more vulnerable—and their lives more precarious—than others. So let me say a bit about that distinction before turning to the implications for education.

### **Precarity and a Class-in-the-Making**

In sociology, economics, and political theory, the term ‘precarity’ is used to highlight the insecurity that comes about not as a result of individual weaknesses or failings, but as a result of what Butler (2012b) calls the unequal political distribution of vulnerability. As Lorey (2011) explains, precariousness (a basic vulnerability) is an existentially common dimension of life for both human and non-human beings. Significantly, however, this precariousness is always relational. It does not exist in itself, in the philosophical sense, but is rather a kind of “socio-ontological ‘being-with’...with other precarious lives” (Lorey, 2011, para. 3). In other words, we all share an existential condition of precariousness because we are fundamentally relational beings. Precarity, on the other hand, is “a category...that denotes the effects of different political, social and legal compensations for a general precariousness” (para. 4). So while we are all

vulnerable to the whims of fortune, health, violence, and natural disasters, there are some people whose social, economic, or political status renders them more vulnerable, more precarious, than others. A third related term, ‘precarization,’ refers to the governmental or structural ways in which precariousness is distributed and managed (para. 5). It is the process by which the shared existential condition of vulnerability or precariousness becomes a condition of precarity for some people. Perhaps the most obvious example of precarization is the destabilization of labour, a process that has given rise to a new economic class: the precariat (a play on proletariat).

In his 2011 book, *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*, Standing (2011a) notes that the term ‘precariat’ was “first used by French sociologists in the 1980s to describe temporary or seasonal workers” (p. 9). But Standing uses the term more broadly, describing the precariat as a “class-in-the-making,” not yet a “class-for-itself” in the Marxist sense (p. 7). On a scale of relative security, Standing positions the precariat below the elite (whom he describes as “the tiny number of absurdly rich global citizens”), below the “salarariat” (which includes those who are employed in stable full-time jobs, largely concentrated in the big corporations, government agencies and public administration), and below the “proficians” (a combination of *professional* and *technician*, which Standing uses to describe those who earn high incomes on contract or as consultants). In terms of security and stability, the precariat is also positioned below the shrinking core of manual labourers (the traditional working class) (pp. 7-8). Despite attempts to level the playing field through better access to education and job training, Standing notes that the precariat is actually growing. He estimates that, as of 2011, in many countries, at least a quarter of the adult population was in the precariat (p. 24).

Broadly speaking, this class-in-the-making is composed of three main groups of workers. The first group is those who are, as Standing (2011b) puts it, “falling out” of working class communities and traditions. These are typically young people whose parents were members of the working class, but who don’t themselves have a working-class identity. The second group is composed of those who have, at least in a thin sense, opted into the precariat because it is better than what they had before—for example, migrant workers for whom even unstable, poorly paid temporary labor is better than no work at all. The third group, which is relatively new as a social category, is composed of educated, progressive young people who have been taught to aspire to an occupational identity, but who find, upon completing their higher education, that there is, in fact, no identifiable future for them. As evidenced by the May Day protests that began in Milan in 2005 and quickly spread to other cities, this last group has been the most vocal (Standing, 2011b). But what does this socio-economic analysis have to do with education, and with pedagogical responsibility in particular?

### **The Educational Precariat**

Even though most theorists writing about precarity focus on the adult world of precarious workers, I think there is a parallel precariat in schools. This category of students—whom I will call the ‘educational precariat’—is made up of those who currently come under the umbrella term, ‘vulnerable learners.’ So, while Standing’s focus is on the precariat as an economic category in the adult world of work, I want to extend the term precariat to include the child’s world of schooling. Depending on where one lives, the educational precariat might include recent immigrants, Indigenous students, students who are gender-nonconforming, or who have special learning needs, or who live

in poverty, or who are children of the precarious workers I described a moment ago—or even those young people who, for whatever reason, are “just not school-shaped” (Williams, 2013, p. 32).

I taught for several years in a teacher education program that prepares teachers for work in a large urban school district with over 70,000 students and approximately 5,000 teachers. As of 2012, 32% of the district’s students were designated vulnerable learners, and that number continues to grow (Surrey Libraries, 2012; UBC Early Learning, 2011). Of these vulnerable learners, 600 live in the care of the Ministry of Children and Family Development—which is to say they live in foster homes or group homes rather than with their own biological or adoptive families. Another equally pressing concern is that only 54% of Aboriginal students in the district complete high school within the normal time frame. While this figure is an improvement over previous years, it is still nowhere near an acceptable rate, and Aboriginal elementary students’ mathematics scores continue to decline (BC Ministry of Education, 2012).

Obviously, schools cannot be expected to solve the larger global problems of economic and social inequity, but I do believe that the classroom experiences of those students I am calling the educational precariat fall squarely within our purview as educators and teacher educators, and I believe that the literature on precarity might help us begin to shift our understanding of pedagogical responsibility for the so-called vulnerable learners in our classrooms.

The philosopher best known for connecting responsibility and vulnerability is Emmanuel Levinas (1981, 1995), and while a full description of Levinas’s work goes beyond the scope of this paper, there are two key points that are helpful for our purposes

here. First, contrary to prevailing conceptions of self-other relations, which begin with the self and move outwards, Levinas claims that we come into being as subjects—as beings who can say “I”—only in responding to the other (Levinas, 1981). Responsibility is therefore not something one chooses to take on or not; it is the very foundation and precondition for selfhood. Second, for Levinas, the ethical force that draws me out of my self-interested projects into responsibility to and for the other is not the other’s real or imagined power over me, but rather her fragility and vulnerability. Paul Ricoeur (1996) explains it this way:

Consider the birth of a child—its mere existence obliges. *We are rendered responsible by the fragile.* ...[In] the appeal coming from fragility... the question becomes, what shall we do with this fragile being, what shall we do for her or him? We are directed towards the future of a being in need of help to survive and grow. (p. 16, emphasis added)

According to Ricoeur and Levinas, in the encounter with the fragility and precariousness of the other, we are called into a relationship of responsibility that we have not chosen, but which we cannot refuse.

I have long found Levinas’s emphasis on the encounter with the vulnerability of the other as the foundation for ethics compelling, and I also think his ethics makes an important contribution to our understanding of pedagogical relations. But when we shift our attention from responsibility for the other’s vulnerability/precariousness to responsibility for his or her precarity—that is, to responsibility for the unequal social and political distribution of precariousness that renders some people more vulnerable than others—Levinas’s ethics might not take us quite where we need to go. What I mean is

that in responding to precarity, we are called not only to respond to the vulnerability of the particular other in front of us here and now, but to the broader social and political context.

So what kinds of experiences might it take for us, as educators, to see the call to pedagogical responsibility as a call to respond to the precarity of those who have been designated vulnerable learners? In the next section I turn to the experience of bodies coming together in public space as one potential site where that recognition might occur.

### **Bodies Coming Together in Public Space**

At Occupy Wall Street in October 2011, Butler said:

It matters that as bodies we arrive together in public, that we are assembling in public; we are coming together as bodies in alliance in the street and in the square.

As bodies we suffer, we require shelter and food, and as bodies we require one another and desire one another. So this is a politics of the public body, the requirements of the body, its movement and voice. (2011b)

Now it might seem hopelessly old-fashioned in our digital age to appeal to physical proximity as a key site of ethics and politics, but I share Butler's belief that there is something important about the experience of bodies coming together in shared space. I am not naïve about the potential for violence to erupt in such situations, and as Butler herself made clear with regard to political protests, there are "risks in putting ourselves out there, on the street, in the world, among others we cannot know and fully predict" (2010, p. 14). There are risks to bodies coming together in classrooms too, but I believe that spending time in physical proximity with those who are distant from us in other ways, whether race, class, gender, religion, sexuality, or ability, might open us up to new

ways of perceiving those other (and othered) bodies.

Our visceral responses to other people—whether desire, disgust, or, perhaps even more telling, when we register no physical response at all—reveal a lot about our relationship to those others. In a keynote address to the North American Philosophy of Education Society, George Yancy (2012) offered a phenomenological account of his experience as a black man riding alone in an elevator with a white woman. As the elevator ascends from one floor to the next, so too the tension between Yancy and the white woman rises, as each silently inscribes the other with well-rehearsed assumptions about the differences that define and divide them. But, “[w]hat if the elevator broke down for six hours?” Yancy asks. Could this create a space for the assumptions about each other to begin to crack, even slightly? Yancy’s bigger project of addressing embedded racism extends beyond what I can do justice to here, but I want to pick up on his suggestion that in order to teach and learn across differences of race—and we could add class, religion, sexuality, and ability—we might need more experiences where, as he puts it, “the spaces we inhabit break down—like the elevator, spaces where we ‘dwell near’” (p. 52).

### **Unwilled Proximity and Unchosen Cohabitation**

Let us return again briefly to Butler. In “Precarious Life: The Obligations of Proximity,” a lecture delivered at the Nobel Museum in the spring of 2011, Butler (2011a) drew on both Levinas and Hannah Arendt. She used Levinas to argue that ethical responsibility comes to us as an obligation that binds us outside any social contract, decision-making, or choice. And she used Arendt’s claim that we do not get to choose with whom we share the world as a “guideline for particular forms of politics” (Butler,

2011a, pp. 11, 13). “The necessity of cohabiting the earth” with those we do not choose, Butler says, “is a principle that, in [Arendt’s] philosophy, must guide the actions and policies of any neighborhood, community, or nation” (p. 13). And I think we could extend that principle to public schools.

It is important to note that when Arendt used the terms “unwilled proximity” and “unchosen cohabitation,” it was in the context of her condemnation of Eichmann’s desire to get rid of those he thought unworthy of sharing the earth (in Butler, 2011a, p. 11). She claimed that Eichmann refused to see that plurality and sharing the world with those we do not choose are the very conditions of our existence as ethical and political beings, and that, while we should be free to choose with whom we want to share private space—for example, those with whom we want to share a household or go on holiday—that freedom does not (or should not) extend to the public sphere (Arendt, 1959, p. 52).

Obviously, in any discussion about education, it needs to be noted that the public-private distinction that Arendt described and defended with regard to schools in her essay “Reflections on Little Rock” (1959) does not hold—and she has been widely critiqued on that point. However, in introductory remarks she added to the article when it was published in the journal *Dissent*, she acknowledged that when she first wrote the “Reflections,” she had not “take[n] into account the role education plays, and has always, played, in the political framework of [the United States]” (p. 46), and she fleshed this point out more fully in her essay “The Crisis in Education” (in Arendt, 1961).

I mention this because it is precisely the role of education—and, in particular, the role of publicly funded schools in pluralist democracies—that is central to our discussion here. Schools and classrooms within those schools are neither fully public, in that not just

anyone can come into the space, nor fully private, in that they serve a broader public mandate and cannot exclude students on the basis of cultural, racial, or religious difference. For the purposes of this paper, I consider them more public than private spaces, and, as a result, it seems to me that Arendt's terms "unwilled proximity" and "unchosen cohabitation" come back into play as apt descriptors for the ways in which students and teachers, especially at the elementary level, occupy classroom spaces. Students are grouped together by an administrator and assigned to a teacher who may also have little choice in that assignment. In general, this does not need to be seen as a problem. Of course, there may be instances of truly counter-productive groupings, but I want to suggest that it is precisely in the experience of "dwelling near" (to use Yancy's term) or living "up against" (to borrow from Butler, 2011a) those we have not chosen—and perhaps even those we might in other contexts seek to avoid—that we might find a new way to think about pedagogical responsibility.

### **Proximity and Pedagogical Responsibility**

I realize that in arguing that we need more experiences of "up-againstness" and "dwelling near" in education, I am not suggesting anything particularly radical—but it does go against the current trend toward more and more online education, even at the elementary and secondary levels. My main concern is that when we remove from education the requirement of spending time in physical proximity with those we might not normally choose to spend time with, we risk missing something important about being human. We risk forgetting that vulnerability is a characteristic of all human lives, not something we can contain or avoid—and that our very subjectivity is tied to the other to whom and for whom we are responsible. We risk forgetting, in other words, that any

experience of being is an experience of being-with.

As I mentioned above, there are no guarantees that spending time with others will be a positive experience, nor that physical proximity will necessarily facilitate the development of particular moral emotions or political commitments. And public school classrooms, especially in large urban centers characterized by cultural, religious, economic and racial diversity, can be very complicated spaces indeed. But, consistent with Dini Metro-Roland and Paul Farber's (2012) work on cultivating civic virtues, I believe that one of the important roles of public schooling is to offer opportunities for students and teachers alike to experience up close the many divergent, and often equally defensible, ways that human lives can be lived. Drawing on Arendt and moral philosopher Julia Annas, Metro-Roland and Farber argue that

... schools provide a separate place for sustained relationships where virtue is practiced in a theater of mimesis and innovation, action and reflection, giving and receiving, watching and being watched. ... a place where students have time and space to overcome their initial reservations and discomfort and, in the presence of passionate teachers, encounter new and old ideas and aspire to learn and share their understanding in ways that contribute to their own flourishing and the flourishing of those around them. (2012, p. 436)

However, pedagogical responsibility as a response to precarity means that, as educators, we must not only provide our students with these experiences of "up-againstness"; we must also change the social and political landscape of our classrooms so they become spaces where equality is not just talked about, but enacted on a day-to-day basis.

Pedagogical responsibility in this vein therefore means that, as educators, we must

use our speech to make space for those who are denied the right to speak, we must listen to those who are deemed unintelligible, and, as Levinas (1993) puts it, we must “invest our freedom and rights in the freedom and rights of the other” (p. 125). Pedagogical responsibility as a response to precarity means that we need to examine the educational systems, policies and practices that render some students unnecessarily vulnerable, and which categorize certain ways of being as inherently at risk. It is not about denying that differences exist, but rather about what we *do* with those differences.

Butler, Standing, and Lorey focus quite rightly on the need to address precarity in the larger political arena rather than on the individual level, but I also believe that there are times when smaller acts and one-to-one encounters can contain the seeds of political transformation. And I want to suggest that there are smaller interventions we can take in the context of our own classrooms that, while not explicitly addressing the larger political conditions, do, in fact, move us closer to, rather than away from, equality and justice. Therefore, let me close by recounting a seemingly small act that teacher Vivian Gussin Paley (1992) made in her kindergarten classroom that helped to change the social and—even though it was with young children—political landscape of her classroom. I quote her at length here. “Turning sixty,” she writes, “I am more aware of the voices of exclusion in the classroom” (p. 3):

By kindergarten...a structure begins to be revealed and will soon be carved in stone. Certain children will have the right to limit the social experiences of their classmates. Henceforth a ruling class will notify others of their acceptability, and the outsiders will learn to anticipate the sting of rejection. Long after hitting and name-calling have been outlawed by the teachers, a more damaging phenomenon

is allowed to take root, spreading like a weed from grade to grade.

Must it be so? This year I am compelled to find out. Posting a sign that reads YOU CAN'T SAY YOU CAN'T PLAY, I announce a new social order and, from the start it is greeted with disbelief.

Only four out of the twenty-five in my kindergarten class find the idea appealing, and they are the children most often rejected. The loudest in opposition are those who do the most rejecting. But everyone looks doubtful in the face of this unaccountable innovation.

...Fervently the children search for detours and loopholes as we debate the issues and, eventually, I bring the matter before the older students in the school.

They too cannot imagine such a plan working. 'You can't say you can't play?' It is very fair, they admit, but it just isn't human nature. (pp. 3-4)

On one level, Paley's intervention might just look like a way to make the children be nicer to each other, but I think there is more to it. Whether or not Paley would put it this way, I want to suggest that the declaration, "You can't say you can't play," is first of all an affirmation of Arendt's claim that plurality and sharing the world with those we do not choose are the very conditions of our existence as ethical and political beings. Secondly, the experience of "dwelling near" that was a result of the rule "you can't say you can't play" exposed both the students and Paley herself to the shared condition of vulnerability that binds us all as human beings; and perhaps most importantly, it called into question the established patterns of privilege and exclusion that had rendered some students in the class more vulnerable, and others more powerful than their peers, so they had to work out new ways of being together in the shared space of the classroom.

As I mentioned above, there is no guarantee that perceiving another person's fragility and suffering will lead to a recognition of our responsibility for that other. For those who have sadistic tendencies, for example, another person's fragility or suffering is a source of pleasure; and, more commonly, when we encounter someone who is vulnerable or fragile, it is tempting to simply turn away, perhaps grateful that it is the other who is suffering, and not me. But there is also the possibility, as Levinas, Butler, and others suggest, that we might awaken in those moments to a new awareness of our responsibility for the other. Paley's proscription, "You can't say you can't play," was not about denying the tensions and power struggles that arise in classroom life, but about calling both her students and herself into a new way of being with and being for each other—to a way of responding to each other that cannot be prescribed or predicted in advance, but which emerges only in the moment of response.

Obviously, there are no easy answers; there is no one right way to enact pedagogical responsibility. But, in light of the increasing precarity in what were once relatively stable and secure societies, and increasing precarity in schools within those societies, I think we might need to investigate more deeply the particular responsibility we are called to in our work with those who are designated vulnerable learners—those living on the margins, and @ the edge—lest they become the next precariat.

## References

- Arendt, H. (1959). Reflections on Little Rock. *Dissent* 6(1), 45-56.
- Arendt, H. (1961). *Between past and future: Eight exercises in political thought*. New York, NY: Penguin.
- Arendt, H. (1963). *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A report on the banality of evil*. New York: Viking.
- BC Ministry of Education. (2012). *Surrey superintendent's report on student achievement* 2011-12.  
[http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/schools/sdinfo/acc\\_contracts/2011/36SROSA.pdf](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/schools/sdinfo/acc_contracts/2011/36SROSA.pdf)
- Butler, J. (2004). *Precarious life: The powers of mourning and violence*. London, UK: Verso.
- Butler, J. (2010). From performativity to precarity. Unpublished lecture presented at the Performing the Future Conference. Berlin, FRG, May 6, 2010.
- Butler, J. (2011a). Precarious life and the obligations of cohabitation. Address given at the Nobel Museum, Stockholm, May 27, 2011.  
[http://www.nobelmuseum.se/sites/nobelmuseet.se/files/page\\_file/Judith\\_Butler\\_NWW2011.pdf](http://www.nobelmuseum.se/sites/nobelmuseet.se/files/page_file/Judith_Butler_NWW2011.pdf)
- Butler, J. (2011b). <http://feministing.com/2011/10/24/judith-butler-joins-occupy/>
- Butler, J. (2012a). Occupy as form. ARC Muses. Berkeley.  
<http://arcdirector.blogspot.ca/2012/02/occupy-as-form-judith-butler.html>
- Butler, J. (2012b). A politics of the street. Lecture given at the Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies, UBC. Vancouver, BC, May 24, 2012.
- Levinas, E. (1981). *Otherwise than being or beyond essence*. (A. Lingis, Trans.). The

- Hague, NL: Martinus Nijhoff. (Original work published 1974)
- Levinas, E. (1993). *Outside the subject*. (M.B. Smith, Trans.). London: Athlone Press.
- Levinas, E. (1995). *Ethics and infinity*. (R. Cohen, Trans.). Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press. (Original work published 1982)
- Lorey, I. (2011). Governmental precarization. <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0811/lorej/en>
- Metro-Roland, D., & Farber, P. (2012). The eclipse of civic virtue: Recalling the place of public education. In C. Ruitenberg (Ed.), *Philosophy of Education 2012* (pp. 430-438). Urbana-Champaign, IL: Philosophy of Education Society.
- Paley, V. G. (1992). *You can't say you can't play*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Platt, A.M. (2009). *The child savers: The invention of delinquency*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers.
- Ricoeur, P. (1996). Fragility and responsibility. In R. Kearney (Ed.), *Paul Ricoeur: The hermeneutics of action* (pp. 15-22). London, UK: SAGE.
- School district approaches to supporting vulnerable students.  
[http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/communitylink/pdf/vulnerable\\_students.pdf](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/communitylink/pdf/vulnerable_students.pdf)
- Standing, G. (2011a). *The precariat: The new dangerous class*. London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Standing, G. (2011b). The precariat: The new dangerous class. Part 1. Lecture delivered at the University of North Carolina, Dec. 5, 2011.  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MbyMM\\_q2VFg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MbyMM_q2VFg)
- Stormont, M., Espinosa, L., Knipping, N., & McCathren, R. (2003). Supporting vulnerable learners in the primary grades: Strategies to prevent early school

- failure. *Early Childhood Research and Practice* 5(2). Available at:  
<http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v5n2/stormont.html>
- Surrey Libraries. (2012). *Literacy day report*. Available at:  
[http://www.surreylibraries.ca/files/Surrey\\_Libraries\\_Literacy\\_Day\\_Report\\_2012.pdf](http://www.surreylibraries.ca/files/Surrey_Libraries_Literacy_Day_Report_2012.pdf)
- UBC Early Learning. (2011). Early development instrument study for School District 36.  
<http://earlylearning.ubc.ca/maps/edi/nh/sd36/>
- Williams, R. (2013). Some young people are not school-shaped, *The Guardian*, 14 May, 2013, 32.
- Wotherspoon, T., & Schissel, B. (2001). The business of placing Canadian children and youth 'at risk.' *Canadian Journal of Education* 26(3), 321-339.
- Yancy, G. (2012). How can you *teach* me if you don't know me?: Embedded racism and White opacity. In C. Ruitenberg (Ed.), *Philosophy of Education 2012* (pp. 43-54). Urbana-Champaign, IL: Philosophy of Education Society.