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Have conceptual reforms (and one anti-reform) in preservice teacher education improved the education of multicultural, multilingual children and youth?

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This article examines three conceptual reforms in US teacher education (competency-based teacher education (CBTE), reflective teacher education (RTE) and constructivist teacher education (CTE)) for their effects on the education of multicultural, multilingual youth, as well as considering alternative certification (AC), known here as an 'anti-reform'. The author suggests that although each reform made incremental improvements in the ways that preservice teachers are prepared to teach multilingual and multicultural learners, none significantly altered the education of under-served children and youth. For instance, CTE points out the importance of prior knowledge, but fails in connecting its core concepts with culturally relevant instruction. CBTE, while also generally failing to alter teacher preparation for multicultural learners, did try to make explicit connections for preservice teachers. RTE made explicit the moral consequences of working in diverse communities but fell short when it altered the apprenticeship–mentor relationship. AC of teachers is presented as the work of neo-liberals whose largely successful efforts to deregulate teacher preparation offer both an improvement and retrenchment for urban children and youth. Finally, the article links the field's focus on the preparation of teachers for diverse students and the moral dimension of teacher education, concluding that such a connection may be the only way to maintain the professional school preparation of teachers.

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In an insightful account on the growth of school-based professional programmes, Burrage (1993) suggests that the tension between practitioner-controlled and

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school-based professional preparation is essentially a competition for moral authority. He points out that arguments over the acquisition of technical versus theoretical knowledge in the professions are secondary to the desire for preparing new professionals according to an existing, and largely unwritten, moral code.

University-based teacher educators have been, especially in recent years, explicit about their role in the professional development of teachers as agents for social justice and equity (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). This moral focus is perhaps best expressed in the field's efforts at better preparing teachers for low-income students of colour. However, current threats to university-based teacher education suggest that the moral import of professional preparation for teaching may be eroding as never before and that the entire field of teacher education is facing challenges to its professional authority, moral and otherwise (Cochran-Smith, 2001). Recent reform efforts, in spite of emphasising the importance of the ethical component in professional preparation, may not be enough to alter this course. Yet even a brief history of teacher education tells a tale of almost constant reform.

In the late 1800s, the normal schools ushered in the professional school preparation of teachers in the USA (Clifford & Guthrie, 1988), but even after a century of teacher education, the field remains dubious. Continuous criticism from both inside and outside has kept teacher educators chasing data and testimony that proves the relevance of their work (Darling-Hammond, 1999). Convincing arguments in favour of teacher education have not silenced the enduring critique and often the most egregious attacks have come from within the academy itself. Such criticism reached one of its many peaks in 1963 when James Bryant Conant, the then president of Harvard and a leader in national education policy, wrote:

> I felt confident that I was an excellent teacher and I had developed my skill by experience, without the benefit of professors of education. I saw no reason why others could not do likewise, including those who graduated with honors in chemistry and who wished to teach in high school. (Conant, 1963, p. 1)

It is little wonder that we now find a new army of less well-known academics (e.g. Chester Finn) carrying the flag Conant and others raised over 40 years ago. As a field under constant threat, teacher education has, perhaps more than any other professional field, been in perpetual reform. Given this history, the title of Fullan *et al.*'s (1998) paper comes as no surprise, *The Rise and Stall of Teacher Education Reform*.

The motivation for such reform has come from a wide range of sources. As a largely practical people, teacher educators are likely to listen first to their students, those who evaluate their courses, and who make judgements about their teaching—judgements on which important career decisions are often made. But beyond a purely instrumental and potentially self-serving interest, I believe that most teachers, including teacher educators, want their students to gain meaning and insight from their instruction. And what have preservice teachers generally said about teacher education? Make it relevant. 'Teach us things we can *use* in the classroom.' Teacher educators who respond to the desires of their students must be ready to face their colleagues across the campus and in the larger academy who accuse teacher education of being bereft

of theory or import, of sharing nothing more than 'tricks' for managing a group of eight-year-olds.[1]

And so it has been and continues to be. Criticism from one group of stakeholders foments reform in teacher education, which, in turn, makes it an easy target for another. Like the public schools they are designed to serve, teacher education programmes have been accused of following fads and so-called experts while failing to engage in true reform. However, given the constant critique, 'reform, reform and reform again' may be the only way to survive, assuring the critics that 'this time we'll get it right'.

In this article, I have chosen to examine three major conceptual reforms in teacher education: competency-based teacher education (CBTE), reflective teacher education (RTE), constructivist teacher education (CTE) and one 'anti-reform' (alternative certification, AC) for their effects (or lack thereof) on the improvement of the education for children and youth who are of colour, who enter school speaking a language or dialect other than English or who share these qualities.[2] Such learners, who I refer to as multicultural, multilingual learners (MML), are likely to be poor. Academically, they generally score about a standard deviation lower on tests of achievement than their white, monolingual English-speaking counterparts (Jencks & Phillips, 1998; Rumberger & Gandara, 2004). And whereas this achievement gap has narrowed in recent years for some groups in some subjects (e.g. the 2004 difference between White and African-American nine-year-olds' reading scores is the lowest on record), it has widened in others (e.g. the White–'Hispanic' mathematics score difference for 17-year-olds has increased substantially since 1990) (Perie *et al.*, 2005). MML often enter school speaking a language other than English; the vast majority speak Spanish as their native language (Kindler, 2002). Or they may speak a dialect of English that differs substantially from the dialect of the school; African-American Vernacular Dialect is most common. In either case, acquiring 'school' English may be a challenge for MML.

Whereas these three reforms in teacher education have tried to alter more than the education of MML, the education of marginalized youth has become a primary focus for US teacher educators (Berry, 2005), as well as the moral issue that many teacher educators believe distinguishes their form of professional preparation from one resembling a pure apprenticeship. This moral issue can be analysed within a conceptual frame suggested by Burrage and others (Tom, 1997), and yet the moral and ethical dimension of preparing teachers for MML is not the only compelling reason to examine teacher education reforms with such children in mind. A second reason is that teacher educators have been remarkably self-critical with respect to failures in preparing teachers for MML (Ladson-Billings, 1999; Goodwin, 2002), pointing out the omissions, missteps and outright failures of the field to prepare teachers for MML. In fact, one of the most successful inroads to creating irrelevancy for the professional preparation of teachers (e.g. Teach for America, AC) has come from initiatives aimed at preparing teachers for MML, especially those who live in urban areas. I have tried to focus on those papers that have specific relevance for the preparation of teachers for MML but admit that I have not conducted an exhaustive review of each reform model.

Before exploring the models, I want to frame the issue upon which I believe these and other reforms in teacher education turn; that is, the degree of pedagogical knowledge we demand of new teachers. As disparate as these reforms are, they all, to some degree, address the role of purely pedagogical knowledge in the education of teachers. None of the reforms suggests—at least as a primary focus—the broadening or intensification of academic content knowledge. Pedagogical and pedagogical-content knowledge (cf. Shulman, 1987) have been the knowledge base that teacher educators have promoted as their proprietary instructional domain, and recently, teacher educators have linked growth in pedagogical knowledge with the moral consequences of better preparing teachers for MML. For instance, instructional strategies, such as cooperative learning, are promoted as methods of teaching that 'build on prior experiences', a crucial practice when working with MML. Helping new teachers understand strategies for equity, at least in the minds of most teacher educators, is different from advancing their academic content knowledge. Teacher educators tend to focus on questions such as, 'What are the instructional strategies that can best help MML students understand their own political/social/psychological predicament and gain agency over it?' Unlike their critics, who evoke Conant's argument, teacher educators concerned with better preparation for MML do not lament that their students lack content knowledge.

As I review each reform, I wish to address several questions. For instance, has the reform promoted the pedagogical strategies necessary to meet the needs of MML? What knowledge has it encouraged among new teachers that will better serve MML? And what moral issues are at stake for the development of teachers who will work with MML?

Competency-based teacher education (CBTE)

Competency-based teacher education began as a branch on the behavioural psychology tree in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Borrowing from behaviourism's focus on observable events, it required teachers to demonstrate successful teaching in discrete instructional acts (Howsam & Houston, 1972). As an example of its focus, one of the more effective and enduring legacies of CBTE is the microteaching requirement. Preservice teachers were invited to develop a short lesson, scripted so that it demonstrated all the features of 'effective' instruction, and then teach it to a small group of peers who would provide a detailed critique. In this way, preservice teachers were given an opportunity to develop 'competency'—proving, as it were, that the lesson's features were clearly explained and organised.

Weiner (1993) expertly links the CBTE movement with the effort to improve education in the urban schools, suggesting that CBTE, based on the so-called science of teaching, seemed to offer an instructional answer for underperforming, urban students. Specifically, she points out an effort by the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE) who convened a group of multicultural educators and charged them with the task of creating a linkage between CBTE and multicultural education. The organisers of the effort argued that teachers of multicultural students

would require new competencies and skills in order to meet the needs of diverse students. These new skills, they argued, could work easily into the framework of CBTE and preservice teachers could then be tested for their knowledge of these skills. The rub, of course, was that the skills a new teacher needed to be successful in multi-cultural schools, even if they could be foretold, were so varied and tied to the particular school environment that it would have been impossible to demand their 'competency'. Like general school reforms in the 1970s, CBTE felt the tension between the behav-iourists' belief in scientific principles that could predict and alter human behaviour (e.g. Johnston & Pennypacker, 1980) and the need to continue the war on poverty and the initiatives of the Civil Rights Movements, which included improving the education of poor, minority children.

The AACTE effort, now largely forgotten, was documented in an edited book, *Multicultural Education through Competency-Based Teacher Education* (Hunter, 1974). Each chapter was written by an expert in multicultural education who provided a review of their expertise followed by applications of CBTE. Many of the chapters were focused on specific ethnic groups in which the author tried to link their knowl-edge of their own community to the CBTE processes needed to prepare teachers for children and youth who share their ethnicity. The effort generally fell short, as the passage by Garcia illustrates:

> If Chicanos indeed learn through operant conditioning just like anybody else, it would be helpful to view the process through a *cultural filter*. If the teacher who uses behavior modi-fication knows things about the Chicano learners that are different from her/his own expe-rience or the experience of other identifiable groups, then this information can be put to effective use in the implementation of the technique. (1974, p. 148)

The remaining text of Garcia's chapter reinforces the idea that Chicanos indeed respond to positive and negative reinforcement, omission training and punishment through a cultural filter—who doesn't?—and he clearly strains to find applications of behaviourism to the education of teachers faced with a complicated cultural mix in their classrooms. In Garcia's chapter and the other works in this volume, the multi-cultural experts find it difficult to square their understanding of complex cultural knowledge with a training mechanism that allows no indeterminacy. It is no wonder CBTE failed to bring about any real reform in the interest of MML.

In its defence, however, CBTE was oddly situated in the nation's educational history, sandwiched between a growing awareness of the need to address the vast educational inequities among the classes and the desire to solve every social problem through the contingencies of operant conditioning.[3] Many behaviourists argued that their methods could enhance the academic achievement of MML, but behaviourism paid little or no attention to cultural differences and CBTE's foundational belief system, in the end, could not reconcile such differences either.

Competency-based teacher education was primarily about clear instructional objectives and consistent assessment of those objectives. Consequently, we see the legacy of CBTE in the 'laundry list' of cultural features preservice teachers were asked to memorise as a demonstration of competency for multicultural education. For

many years following the initiation of CBTE, it seemed as though every new teacher in the southwestern USA held such a truncated knowledge of Chicano culture. In particular, one of the widely held cultural 'understandings' was that Mexican-American boys looked down when they were being scolded. Teachers were told that such behaviour was in fact a sign of respect and that forcing these children to look a teacher in the eye was culturally inappropriate. This surface understanding of Mexican-American culture is not entirely wrong, but the more important issue is why Mexican-American children required scolding in the first place. CBTE, as a programme design, was not up to the task, and teacher education would have to wait more than a decade before such questions were posed.

CBTE is now more or less extinct in contemporary teacher education circles, the result of our desire to move on to different models and criticism from teacher educators themselves. For instance, Ginsburg's (1986) ethnography of CBTE led him to conclude that its primary purpose was the production of 'curriculum delivery service workers' (p. 302). Framed thus, CBTE became an easy target of the critical theorists, whose broad attack on behaviourism now included teacher education.

Nevertheless, it is easy to understand why CBTE became an important movement in teacher education. The political attraction to CBTE, I suggest, is similar to the current attention to content and performance standards. Like the accountability movement, CBTE did not require significant increases in state education budgets, held the promise of systematic changes, was focused on results—instead of the messy and confusing processes nested within most educational reforms—and, finally, seemed capable of paying off quickly. Few policymakers can resist such guarantees. Today's standard-based reforms have a similarly seductive quality: they make the same assumptions while embodying the same limitations (Téllez, 2003).

On balance, we can credit CBTE with a weak attempt to prepare preservice teachers for MML. However, its reliance on the principles of behaviourism, in which factors intrinsic to the individual—culture among them—were considered superfluous to the act of teaching, prevented it from a reasoned approach to the ways in which teachers could learn to work successfully with MML.

Reflective teacher education (RTE)

The emergence of reflection as a theme for teacher educators was brought about largely by two publications: Donald Schön's (1983) book, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*, and Zeichner and Liston's (1987) article *Teaching Student Teachers to Reflect*. Although both promoted a different perspective on the role of reflection, they challenged teacher educators to think differently about professional preparation. Most importantly, each was a radically different view of teacher education than the one proposed by CBTE. In spite of using the same term, neither Zeichner nor Schön considered their work as conceptually similar and rarely, if ever, cited each other. Nevertheless, reflection, in its time, had a dramatic impact on research and programmes in teacher education, even if reflection as a programme theme appears to be waning (see Loughran, 2002 for a review). But the task here is

to consider whether reflection, in either conceptualisation, improved the education of MML. And in order to assess this question, I will provide a brief overview of each type of RTE (beginning with Zeichner's view), noting only those features relevant to the preparation of teachers for MML and later suggest how RTE has affected MML.

Building on the emerging work of the critical theorists in education, Zeichner framed teacher education as either a conserving or transformative social practice, similar to the way earlier commentators (e.g. Postman) had proposed we look at schooling itself. Zeichner and his colleagues asked us to consider teacher education's potential for creating more equitable schools, suggesting that teacher educators could radically alter the views of new teachers who could, in turn, change schools. From this perspective, reflection was seen as a way to enlarge what teacher education was capable of, a way for teacher education students, in particular, to understand the role they could play in improving schools, primarily by calling into question long-held assumptions about the goal of schooling in a democracy. Zeichner's fundamental assertions about the importance of reflection began not as a clear direction for implementing reflective practice in teacher education, but instead detailed what this 'new' teacher education was not. Prior to RTE, the development of teachers, according to RTE advocates, was largely technical, highly instrumental, decidedly anti-theoretical and even anti-intellectual. In other words, RTE was more or less the obverse of CBTE.

In the RTE programme, great emphasis was placed on the university classroom curriculum where teachers-to-be were presented with the larger philosophical and moral issues on teaching. They were given a chance to think more deeply about concepts previous teacher education students took for granted. Such a clear call for a social reconstructionist focus in teacher education had not been heard since the Progressive Movement (Grinberg, 2002).

RTE advocates argued that teacher education students should come to see that knowledge is problematic, that teaching is a moral, not a technical, act; and that curriculum should be considered a process of reflexive development. These goals, while clearly in line with a teacher education devoted to improving the education of MML, are abstractions that preservice teachers have difficulty understanding (Smylie & Kahne, 1997). This, I believe, is a primary problem with RTE. RTE for MML failed to orient preservice teachers around the specific teaching acts that would demonstrate its premises. Reflection, in this conception, came to be seen largely as a theoretical stance towards teacher education rather than a new curricular view that considered how a reflexive curriculum could improve the education of MML. This is not to say that such an understanding could have encouraged teacher education students to become more effective teachers of MML, but the reflective turn in teacher education failed to build substantially on the critical awareness new teachers held. Beginning teachers who participated in reflective programmes may have clearly understood the moral dimensions of teaching and been convinced of the importance of the co-construction of curriculum, but the lack of direct attention to how these issues connected to educating MML left them wondering.

In addition to lacking in specificity for MML, RTE, as promoted in an article by Liston and Zeichner (1987), suggested a circumscribed political role for teachers. In a work whose purpose was to relate critical pedagogy to reflective practice, Liston and Zeichner restate their view that teacher education must be understood as a value-laden social practice, a view consistent with critical theorists such as Giroux, McLaren and others. However, they stop short of agreeing with the critical theorists on the point that a teacher must also serve as a political activist. Instead, they suggest that teachers can participate in the shaping of political life through the act of teaching. This point is crucial because the role of political activist is the very one that may have successfully linked RTE to the improvement of MML. Radical commentators such as bell hooks have argued that teachers who work in the interests of oppressed children and youth must agree to political activism on their behalf.

Of course, it is impossible to know how many RTE programmes discouraged (by way of following on Liston and Zeichner's point) preservice teachers from becoming politically active. Many teacher educators, I suspect, agreed entirely with their point, suggesting that activism within the classroom can be just as powerful as activism from without. However, some preservice teachers may have misunderstood the role RTE promoted, believing that teachers had no role in political struggles and understood reflection as apolitical. Without a political edge to their work with MML, new teachers did not link the equity outside the classroom with equity within and thus failed in opportunities to improve the educational experience of their MML. But this point should not be overplayed. Teachers, irrespective of the focus of their teacher education programme, rarely consider themselves political activists.

In review, the critiques of RTE are not enough to render it ineffective for improving the educative experiences of MML. On the contrary, RTE, especially as Zeichner and his colleagues promoted it, encouraged many beginning teachers to understand the moral obligations of the teacher, including a sense of responsibility that led many to work with MML. Indeed, during the height of RTE in the early to mid-1990s, many preservice teachers from the most active RTE programmes (e.g. the University of Wisconsin) began their teaching careers in the southwestern and southern states where they had opportunities to engage in teaching MML.[4] More importantly, RTE was a vast improvement on CBTE with regard to the preparation of teachers for MML. Even if RTE failed to cast a direct light on the relationship between reflection and MML, it was clearly better than CBTE's attention on 'cultural competency'.

The second direction for RTE emerged out of Schön's work on the professions. In partial contrast to Zeichner and his colleagues, Schön's work was oriented towards reflection as a tool for more deeply understanding the work of professionals (e.g. physicians, architects, teachers), and, therefore, a tool for also understanding the development of a professional. As a theorist interested primarily in detailing and analysing what professionals do when faced with indeterminacy in their work, Schön suggested that no amount of technical proficiency could account for success. Zeichner and his colleagues made a similar point.

For instance, in his 1987 work, '*Educating the Reflective Practitioner*', Schön suggests a typology for understanding how professionals learn their craft and, once 'learned',

make complex decisions. In particular, Schön made good use of a clever concept he called 'reflection-in-action'. This term referred to how professionals can use reflection 'to reshape what we are doing while we are doing it' (Schön, 1987, p. 26).

Schön argued that teaching was complex work, even if it is made to look easy by those who are most skilled at it. Imbued as it is with the orchestration of many, many interpersonal and intellectual skills, an easy description of superior teaching is impossible. Good teachers make crucial decisions in a moment, appearing as if they had ample time to consider their options. In a compelling analogy, Schön argued that the moment-to-moment decisions of a teacher resemble those required of a jazz ensemble. 'Reflection-in-action' was met with great enthusiasm by teachers and teacher educators who had found their intuitions about teaching now validated by a coherent theory. Schön had aptly described the way expert teachers can alter a lesson's content midstream based on the subtlest of student cues. Further, the term 'reflection-in-action' was much more satisfying than previous attempts to describe roughly the same concept (e.g. 'with-it-ness').

There can be no question that Schön's theory of the professions influenced teacher education, but did the theory improve the preparation of teachers for MML? The answer to this question is complicated, at least partly because Schön never mentions teacher preparation for any specific student. But I do believe that Schön's work was misinterpreted in a way that put preservice teachers in a peculiar position, especially when middle-class, white preservice teachers were placed in urban, MML schools. To begin, RTE challenged the methods and relationships found in traditional teacher education. It was generally believed that the relationship between preservice and cooperating teachers must be made more collegial, less authoritarian. While this view is internally consistent with other features of RTE, it represented a measurable change in the way that experienced cooperating teachers viewed their role. Cooperating teachers, whose importance in teacher preparation cannot be underestimated, had little time to prepare for the changes RTE promoted. In addition, RTE, with its highly specialised vocabulary, introduced a way of talking about teaching not generally shared by veteran teachers.

Student teaching was no longer considered an apprenticeship, but an apprenticeship was exactly what Schön was proposing, and herein we find the misreading of his work. In an effort to describe how the learning process can go awry, Schön describes Johanna, a design student under the supervision of a well-known master of architecture (Schön, 1987). Johanna grasped something that remained elusive to the other students. She was able to understand that within the process of learning she could emulate her teacher's methods without sacrificing her own vision. Meanwhile, many of the other students were caught in a battle with the teacher over whose style would win out. The teacher had not intended to create disciples, but a number of the students, those whom Schön believed to have less skill than Joanna, took it that way. Johanna, on the other hand, seemed to understand her mentor's intent:

> In a way, I completely trusted Quist's [the instructor] judgment, and worried about it. But in looking back at it now, he doesn't really work that way—he works with your own ideas and never imposes his except in the most positive way of helping you to extend and see the

> implications of your own ideas. I don't think that we are getting that doctrinaire a line. But in a way, it is laziness. You want a quicker way to get there. I feel that even if someone is very dominant now, I will always be able to undo it later. (Schön, 1987, p. 122)

RTE suggested that preservice teachers were more than apprentices; indeed, their role was to act as transformational agents, but as Schön points out, reflection can be fostered even when the apprentice views her role as imitative.

In teacher education, RTE challenged traditional relationships in ways that were particularly harmful when white, suburban-bred preservice teachers, armed with a desire for equity and on the lookout for unrecognised moral contradictions, were placed with urban cooperating teachers of colour. In my experience, I found that student teachers sometimes confused high expectations and educational rigour with callous treatment of MML at the hands of their cooperating teachers. Ware's (2006) recent research has operationalised these high expectations, suggesting that such teachers, known as 'warm demanders', are able to enhance academic achievement *because* they ask much of their students. In my own research, I have discovered that cooperating teachers experience great frustration with those student teachers who enter the classroom with a belief that MML need a combination of love and political empowerment (Téllez, in press). The cooperating teachers in this research argued that the student teachers neither have any idea how to engage their goals nor do they realise the immense academic progress most MML need. And it is the latter concern that the warm demander teachers address most forcefully. When combined with their misunderstandings about successful teaching for MML and an understanding that their role was more than an apprentice, the admixture resulted in confusion for everyone.

For the vast majority of white student teachers placed in MML schools, their stance should be the one Johanna took: learn, listen, even emulate and know that matters of style can be worked out later. Given most preservice teachers' lack of experience with MML, there was little justification for altering the mentor–apprentice relationship. Indeed, many educators are now embracing 'communities of practice' which emphasise the role mentors play in preparing novices for both the cognitive and skill-based demands of a job or task (see Coy, 1989 for a set of diverse views on the mentor–apprentice relationship). This new work on learning in social communities suggests that RTE's focus on altering novice-expert may have been misplaced.

What a student teacher finds in a strong cooperating teacher is a deep familiarity with local knowledge, those techniques and, for lack of a better term, tricks that work at *this* school, for *these* kids and their parents. Teacher educators may not prefer it this way, but direct experience in a specific context with a particular group of children counts. The cooperating teacher who understands the school's cranky laminating machine (the purely technical) or who can cut right to the heart of a playground argument, quickly meeting justice (reflection-in-action), or who knows how to balance a state-mandated curriculum with students' cultural knowledge (success with MML) will render advice highly prized by preservice teachers. The range of localised skills that effective veteran teachers develop when working with MML is exactly the type of yet-to-be coded expert knowledge beginning teachers need. RTE

may have inadvertently altered this community of practice by inviting, even demanding, that the preservice teacher becomes a critic of both the school and her cooperating teacher.

In my view, RTE missed striking a balance between developing teachers who understood the transformative potential of their work and the role they were required to play as student teachers in the K-12 classroom. Nevertheless, RTE levered a positive effect on teacher education for MML by emphasising the importance of context. If there is one clear message that emerged from both the Schön and Zeichner versions of reflection it was that teachers could never rely on 'generic' teaching strategies, whether or not they were taken from the research literature (Valli, 1992). Generic, of course, was coded to mean what worked for white, middle-class, native English speakers—not MML. RTE made clear that contexts could not be considered equal. Each specific school, classroom and child required deep, deliberate reflection on those acts that would foster successful educative experiences. And in this emphasis, RTE represented a striking change from what had passed for 'methods' in teacher education.

Constructivist teacher education (CTE)

Chomsky's critique of Skinner's *Verbal Behavior* in 1957 began to unravel behaviourism's hold on the social sciences in the USA and elsewhere. And although it took time, behaviourism (and the CBTE programmes it inspired) has all but vanished as a guiding theory in the preparation of teachers. Indeed, it would be difficult if not impossible to find a contemporary professional preparation programme in education (save those oriented towards work with special populations of children, such as those affected by autism) that features behaviourism as the dominant programme ideology.[5]

The void left by behaviourism was filled not with an approach to learning based on Chomsky's theory of language (as might be predicted) but rather on the work of Piaget, Vygotsky and von Glaserfeld (see McCarty & Schwandt, 2000, for a review). While the views of these three theorists cannot be considered at all unified (recall Vygotsky's vigorous critique of Piaget's theory of ego-centric speech, for example), their general theoretical stance suggested that learners manipulate environmental stimuli based on their individual experiences and are highly likely to be influenced by the language and activities of those around them. More importantly, perhaps, it was now believed that learning was largely self-regulated and that rewarding learning was no guarantee of a change in behaviour, attitudes or cognition. As educators and others began to organise these views into a somewhat coherent concept, the term 'constructivism' emerged as a descriptive label, even if the theories supporting the term were not necessarily new and conceptually disparate (Terhart, 2003). At present, the importance of constructivism in educational theory and research cannot be underestimated (its impact on educational practice is less noticeable). By the early 1990s, when constructivism had established itself as a major educational philosophy and theory of learning, it was only a matter of time before teacher educators began to reconcile their field to this view.

Constructivism has played two roles in teacher education, one related to the *content* of teacher preparation and the other to the *programme design* of teacher education (the latter is what I call CTE). This is an important distinction. With regard to content, we would be challenged to find a teacher education programme in the USA that fails to introduce students to the idea of constructivism and invites them to learn its major properties. But not all programmes that invite students to learn about constructivism are themselves built on a constructivist ideology. For instance, a programme could require students to read about constructivism but fail to allow them opportunities to organise their knowledge based on their previous understanding or collaborate with their peers. Similarly, a programme could emphasise for its students the importance of providing genuine experiences for learning but underemphasise its own students' field placements or neglect the formation of a social learning community. Of course, it would be hard to imagine a constructivism programme that failed to share the principles of constructivism with its students. Most CTE programmes promote a very clear constructivist frame (e.g. Mayer-Smith & Mitchell, 1997).

The role of constructivism in teacher education as a programmatic focus suggests that teacher educators alter their pedagogy to the type of instruction and experiences constructivism suggests. Although this is the type of CTE on which I wish to focus, I would like to speculate first on how a constructivist focus in the content of teacher education may affect preservice teachers' capacity for better serving the educational needs of MML. I will return to constructivism as a programmatic focus at the end of this section.

The question at hand, then, is 'When preservice teachers learn the foundations of constructivism, what do they learn that will help them to be effective with MML?' Of course, there is no way of determining exactly how each and every teacher education programme is sharing the varied ideas of constructivist theory, but we can safely assume that a great many preservice teachers learn that constructivism (1) is in opposition to behaviourism—a theory with which they may have some familiarity, (2) values the learners' previous experiences, (3) allows learners to discover new knowledge rather than having it 'given' to them, and (4) encourages extended forms of collaboration among learners. Whereas these features do not fully envelop the varied understandings of the term, especially the more philosophical or epistemological elements of constructivism (Howe & Berv, 2000), they are likely, I believe, to represent knowledge that preservice teachers gain of the theory.

Clearly a constructivist position that encourages beginning teachers to take into account their students' previous experiences could encourage new teachers to value a student's existing cultural knowledge and build on those experiences, thus connecting MML students' lives to school knowledge. But the distance between an idea, such as 'build on students' previous knowledge', and the actual educative experiences that rely on student culture is often too great for preservice teachers to negotiate. Some research evidence suggests that even experienced teachers are struggling with these challenges. For instance, Windschitl (2002) points out that experienced teachers face many unrecognised challenges in practicing constructivism in contemporary schools and suggests a categorisation scheme to describe the dilemmas faced by

teachers oriented towards constructivism. Most germane to this article is the category Windschitl calls the 'cultural frame', characterised by the challenges teachers face with respect to understanding student culture, the 'local knowledge of students with varied cultural backgrounds' (p. 133) and suggests that constructivism is underdetermined in this area, although pointed in the right direction.

Preservice teachers who come to understand constructivism may easily understand the importance of the role that prior knowledge plays in a student's education but be no closer to designing and implementing lessons that build on that culture. Constructivism as a subject of study in teacher education does not, in my view, help preservice teachers to be more effective with MML. But this failure is merely a part of a more significant shortcoming of constructivism itself; that is, the lack of specificity with regard to how we teach those whose culture is unfamiliar. The call to take into account student culture as evidence of prior knowledge is woefully unclear, especially for preservice teachers. The assumption is that preservice and beginning teachers already know or can acquire the culture of the students in order to build on student experiences. I would argue that we have shockingly few examples of instruction that genuinely builds on student culture (Au & Jordan, 1981; McCollum, 1989; Bean, 1997) so asking preservice teachers to create lessons that build on prior knowledge, especially student culture, vastly overestimates their pedagogical and cultural capacities. But I readily admit it *sounds* right. Similarly, an emphasis on dialogue among students, another common understanding of constructivism, will not guarantee effective instruction for MML. Neither of these principles leads to enough curricular specificity to be of much help to preservice teachers. Indeed, teacher educators who maintain a focus on constructivism must significantly augment their curriculum if they hope to prepare preservice teachers for effective instruction of MML.

What of constructivism as a programmatic focus in teacher education? First, the few examples of such programmes found in the literature point to significant challenges. It is clearly much easier to teach preservice teachers about constructivism than to orient an entire programme to constructivist principles. A recent article by Mintrop (2001) points out the vagaries, genuine challenges and even failures in implementing the CTE. But Mintrop remains committed to constructivist principles, unlike Baines and Stanley (2000), whose blustery critique of constructivism in teacher education suggests that the theory has little or no value in the preparation of teachers.

Richardson (1999) notes constructivism's importance in teacher education, suggesting that teachers who wish to radically alter their view of teaching and learning will find the constructivist theme a useful one. However, she is careful to point out that other models may be more fruitful in other learning contexts. While not specifically mentioned, could preparation for MML be included in this category?

In another work promoting the idea of constructivist designs in teacher education, Putnam and Borko (2000) suggest that teacher educators can create growth in teaching knowledge, among both preservice and in-service teachers, by using strategies based on '"situated cognition", "distributed cognition", or "communities of practice"' (p. 4). The general premise of their work is that Vygotsky's theory of language

development can be brought to bear on the development of teachers' professional growth. Putnam and Borko use Vygotsky's work to suggest that teachers can make better sense of their instructional practice if they share ideas and develop teaching strategies in concert with each other. Knowledge is socially constructed as the theory goes; therefore, teachers who rely on one another, who recognise the 'distributed nature' of their professional expertise, will expand their knowledge in fruitful ways. Teachers may indeed benefit from working together in solving their instructional dilemmas, and others (e.g. Hedgecock, 2002) suggest that communities of practice form the basis of preservice teacher knowledge growth. However, such a focus ignores several features of teachers' work, thus limiting the theory's application to the context of preservice teachers, especially those working with MML.

Vygotskyan theory, while clearly explanatory and perhaps even prescriptive in some contexts, may not apply to enhancing teacher development for MML. First, teachers in US schools remain isolated from their peers and most often develop their professional knowledge and skills alone in their classroom. To some degree, preservice teachers share this isolation. Teachers may not prefer it this way, and many have argued that the egg-crate architecture of schools promotes this isolation (e.g. Fieman-Nemser & Floden, 1986), but many teachers do not view growth in their teaching practice as 'socially constructed', at least not socially constructed with other teachers. Teachers, for the most part, see their students as the most important partners in developing instructional practice. While this may be a form of knowledge growth in a social setting, it does not conform to the theoretical boundaries of the zone of proximal development, at least as the term is normally understood.

Further, teachers, including preservice teachers, may need the freedom to experiment, to form emotional bonds with the children and youth with whom they work, without the distraction of squaring their work with other professionals, and to learn—primarily—from their students, especially when the students are MML. I suggest that a focus on learning from students is far more important to the beginning teacher's understanding of MML than working in cooperative peer groups. After all, when asked to collaborate with peers, a preservice teacher is almost guaranteed to find other white, middle-class women in her group. The cultural and linguistic sameness among preservice teachers is shocking.

Borko and Putnam's focus does not necessarily suggest that teachers (preservice or otherwise) would not also consider collaboration with their students as constructivism in practice, but teacher educators could invest so heavily in preservice teacher-to-preservice teacher collaboration that working and learning from and with students would be diminished. Preservice teachers could benefit from sharing what they have learned about MML with other preservice teachers, but classrooms are frustratingly distinctive. Talking about students and classroom conditions with those who do not have direct experience with those specific students in a specific classroom can be less than helpful. Working with other teachers on instructional challenges does not, of course, prevent teachers from learning from students, but I worry that such an approach, if taken too seriously, would prescribe a type of professional development at odds with teachers' own inclinations. Perhaps most important, the formation of

communities emerges from the collective interests of its participants. Genuine communities of practice cannot be prescribed.

Mainly, constructivism has complicated our understanding of teaching and learning and thus invited preservice teachers to be more aware of students' specific knowledge and culture. And while we might question whether it has led to great improvements in the preparation of teachers for MML, it is clearly an advance over the static, culture-free focus CBTE promoted for teacher education. However, unless constructivism is combined with a theory or model that includes some specificity for curriculum development in the interests of MML, its promise for MML remains limited.

The anti-reform: neo-liberalism and the advocacy of alternative certification (AC)

Alternative certification presents us with an example of a recent policy reform, to be distinguished from the conceptual reforms already discussed, that commonly eschews any conceptual orientation in the preparation of teachers. Indeed, many AC programmes are based on the view that beginning teachers, if properly chosen, need little or no pedagogical preparation. Most advocates of AC would consider a conceptual programme orientation superfluous at best. The lack of an overarching conceptual scheme, the elimination of pedagogical preparation and the removal of oversight from university-based teacher educators make AC an anti-reform in teacher education. As such, this article could safely ignore AC, except for the fact that AC has generated intense controversy, and nowhere has that controversy been hotter than in discussions about alternative licensing's effects on MML (Darling-Hammond, 1994; Darling-Hammond *et al.*, 2005).

In spite of efforts by university teacher educators to eliminate alternative licensing, policymakers in many states continue to create routes to teacher licensure that detour professional-school preparation. For instance, Florida's legislature recently approved the tests of the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE) as a valid route to all state teaching certificates (http://www.fldoe.org/edcert/cert_steps.asp). In another example, Pennsylvania now accepts the ABCTE examinations for those seeking the elementary and secondary English and math licences. We also find an entirely new class of credentialing agencies nationwide, some of which place teachers in classrooms with little or no coursework; in many such programmes, teaching itself is counted as units towards the credential. To wit, in the Houston, Texas region, of the 28 agencies that offer a teaching certificate, only eight were traditional university programmes. The remaining 20 state-approved institutions included several school districts and even a programme known as the Web-Centric Alternative Certification Programme (http://www.online-distance-learning-education.com/articles. php/tPath/12).

Many of the critics of both the test-only or AC routes suggest that MML are those most likely to be taught by an alternatively licensed teacher, with damaging effects to their academic growth. Indeed, the claim that MML are harmed by alternatively

licensed teachers is very much related to the general moral stake teacher educators have planted with regard to all MML. AC programmes, with their minimal preparation schemes, are especially worrisome. The research on teacher thinking has demonstrated that teachers, left to their own devices, will fall into the instructional practices they experienced as students, unless challenged to think otherwise. Lengthy, high-quality teacher education has been shown to counteract such teaching 'instincts' and promote attention on students' needs (Sprinthall *et al.*, 1996) but such programmes are rare.[6] Nevertheless, teachers who do not know their students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds or who ignore their influence break a fundamental pedagogical rule: connect what students know to what they do not yet know.

Because MML are the students most likely to be taught by a teacher who has been alternatively licensed, teacher educators appear to have a clear moral cause, but the research and policy studies on AC do not roundly support the negative consequences of AC's effect on MML. In particular, teacher educators have argued that recruiting teachers who share a cultural and linguistic background with students improves the education of MML (see Téllez, 2004/2005, for a review). And in a twist that is bound to make teacher educators committed to MML uneasy, a few model AC programmes, including those directed by university teacher educators (e.g. Brennan & Bliss, 1998; Hawk *et al.*, 1999), have found AC programmes to be a very effective strategy in diversifying the teaching force. Clearly the low cost of AC (both in the lack of university tuition and in the opportunity cost of not working) is a successful tool for luring working adults of colour into the classroom.

When AC is found to be a strategy for recruiting multicultural, multilingual teachers, it requires teacher educators to make a difficult choice: is pedagogical preparation more important than the cultural unity? In other words, can a minimally prepared multilingual teacher of colour serve MML better than a white teacher skilled in equity pedagogy? It may be an unfair question to ask of teacher educators, but it cuts to the heart of these competing agendas. Teacher educators, at least those who care deeply about the education of MML, are forced to reckon with the 'success' of AC and balance their commitment to professional preparation with their desire to create a more culturally and linguistically diverse teaching force.

I want to be clear that I am not promoting AC of teachers as a strategy for improving the education of MML. On balance, I believe that the general de-skilling of teachers, as AC often does, has a negative impact on all learners, especially MML. And I believe that a great many mono-English speaking white teachers of MML who enter the profession via alternative routes develop enduring misunderstandings about their students. Without a professional educator guiding them, such teachers mistake cultural and linguistic differences as errors, a lack of motivation or any number of other factors that appear to impede academic progress. In time, many grow increasingly frustrated at their lack of success and may leave the profession or, worse, remain teaching, embittered and blameful of the students for their own failures.

This brief discussion points out the moral 'half-light' of AC. I argue that university teacher educators, who have argued against AC, and often on moral grounds, can no longer claim that the effects of AC are uniformly negative. At the same time,

a full-scale deregulation of teacher professional development, as the neo-liberals suggest, has significant negative consequences for MML.

Conclusion

Have the conceptual reforms in teacher education of the past three decades improved the education of MML? The answer is expectedly uneven. CBTE, even with its behavioural tendencies, understood the need for specialised knowledge for MML. But with student culture and even the learning context considered unimportant, it could fit preservice teachers only with rudimentary and over-generalised knowledge of MML. RTE certainly encouraged a deeper understanding of context, but it may have altered the apprentice–mentor relationship in ways that discouraged knowledge growth by preservice teachers in MML classrooms. However, its focus on teaching as a value-laden act clearly encouraged preservice teachers to consider where and how they would teach. CTE encourages a dialogic approach to pedagogical knowledge growth, but a dialogue with whom? Teacher educators could overplay the role of communities of practice, in which student teachers place more emphasis on learning from each other rather than learning from MML.

The three conceptual reforms in teacher education I reviewed, each devoted attention to improving education of teachers for MML. We know that national, state and local policies have long been directed at this same goal, but will university teacher education be able to save its professional schools? I believe teacher educators have an obligation to make their case, and the analysis of these three reforms offers at least two directions. First, it would be wise to reclaim RTE's focus on teaching as a value-laden endeavour, pointing out that beginning teachers who have not been socialised to see their work with MML as a moral activity, and one that they have committed to by virtue of their programme preparation, will not last long in the classroom. Second, CTE helps preservice teachers focus on learners by emphasising the importance of prior knowledge and the arrangement of educational experiences in place of a simple 'message sent–message received' view of learning. Even CBTE, with its focus on competence in cultural knowledge, however trite it may have been, valued specificity when understanding students whose life experiences were different from one's own.

I believe that two recent practices in professional teacher education offer hope in reclaiming teacher education as a field in need of professional preparation. The number of English language learners continues to grow (Kindler, 2002), and preservice teachers must understand the challenges of teaching both content and language at once. Minaya-Rowe (2006) offers a unique avenue to advance such growth. She requires her mono-English speaking preservice teachers to learn about English language development *in Spanish*. As she demonstrates the very teaching techniques she hopes they will use as teachers, they experience both the frustration and exhilaration of second language learning. They also realise that teaching English is imbued with moral dimensions they had not considered. A second direction requires teachers-to-be to learn about students' lives *outside* of the school (Aguilar & Pohan, 1998; O'Grady, 2000). To be sure, preservice teachers must have placements in schools

serving MML, but schools have a culture of their own that tends to obscure all others. By inviting students to acquire knowledge about MML outside of the school links service and professional learning while encouraging preservice teachers to understand cultural processes without the mediating effects of the school, as well as pointing out the moral consequences of working in MML communities. Neither of these experiences is likely to be included in an AC programme. They could only be found in a *professional* preparation programme.

The learning experiences I have described above are not part of the time-worn theory/practice dualism, and teacher educators would do well to abandon it. As Burrage (1993) suggests, advocates of professional school fail to make their case when they draw attention to theory/practice splits, largely because traditional apprenticeships, if properly structured, can teach theory and practice equally well. Professional school preparation is better served when its advocates make the case that it can stand above the provincial desires of a specific practice context, when they have the time and space to engage their students in the moral causes they will one day pursue. In the case of teacher education, university professors are not bound to the goals of a specific school district or even state mandate. Teacher educators can unabashedly promote what is best for children and youth, irrespective of where such youth attend school. On the other hand, without a deep knowledge of the local contexts, teacher educators appear out of touch, which might be considered a moral shortcoming itself. Helping preservice teachers understand the moral ground unique to professional school preparation has not always been easy, but it may be the only way to survive.

More than a decade ago, Sirotnik (1990) found that teacher educators were not very effective in convincing preservice teachers of the moral nature of teaching. More recently, Tom (1997) has suggested that preservice teachers may view the purpose of professional teacher preparation as merely instrumental, as a set of methods for conveying information to others. He points out that preservice teachers often fail, at least in the early stages, to understand that 'pedagogy therefore is not only a process to achieve understanding but also a moral enterprise, not merely because teachers provide ethical instruction but also because they decide what learning is worthwhile for students' (p. 107).

For those of us who see the preparation of teachers for MML as a primary purpose of teacher education, the way ahead is relatively straightforward. It is too late for another reform, but it is too early to give up. Teaching is a profession imbued with the deepest of moral questions, and one of the most important questions for modern educators is whether schools are serving all children with equity and care. If professional teacher education does survive—and I believe it has a fair chance—we cannot know what conceptual reform might save it. In my view, the best course of action is to recognise our independence from the traditional sources of power and to help preservice teachers see clearly the relationship between the pedagogical and the moral when teaching MML. If we choose this course and still lose the battle for the professional school preparation of teachers, would it be fair to say that we lost?

Acknowledgements

Notes

1. Teacher educators, as well as select other social scientists, agree to a critical and foundational knowledge required for classroom management. And dozens of theories of sociology, for instance, can be applied to the social management of children in group settings. However, when such knowledge is rendered as a 'programme' such as Assertive Field, the chance that any deep, theoretical knowledge will emerge is slight.
2. Recently, several teacher educators (e.g. Zeichner, 2003) have reflected upon the state of the field with an eye towards its 'democratising' effects. Such self-examination, especially Zeichner's thoughtful review, motivated this article. I believe that this article adds to this recent round of reviews but with more focus placed on how reforms in teacher education have directly affected MML.
3. Teacher education in Europe and elsewhere never took CBTE very seriously. Continental educators, in particular, never embraced behaviourism as the USA and the UK did.
4. Some may argue that beginning teachers in the Midwest began their careers in 'growth' states with large proportions of MML simply because there were few jobs at home.
5. This is not to say that teacher education does remain influenced by behavioural principles. On the contrary, some teacher education programmes, especially when the topic turns to 'classroom management', are quite willing to instruct preservice teachers in strategies based largely on behavioural principles.
6. On the other hand, we have evidence that even when teacher preparation challenges the educational histories of its charges, teachers-to-be tend to believe and act on their experience rather than research or professional opinion (Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991).

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