

**EDUCATIONAL DISCOURSES AND TEACHING IDENTITIES:  
AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF BEING TAUGHT TO TEACH**

by

**JOHN TAYLOR**

**B.A., Trent University, 1989  
B.Ed., University of British Columbia, 1998  
M.A., Trent University, 1996**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

in

**THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**(Department of Educational Studies)**

**We accept this thesis as conforming  
to the required standard**

**THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA**

**December, 2000**

**© John Taylor, 2000**

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the head of my department or by his or her representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Department of Educational Studies

The University of British Columbia  
Vancouver, Canada

Date Dec- 12 2000

# Abstract

Poststructuralism and discourse analysis have offered us new ways to research and understand human behaviour. Their contributions have been particularly useful for investigating individual identity or subjectivity. Poststructuralism suggests that we understand the individual as discursively positioned or constructed. When becoming who we are and acting how we do, we do so using already available discourses: ways of being, ways of knowing. We are constantly surrounded by multiple, contradictory discourses, and by consequence individual subjectivity is also changing, multiple, and contradictory.

Using poststructuralism and critical discourse analysis I conducted a twelve-month ethnography of the experiences of being taught to teach. On the first of September, 1997 I began the twelve month, secondary English, teacher education program at the University of British Columbia. I employed autoethnographic and ethnographic techniques to explore some of the dominant and marginal discourses in teacher education, with a focus on my experiences and those of four other students. While there are many discourses operating in and around teacher education and schools, I examined only three: "Student Teacher as Technician," "Student Teacher as Child," and "Student Teacher as Agent for Change."

The data gathered suggests a teacher education program which at its core is technocratic in nature. Students are kept so busy with largely trivial assignments and tasks that indepth engagement with educational theories and ideas is virtually impossible. Furthermore, the technocratic approach by its very nature appears to inhibit discourses related to social or educational change. In short, it could be said that students are not in a "teacher education program" but instead a "teacher training program." Perhaps one of the most significant contributions of this research is that it represents the only ethnography of teacher education conducted by a student of teacher education. This "inside" perspective may provide unique and valuable insights and offer a balance to the professorial perspective, which dominates the majority of discussions about contemporary teacher education.

It is my hope that this research helps to clarify the various discourses that circulate throughout teacher education. If these discourses become more apparent to us, we can begin to understand how they act upon us to position us in particular ways as teachers and student teachers. It is also my hope that by representing a variety of ways of being a teacher, I will help to create a space in which a multiplicity of approaches to teaching are accepted and appreciated.

## Table of Contents

Abstract .....	ii
Table of Contents .....	iii
Acknowledgements .....	iv
 <b>Chapter One: Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Poststructuralist Ethnography and Critical Discourse Analysis .....	5
Ethnography/Autoethnography .....	12
Research Objectives .....	17
Data Sources .....	18
A) Self-Study and Participant Observation .....	18
B) Individual Interviews/Focus Groups with Students .....	20
C) The Faculty and Administrative Perspectives .....	23
A Note on Subjectivity .....	24
My Subjectivities/Positions .....	27
Reactivities: A Myriad of Responses .....	30
Studying Up, Studying Down: Resistance and Desire .....	38
Significance of This Study: Why Bother? .....	43
Concluding Comments .....	45
 <b>Chapter Two: Becoming a Teacher .....</b>	<b>48</b>
The Program: So Much Content so Little Time .....	52
Brent: Going it Alone .....	53
Hannah: Agent for Change .....	58
Jackson: "I Don't Want to be One of Those Teachers" .....	64
Ophelia: The One Who Got Away .....	70
John Taylor on John Taylor: Pushing (But Not Breaking)The Boundaries.....	77
Conclusion .....	82
 <b>Chapter Three: Student Teacher as Technician .....</b>	<b>83</b>
Teacher as Practitioner: Theory and Practice .....	87
Student Teacher as the Evaluated/Student Teacher as the Evaluator .....	99
Conclusion .....	108
A Final Thought .....	110
 <b>Chapter Four: Student Teacher as Child .....</b>	<b>112</b>
Discourses of Knowing: Student Teacher as Non-Knower .....	114
Discourses of Authority and Hierarchy: Student-teacher .....	121



Discourses of Development: Student Teacher as Neophyte .....	131
Program as Text: Jumping Through Hoops .....	139
Conclusion: Being the Discourse .....	150
<b>Chapter Five: Student Teacher as Agent for Change: Exploring a Marginal Disclosure .....</b>	<b>154</b>
Student Teacher as Agent for Change .....	157
Student Teacher as Not yet Ready to be Agent for Change .....	169
Student Teacher as Agent of the State: Being Trained to be a Teacher ..	173
Conclusion: When Push Comes to Shove .....	182
<b>Chapter Six: Future Directions and Concluding Thoughts .....</b>	<b>188</b>
Teacher Education or Teacher Training: What Lies Ahead .....	188
Research Directions .....	191
Concluding Thoughts .....	193
References .....	198
Appendix A: 12-Month Secondary Teacher Education Option .....	207
Appendix B: Regular Evaluation Form .....	209
Appendix C: Short Practicum Evaluation Form .....	210
Appendix D: Extended Practicum: Mid-Point Evaluation Form .....	211

## Acknowledgments

First and foremost, I would like to thank my sister Leah and my brother-in-law Peter, without whom, quite simply, this would never have been accomplished. Their generosity is a source of amazement to all who know them.

I would also like to thank my sister Theresa for transcription, editing, and ideas. I hope your work on this thesis has not caused you to abandon your plans to enter teacher education next year!

I would like to thank my parents who have been, and continue to be, great teachers.

A special thanks to Wendi Bogers Kuan-Veng for helping me think of this project, and to Chris Magwood and Mike Thoms for reminding me to think outside the lines.

I would like to raise a glass of wine (and I will) to my cohort at UBC. I was lucky to be thrown in with such a great lot. Thanks: Martha, Jan, Larry, and Anita!

Thank you also to a great cohort in the teacher education program: Miss. Julie & Rory (now happily wed), Suzanne, Vince (where are you?), and Cheryl. We survived.

Thank you to the six students who shared their frustrations, anxieties and successes. You are teaching us all about teacher education through your experiences.

Thank you to the faculty members, sponsor teachers, school administrators, and my faculty advisor, who gave me their time.

Thank you to Gaalen Erickson for his time and effort on my thesis committee. Thank you also to Charles Ungerleider for supporting this research.

A large thank you to my other committee member, Jean Barman. Jean's support for my work began before we met. I am truly fortunate to have met someone with the wisdom, insights, and encouragement that Jean embodies.

-----

Finally, I would like to thank my supervisor, Deirdre Kelly, who never treated me like a child, but always taught me. Deirdre, thank you for pushing me when I needed to be pushed and supporting me when I needed support. I feel truly lucky to have worked with you. Thank you, most of all, for the great conversations about teaching and learning--that's what it's really all about, right?

## **Chapter One : Introduction**

I should begin by making it clear that my interest is in the student of teacher education and the discourses they draw upon to construct their identities. Although I will at times turn to the faculty, the program itself, and curriculum, I will maintain a central focus on the student of teacher education. Specifically, the questions which guide this research are: 1) What are some of the discourses in teacher education? 2) How do they interact? 3) And how do they influence the construction of the identities of students of teacher education?

As Ann Phelan (1994) points out, students are surrounded by various educational discourses.

Throughout the acculturation process we are immersed in multiple educational discourses--ways of viewing the educational world, ways of communicating with others within that world, ways of valuing and thinking about the world of teaching and learning and the actors within it (Gee,1990). (p.101)

I have chosen to explore these discourses from the perspectives of students of teacher education. Although I agree with Phelan that there are multiple educational discourses circulating within a teacher education program, it is important to emphasize that not all discourses receive equal "air time" or enjoy equal status. Phelan herself is disturbed by the dominance of the management discourse which had become embedded in the students of teacher education in her program (p. 110).

I chose to experience and explore the various discourses which circulate in the teacher education program at the University of British Columbia (UBC) not only through the experiences of key informants but also through my own experiences. I

felt that by including an element of self-study I could provide my readers with depth and vividness perhaps not possible otherwise.<sup>1</sup> I wanted to explore, personally and in-depth, some of the many discourses available in the program. How are certain discourses firmly ensconced within the process of being taught to teach and how are others struggling to maintain a presence in the margins of the same program? Finally, I wanted to try to gain insight into the ways these discourses interact in a teacher education context.

It is essential in any study of this nature to recognize that all knowledge and all discourse reflect an ideological position (Zeichner, 1993; Britzman, 1991). The status quo is protected and entrenched using dominant discourses (Fine, 1987). These discourses are often maintained by an insistence that they are ideologically and politically neutral. Furthermore, when persons or parties fight for change, in part using marginalized discourses, they are silenced by claims that the marginal is political and therefore inappropriate. If we can establish a discourse which recognizes that all knowledge (and discourses) is ideological and political, then we have created an accepted defense to the marginal equals political argument, therefore making change more possible. It was incumbent upon me to try to recognize and depict some of the ideological underpinnings of certain discourses. For example, Giroux and McLaren (1986) believe that most teacher education programs serve as "service institutions" whose central focus is upon the delivery of the "requisite technical expertise" to students in order that they might fulfill the pedagogical needs of schools (p. 223). They suggest that this approach leads to schools of education serving largely to reproduce society as it exists and not taking up a more critical stance which might aim to challenge some of society's inequalities (p. 224). Kenneth Zeichner (1993) calls upon teacher education and educators to recognize the ideological nature of teaching to teach:

---

<sup>1</sup> My participation in the study will be fully explored later in this chapter.

Regardless of our political commitments, we must recognize the reality that neither teaching nor teacher education can be neutral. We need to act with greater clarity about whose interests we are furthering in our work because acknowledged or not, the choices we make every day as teachers and teacher educators reveal our moral commitments with regard to social continuity and change. (p. 2)

If we begin to recognize whose interests are being served in teacher education, we can also begin to recognize whose interests are not being served. Therefore, it was important that I attempt to discover which discourses were being silenced or marginalized within teacher education. Fine (1987) explains "that silencing constitutes the process by which contradictory evidence, ideologies, and experiences find themselves buried, camouflaged, and discredited" (p. 157). It was important to watch for the silences in teacher education because they represent discourses that students of teacher education will have little or no access to as they continue to negotiate who they are as a teacher.

Having attempted to recognize the existence of various discourses and their ideological influences, I examined how these discourses played a part in the negotiation of the identities of students of teacher education. Various discourses within teacher education play upon the students of teacher education as they are being acculturated into the practice of teaching. During this time they are negotiating various identities such as "student of teacher education" and "teacher". The discourses that surround these students greatly affect the negotiation of identity they are involved in. In some cases the students of teacher education consciously draw on particular discourses which they feel represent the teacher they are becoming, while in other instances discourses find their way into the vocabulary of students and also possibly into the identity of students. Deborah Britzman (1991) suggests that learning to teach reveals "the startling idea that the

taking up of an identity means suppressing aspects of the self. So at first glance, becoming a teacher may mean becoming someone you are not" (p. 4). I am not suggesting that the discourses of teacher education fully define the student but that they are a significant influence upon the various teaching identities that continually shift and alter as each day passes.<sup>2</sup>

Teaching identity, which is individual and fluid, is directly linked to a person's other identities. These "selves" are not always easily identified or separated and are repeatedly interacting and affecting one another (Lather, 1994; Orner, 1992). Therefore the individual teaching identity is always in a state of social construction, taking its fluid form from cues of the self and society. The discourses of teacher education are but one set of cues. The individual will also be affected by, among other things, popular culture, images of teachers from one's past, and significant others.

Having recognized the ideological nature of discourse and also how discourse affects identity, it is then necessary to do a little sociological math and put the two together. The result of the equation, for me, is that we need to recognize that the ideological and political positions of certain discourses in teacher education will affect the ideological identity of individual students within teacher education.

Discourse can never be 'neutral' or value free; discourse always reflects ideologies, systems of values, beliefs, and social practices (Fairclough, 1989; Foucault, 1972; Gee, 1990). As Paul Gee writes, discourses are identity tool kits replete with socially shared ways of acting, talking, and believing. (Hicks, 1996, p. 53)

My interests, then, are in the various discourses found in and around teacher education. I am committed to a greater understanding of whose interests are

---

<sup>2</sup> The question of agency is an important one and will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

served by various discourses and how these discourses and interests interact. By identifying some of the discourses present in teacher education at UBC, I try to understand how they affect the identities of students of teacher education. I attempt to understand the ways in which discourses become a part of our identity and the ways we use various discourses as we come to try to understand teaching, learning, and being a teacher. I promise no clear, concise answers in this study, but I do offer insights, pertinent questions, and ethnographic data which I hope leads us to a closer understanding of the nature of being taught to teach.

### **Poststructuralist Ethnography and Critical Discourse Analysis**

I have chosen poststructuralist ethnography and critical discourse analysis as the theoretical and methodological frameworks of my research, in part, because of the complementary nature of the two approaches. These two approaches, in concert, provide the best framework for a sustained engagement with the various discourses and identities which circulate through the teacher education program at UBC.

Poststructuralist approaches are particularly relevant to my interests because they emphasize the need for attention to discourse when examining narrative and identity. Deborah Britzman, author of Practice Makes Practice (1991), describes her poststructuralist approach to ethnography as follows:

In poststructuralist versions, subjects may well be the tellers of experience; but every telling is constrained, partial, and determined by the discourses and histories that prefigure, even as they might promise, representation. To fashion narration with the imperatives of poststructuralism means that the researcher must become overconcerned with experience as a discourse and with competing discourses of experience that traverse and structure any narrative. (Britzman, 1995, p. 232)

Using Britzman's conception of poststructuralist ethnography is particularly appropriate to my research given the direct connections she draws between discourse and identity. Here I would like to draw on Popkewitz's (in Britzman, 1991) definition of discourse as: "set[ting] the conditions by which events are interpreted and one's self as an individual is located in a dynamic world" (p. 16). Using this definition we can view discourse as being constitutive of experience and subjectivity. Discourse is in a sense both the bricks and the tools by which we build our world. But what are the building bricks of discourse? A discourse or numerous discourses are continually being sustained and redefined by the infinite and ubiquitous formations of texts in society. "Life in fast capitalist societies is a text-saturated matter" (Luke, 1996, p. 13). Luke defines text generally as "language in use" and more specifically as "any instance of written and spoken language that has coherence and coded meanings" (p. 13). Therefore text could be written words or images; it could also be audio, audio-visual or gestural, or any combination of the above. Discourse is the result of text being socially engaged.

Discourse, then, consists of recurrent statements and wordings across texts (Foucault, 1972). These together mark out identifiable systems of meaning and fields of knowledge and belief (Kress, 1986b) that, in turn, are tied to ways of knowing, believing, and categorizing the world and modes of action (Gee, 1990). (Luke, 1996, p. 15)

The research I have conducted takes as its focal point the student of teacher education. My investigation of discourse in teacher education is, in part, an attempt to understand how various discourses interact with student identities. My understanding of identity or subjectivity is informed by poststructuralism. I need to be vigilant in my recognition that because numerous discourses speak through us,



our identities or subjectivities<sup>3</sup> are not fixed and unitary, but instead we have, as “poststructuralism proposes[,] a subjectivity which is precarious, contradictory and in process, constantly being reconstituted in discourse each time we speak” (Weedon in Orner, 1992, p. 79). This is a position shared by critical discourse analysis because it recognizes the way several discourses can be heard through one person at one time. “In other words, critical discourse analysis tends to begin from a poststructuralist skepticism toward the assumptions that people have singular, essential social identities” (Luke, 1996, p. 14). This understanding of identity allows me to recognize the contradictory experience of being taught to teach. This conceptualization of identity allows me to explore how students of teacher education can embody several educational discourses, often in contradiction with one another, as they actively negotiate their teaching identity. However, the apparent contradiction of discourses may only be contradictions when they are not embodied. In other words, student teachers may appear to employ contradictory discourses, but if questioned they may have very logical reasons for doing so. Perhaps when we see contradictory discourses employed in order to make sense of the various demands of teaching and learning, we will see that we all sometimes use so-called contradictory discourses in complementary ways.

Poststructuralism<sup>4</sup> and critical discourse analysis are also useful approaches for this study because these frameworks pay special attention to

---

<sup>3</sup> Much, but not all, poststructuralist literature uses the term subjectivity instead of identity in order to stress the historically and socially constructed nature of our subjectivities as opposed to a more humanist reading of identity which positions the individual identity as unitary and self prescribed. I will use the term identity because I feel it is clearer to the majority of readers, but I will emphasize a poststructuralist reading of identity. Occasionally the term subjectivity will be used, particularly when my text interacts directly with poststructuralist theory(ists).

<sup>4</sup> I think it is important to recognize that I am drawing on one strand of poststructural thinking. I recognize that within poststructuralism there are several different emphases. The strand of poststructuralism I draw on is heavily influenced by feminist thinking, hence my use of poststructuralism is concerned with power. The poststructuralism I work with is infused with a critical perspective linked to social change.

structures and discourses which oppress and marginalize the less powerful in society (Luke, 1996; Britzman, 1995, 1991; Manicom, 1992). As already stated, I am interested in how dominant discourses in education marginalize other discourses and I hope my work can make the processes of marginalization in teacher education more transparent.

[C]ritical discourse analysis is a political act itself, an intervention in the apparently natural flow of talk and text in institutional life that attempts to "interrupt" everyday common sense (Silverman & Torode, 1980). Such an analysis has the potential to destabilize "authoritative discourses" (Bakhtin, 1986) and foreground relations of inequality, domination, and subordination. (Luke, 1996, p. 12)

Part of my interest in critical discourse analysis is in its potential to create environments conducive to change. If, through critical discourse analysis, I can further a project which aims to understand and make transparent the dominant discourses of teacher education and their modes of dominance, as well as numerous marginalized discourses, we can perhaps expand the spaces in which a multiplicity of identities might thrive. Of course the degree to which individual students of teacher education can become the teacher "they want to be" is debatable (Orner, 1992; Britzman, 1991). It would be naive to suggest that any of us has total control over who we are and the type of teacher we will be. The issue of agency is becoming more and more complex as poststructuralism challenges dominant humanist readings of identity. What follows is a brief but important attempt to understand the complexity of the concept of agency and what it means to my work.

This issue of the degree to which discourses and identities are constructed for and by the student of teacher education is always present in the background of this study. Given the fact that I will be continuously discussing the interactions of

discourse and identity, either directly or indirectly, it seems appropriate to address the concept of agency at some length at this point, thus avoiding repetitive qualifications regarding individual control throughout the paper. The issue of agency is extremely important given the objectives of this research. Part of my research agenda is to make more transparent the discourses and their effects so that students of teacher education can be more active in the negotiation of teaching identity. However, students of teacher education and teachers must not be burdened with the impossible task of controlling educational discourse and practice; nor should the impression be given that they can have complete control over who they are and how they teach. At the same time I would not want to suggest, or have people believe, that they can not affect the discourses around them. This is certain to be a central tension in my research and it is constantly present in the literature on teacher education.

Poststructuralist theorists have suggested we can only draw on already existing discourses when we attempt to represent our thoughts or feelings and as a result we have only those existing discourses to draw upon when negotiating our subjectivities or identities. We must recognize that "agency and voice are the social effects and not the originators of history and of social relations" (Britzman, 1995, p. 235). This poststructural conceptualization is a response to humanist readings of identity and agency (Davies, 1991). Within humanist readings, identity is singular, unified and fixed. Agency, within a humanist reading, is the resulting action of someone who knows who they are and knows what they want. Within a humanist reading we should be able to act on such knowledge, and our success or failure in such action is the result of our own abilities as opposed to numerous social barriers.

Poststructuralist feminists have accused critical pedagogy of approaching

subjectivity and agency from a humanist position (Ellsworth, 1994; Lather, 1992). The humanist position leads us to believing that we can unproblematically establish who the oppressor and who the oppressed are in situations of inequality. Poststructuralists are quick to point out that everyone has the potential to be either, and both: oppressor and oppressed. Furthermore, critical pedagogy has been faulted for using utopian language of empowerment, thus placing an unreasonable burden for structural change on teachers and individuals. Elizabeth Ellsworth (1994) argues that we should place our language of change within specific contexts of oppression or silencing. This forces the complexities of such dichotomies as "oppressor and oppressed" or "voice and silence" to the surface. Such contextualization should lead to a more realistic and less ambitious understanding of individual agency.

As a result of this problematization of critical pedagogy's conception of identity and agency, feminist poststructuralism developed an understanding of a more limited agency. This involves deemphasizing the ability of people to know and control what they do and who they are:

Feminist poststructuralist theories have been particularly helpful ... [t]hey argue that by assuming people to be effects of language, knowledge, power, and history rather than their essential authors, a more provisional, historical, and ethical understanding of agency is possible (Butler, 1990, 1993; De Laurentis, 1987; Fuss, 1989). (Britzman, 1995, p. 235)

While I agree with, and employ, a poststructural conception of agency in my work, I am left wondering what an "ethical understanding of agency" might look like. I want to come to an understanding of agency and subjectivity that recognizes the complexity and contentiousness of being and doing "what you choose". I would like to arrive at an "ethical understanding of agency" which respects historical,

social, and institutional limitations, while leaving myself and others with a desire to act for change. Kelly and Gaskell (1996) provide a brief but useful analysis of agency as restrained yet active. In their book they suggest possibilities for combating dominant discourses:

[M]arginalized groups interested in reframing the dominant discourse may employ at least two strategies. They may use one discourse against another, and they may take advantage of the contradictions within the dominant discourse in an effort to forge a positive identity for themselves. (p. 148)

I would also suggest that every time we speak in a classroom, in an essay, or in the hallway, we are affecting various discourses and furthermore we are affecting our own teaching identities. Although we cannot escape the discourses in and around us, we can nudge and push and shove, and slowly we can, with others, change the nature of a discourse or change the position or status it holds in our society. However, I must recognize my own privileged position as a white, middle-class, able-bodied, male and accept that it must bias my view of agency. This recognition can help to remind me that agency is more mediated for some than for others! I must find a way to act and encourage action within a clear understanding of what I will call a *mediated agency* informed by poststructuralism.

For now, I will attempt to see our identities and actions as open to influence by a mediated agency which involves certain understandings. Discourse is socially constructed and we are a part of that construction, albeit a small part. The more aware we are of the discourses around us, and in us, the more able we are to resist and negotiate those discourses allowing us a role in becoming the teacher we feel we want to be. But we must recognize limitations on our actions. We must attempt change within a world populated by contradictory definitions, ideologies,

histories, and more. Bronwyn Davies' (1991) definition of *agency* comes closest to an understanding I can feel comfortable with and I believe will encourage action while recognizing limitations and complexities:

Agency is never freedom from discursive constitution of self but the capacity to recognize that constitution and to resist, subvert and change the discourses themselves through which one is being constituted. It is the freedom to recognize multiple readings such that no discursive practice, or positioning within it by powerful others, can capture and control one's identity. And agency is never autonomy in the sense of being an individual standing outside social structure and process. (p. 51)

I feel that poststructuralism and discourse analysis provide an appropriate critical framework to explore discourse, identity, and agency within teacher education. It will be necessary for the readers of this text to keep this discussion of agency mentally nearby as they move into the body of this work, because when I refer to the effects of a discourse or an individual's response, it will be done with the implied understanding of agency as conceptualized above.

### **Ethnography / Autoethnography**

It is a given that one should choose the methodology they use according to the objectives they have set for their study (Goetz & Lecompte, 1984, p. 48). And while this is certainly a consideration, one can't help but wonder how it is that many researchers use the same methodology from study to study throughout most of their careers. One possible answer is that our objectives for a study are often (always?) dictated by our own personal biases and interests. Our objectives are related to what it is we want to know and what it is we want to know is related to who we are, what concerns us, and even how we learn.

I am a person who is interested less in definitive answers than possibilities, questions and context. My bias away from positivism and towards interpretivism and poststructuralism suggests a methodology that does not seek so much to conclude as it does to open up. In my undergraduate years I was an English major. I found I learned best from imagining several possibilities and then debating their merits, never really intent on reaching a definitive conclusion. I learn more from engaging in several possibilities than in knowing one answer. I am not very big on decontextualized "facts". I don't usually trust them, and when I do I often find them uninteresting.

It is no surprise, then, that I find myself now in the field of sociology of education and using methodologies such as ethnography and autoethnography. Simply put my objective in relation to teacher education is to make myself and my reader think deeply about what it means to them to become a teacher, not to discover what it means to become a teacher. "The range, richness, and complexity of educational phenomenon occurring within classrooms are wider than can be measured. Some phenomenon can only be rendered" (Eisner in Ayers, 1980, p. 15). I could have used structured entrance and exit questionnaires of a Likert style to establish that students of teacher education think of themselves more as teachers at the end of the year than at the beginning. I could have even established that they lost faith in their ability to affect their students by the end of the year. Perhaps I could have "PROVEN" that teacher education students lost interest in social change by year's end. But much of this would come as little surprise, and I am not sure it would have the power to make you the reader and me the writer reflect and think about our teaching identities

Ethnography is an exceptional vehicle with which to explore social process and identity formation (Marcus, 1998). It offers an individual a prolonged

engagement with a specific social setting in which, with time and careful observation, identities and discourses may reveal themselves in complex, complicated, and contradictory ways. It is the prolonged engagement which helps to move the researcher beyond simple answers into the realm of complex questions (Wolcott, 1985). It is not surprising that numerous educational researchers are turning to ethnography as a tool for discovery (Segal, 1999; Toohey, 1995; Mohabir, 1993; Britzman, 1991).

I began with the poststructuralist assumption that I would discover numerous ways of becoming a teacher. Furthermore, certain common discourses would emerge that influence those various stories of becoming a teacher. It was the existence of these common discourses that caused me to combine elements of what is becoming known as autoethnography into my methodology. I wanted to bring the experiencing of these discourses to life in a way that would allow the readers of this text to identify with some central experiences (if they have been through teacher education or worked within the field) of being taught to teach. I felt that I could only produce that response in the reader if I felt that response myself. I wanted to be able to tell my own stories of being taught to teach or to re-tell the stories of my participants in ways that evoked the powerfulness of the experience. "In fact I think the word evoke is central to the use and strength of story. I am not sure that any other way of representation can have the evocative power of story" (Carter, 1993, p. 6). I want the reader of this text to feel parts of this text as well as understand them. I, therefore, draw heavily from the methods of ethnography and autoethnography in order to evoke the emotions and detail that I want my reader to access.

At one level, story is a mode of knowing that captures in a special fashion the richness and the nuances of meaning in human affairs.



We come to understand sorrow or love or joy or indecision in particularly rich ways through the characters and incidents we become familiar with in novels or plays. This richness and nuance cannot be expressed in definitions, statements of fact, or abstract propositions. It can only be demonstrated or evoked through story. (Carter, 1993, p. 6)

Autoethnography has come to mean different things to different people.<sup>5</sup> Some see autoethnography as a study of one's own culture, others see it as studying oneself within a specific social setting (Reed-Danahay, 1997). In the case of this work it will refer to (a) living within the social context one is studying<sup>6</sup> and (b) studying oneself while doing so. This study is not "purely" or only an autoethnography; rather I employed autoethnographic methods to enrich my qualitative approach. I say it is not solely autoethnographic in nature because while I studied myself, I also studied others. My own experiences were not meant to be the sole source of data but instead they were meant to be triangulated with the experiences of others so that I could provide dissonance or assonance. I also employed autoethnographic approaches in order to better feel the overall experience of being taught to teach concurrently with my fellow participants.

Another benefit of autoethnography or self-study is the personal and professional growth one undergoes as a result of the process. The learning we participate in as researchers is, I believe, intensified as a result of the autoethnographic process. I doubt I could have gained the depth of understanding of the teacher education process had I not experienced it first-hand--as a student. However, the depth of understanding didn't simply come from experiencing it; it came from systematically studying my experiences. "In short, the value of self-study as a form of professional development is unquestionable" (Cole, 1996, p. 20).

<sup>5</sup> For a brief history of the term and the method; see *Auto/Ethnography* edited by Deborah Reed-Danahay, 1997. For a brief review of autoethnography in education see Burdell & Swadener, 1999.

<sup>6</sup> Not simply living on the sidelines as many traditional anthropologists and ethnographers have done, but living fully in the setting as an active participant.

I applied to the teacher education program as any other student would. I took the twelve-month secondary program for English teachers, as much as possible, in a manner as any other applicant would.<sup>7</sup> My application was accepted conditional upon completion of a course in the area of English language study. This course proved to be a useful pilot study in which I could attempt access to the field, inform students about my research, and observe myself and others' reactions to my study. Although this course represented an opportunity to pilot my study it remains part of the study itself due to the fact that completing a required course prior to beginning the program is a common experience for many of the students in teacher education. I then went on to complete all of the required assignments, courses, and practica. I graduated with a B.Ed. and became qualified to teach secondary English in the province of British Columbia in 1999.<sup>8</sup>

In short, I have employed autoethnographic approaches to this study but it is not autoethnography--period. As opposed to thinking of this being a study about myself, I prefer to think about it as a study about several research participants of which I am one.

One final note on autoethnography, which I feel is of relevance, involves the writing of the text. I conducted research throughout the program and compiled copious amounts of fieldnotes and journal entries, but I did not write anything in a formal manner during the year; I simply did not have the time. In fact, I did not begin to write up my findings for almost one year after completion of the program. I attempted several times but could not find a way into the material. I finally left the material altogether for over three months and returned to it with fresh perspectives and most importantly, distance. Looking back, I believe that I had gotten so immersed in teacher education, so far "inside" the environment, that I needed

---

<sup>7</sup> The level to which I achieved this is discussed in the sections Reactivities and Data Sources.

<sup>8</sup> Graduation was in 1999--the program was from 1997-1998.

almost as much time to get back out. By the end of the program, I was very negative and discouraged. It appears that I needed time and distance so that I could become somewhat less passionate and begin to conceptualize what I had experienced. For anyone engaged in autoethnographic approaches to research, this phenomenon is worth considering. It may be possible that the longer and more intense one's autoethnographic experience, the longer one needs to "decompress".

### **Research Objectives**

Several related research objectives frame this study. My first and foremost objective was to make visible some dominant or important discourses which exist in and around teacher education. I wanted to become more familiar with some of these discourses myself, and I wanted the academic community as well as students of teacher education (past, present and future) to become more familiar with the numerous discourses and their ideological connections. My desire to do so is, in part, related to my hope that through a greater understanding of various educational discourses we will be more able to negotiate our identities in a way which is empowering for us and the people we teach. "[O]ne of the main purposes of critical language studies is to denaturalize everyday language, that is, to make sensible and available for analysis everyday patterns of talk and writing and symbolic exchange that are often invisible to participants" (Luke, 1996, p. 12).

A second objective of this research was to come to a greater understanding of how various discourses interact and affect the identities of students of teacher education. When I refer to their identity, I mean this as individual identity, student teacher identity, and teacher identity. I feel such an increased understanding will further enable people to negotiate discourse and identity. I also believe this

second objective has the potential to offer further insights and direction to the theoretical work being done on educational discourses and teaching identities.

Finally, one of my central objectives was to provide a (critical) description of the process of being taught to teach. I tried to provide a "thick description" of my experiences and the experiences of some of those around me as a glimpse of how the process of being taught to teach affects us, affects our identities, in very personal and real ways. I hope to provide several stories of what it is like to be taught to teach; several stories of what it is like to struggle towards becoming a teacher. While doing so, it will be important to remember that these stories have many tellings. "The fact is that the same sequence of days can arrange themselves into a number of different stories" (Smiley, 1991, p. 155).

### **Data Sources**

The following is a brief outline of how I gathered the data which allowed me to explore discourses and identities in teacher education at UBC. As I stated earlier the study focused on others as well as myself. I have always preferred to triangulate research data, less so for the traditional reason of increasing validity, more so because I think a greater number of perspectives are represented, and a fuller more complex story emerges. I therefore included self-study, participant observations, focus group interviews, individual student interviews, and faculty interviews. The following sections expand upon those five areas.

#### **A) Self-Study and Participant Observation**

At the beginning of September, 1997 I began the twelve-month secondary English program in the UBC teacher education program. Unlike all other examinations of student experiences of being taught to teach that I am aware of,

this study is set apart by the fact that the researcher was a student of teacher education.<sup>9</sup> By observing my own daily experiences of negotiating the discourses of teacher education, I was able to develop a representation that is highly experiential in nature. Using myself as a case study, I was able to explore the poststructuralist assumptions of identity as “multiple and contradictory”:

According to this view, students' identities are not rational and unitary; they are seen to be shifting and fragmented, multiple and contradictory, displaced and positioned as students are across the various discourses which historically and currently constitute their lives in and out of school. (Kenway & Modra, 1993, p. 146)

I attempted to explore myself through poststructuralism and poststructuralism through myself. Poststructuralism allowed me to abandon the need to present myself as having a coherent, non-contradictory teacher identity. Poststructuralism gave me the theoretical basis for exploring what could be called “teaching tensions”. A self-study such as this one allowed me to investigate the contradictions and tensions within myself as I was being taught to teach. I did this using a daily field journal with a descriptive section and an analytical section. The analytical section allowed me to speak directly to the discourses and the interaction of discourses. The journal was my major tool for recording and exploring my experiences. I kept a handwritten journal during classes, which I used to prompt my electronic notes in the evening.

The teacher education program constituted the arena of my research, but within that arena there were more specific data locales. I made the classroom interaction my central focus where I attempted to observe various educational

---

<sup>9</sup> It is hard to be certain of the existence of other studies in this age of endless journals and unpublished papers, but I have done a thorough literature search and spoken with numerous education professors at numerous institutions, and no one is aware of such an “insider study”, in which the researcher is also a full time student in an education program.

discourses operating through myself, the members of the focus group, and other students and instructors. However, observations took place in both formal and informal settings. Some very interesting and different types of talk were found in cafeterias and hallways. Not only were informal settings an important data locale, but it was interesting to observe the nature of informal and formal educational discourses. We altered our talk in and out of the classroom as discursive norms changed.

### **B) Individual Interviews/Focus Groups with Fellow Student Teachers**

I selected the focus group members in the first month of the program, after I had some time to settle in and make some observations. After observing potential members I approached six people, all of whom agreed to participate. They were chosen based upon my desire to achieve a mix of gender, age, ideologies, ethnicity and more. The goal was not to be representative of diversity but to represent a diversity of experiences. Therefore, I deemed "purposive sampling" or "criterion-based sampling" to be the most appropriate and valuable approach. I felt I was the best person to choose the six people in question because it required personal contact to establish such diversity, particularly ideological diversity. As for researcher "bias," it has been widely recognized that everyone has a position (Fine,1994; Harding,1993). If someone else were to have chosen the six participants it would have been difficult to establish or decipher their bias, whereas by making the choice myself I was able to explore my reasons for choosing as I did, as well as any potential personal bias involved in the choice (Peshkin,1991). Furthermore, as the author of the text, readers will be able to become familiar with myself and my biases through reading the text and then apply such discoveries back on my purposive sample, a luxury they would not have with choices made by

a third party.

I explained my research to the six people and what their participation in the study would require (time demands). I also explained that they would remain completely anonymous during the research and in the final text. Finally, I encouraged them to think about my request and to either write to me or see me at their convenience with an answer regarding participation. I did not want them to answer on the spot because the demands of participation during a long, hard program might sink in over time and because I worried there might be pressure to answer in the affirmative in a face-to-face situation; I wanted them to feel as comfortable as possible saying no. However, everyone whom I approached agreed to participate in my research and we scheduled our first focus group meeting.

I conducted individual interviews and focus group meetings with the same six individuals throughout the year.<sup>10</sup> I explained to all participants, early in the year, that it was not clear at that time how their words and stories would end up being used in the finished text. I was still debating using three or four or five case studies or perhaps even experimenting with composite sketches. In the end I chose to include four case studies and to highlight those same four throughout the text. The data from the other two individuals greatly informed the study and are included along with words of other less formal student contributions, under either pseudonyms or simply as an unnamed student. The two participants who were not included as case studies in the following chapter were eliminated for two simple reasons. One participant went overseas as soon as the program ended, and although we tried, we were unable to complete the final interview. Unfortunately, one of the interview tapes of another participant was faulty and the data could not

---

<sup>10</sup> In fact, my first interviews were in 1997 and continued throughout 1998. The final round of interviews took place after the program was over and students had begun substitute teaching or working, in 1999.

be retrieved. Although their experiences are not part of the formal set of four, I would like to thank them sincerely for participating and sharing so willingly. Their input is still a significant part of this work, albeit less visible.

I felt that individual interviews were important to conduct in addition to the group meetings because it allowed for a different kind of interaction and dialogue and therefore a different kind of data. I believe these individual interviews allowed both myself and the participants to follow up particular themes and discourses which the group did not choose to engage with. Furthermore, I anticipated that some (all?) participants may have felt more free to express certain opinions or positions in a one-on-one setting. The individual interviews were also essential because they allowed for a focus on discourse. I was able to record individuals talking about particular discourses within education and their own teaching identity. A component of this research is discourse analysis and these interviews and the resulting text allowed for a closer reading of discourse than my observations in class situations did, due to the fact that I did not record classroom discussions as I felt it would be too intrusive and provide for more data than I could possibly use or manage. However, the classroom observations and focus group discussions were also essential because I am interested in the social negotiation of discourses and teaching identities.

Another important methodological contribution the case studies made was that of de-centering my experiences. It is my hope that the inclusion of four other voices will help to remind the reader that my experiences are those of only one person. This is necessary in order to de-author-ize myself as the researcher and writer of this work. I do not pretend that I am not the author and that I do not have authorial responsibilities, but I do feel that it is my responsibility to move my research and text away from the positivistic tradition in which research is presented



as not only the “right” story but the only story. Steven Tyler (1986) suggests that one way to achieve such aims is through what he calls “post-modern ethnography”:

We better understand the ethnographic context as one of cooperative story making that, in one of its ideal forms, would result in a polyphonic text, none of whose participants would have the final word in the form of a framing story or encompassing synthesis--a discourse on the discourse. (p. 126)

The concept of polyvocality has been usefully problematized by several people (Sanjek, 1990; Tobin & Davidson, 1990) as has the concept of voice (Ellsworth, 1994; Orner, 1992), but I believe the inclusion of numerous voices in research of this nature remains a useful enterprise. I believe that Tyler’s suggestion of no final “discourse on the discourse” is unrealistic and risks avoiding authorial responsibility. However, I do see the overall thrust of his statement and article as being very useful; that of “cooperative story making”.<sup>11</sup>

I am not only including other voices simply to displace the authority of my own experiences. They also allowed me to explore areas of convergence. The additional voices, hopefully, offer significant insights both supportive and contradictory to the various educational discourses I have personally explored through my own experiences.

### **C) The Faculty and Administrative Perspectives: Semi-Structured Interviews**

This study includes interviews with three faculty members who taught courses in the secondary teacher education program. Furthermore, it includes interviews with one faculty member who is considered a sessional. A sessional is someone who teaches in the program by contract and may or may not have a

<sup>11</sup> Polyvocality as cooperative storymaking can be seen in one of its best forms in Julie Cruikshank’s ethnography, Life Lived Like a Story (1990) written with and about three First Nation’s women living in the Yukon.

teaching experience or b) a Ph.D., but who generally has one or the other. It is important to include a representative of this group as perhaps as much as 75% of the program is delivered by sessionals (Charles Ungerleider<sup>12</sup>, personal communication, 08/06/98). I also interviewed key faculty of education administrators, as well as my sponsor teachers, and faculty advisor. I believe that the inclusion of all major stakeholders or representatives of those stakeholder groups is necessary to create a rich, highly contextualized representation of the process of being taught to teach and the social and educational contexts that surround it. Past experience has shown me that very important and useful ideas can emerge from various stakeholder groups. Although not every stakeholder can be included in a study of this nature, I felt it was essential to attempt to bring the various representative groups into the dialogue. However, let me be clear that one of the main goals of this study was to put forward the students' experiences of being taught to teach. Therefore, the extent to which other perspectives are included is limited and presented largely to shed greater amounts of light onto the students' experiences.

### **A Note on Subjectivity**

In the past several years there has been increasing recognition that all research is subjective and that complete objectivity is an impossible goal (Fine, 1994; Code, 1991; Lather, 1991). This recognition has led to a great deal of discussion about what should be done with such an understanding. James Clifford (1986) views ethnography as fiction, in the sense of "something made or fashioned": a "partial truth" (p. 6). This line of thought can end up looking a lot like relativism. However, for many including Clifford, this means recognizing

---

<sup>12</sup> Charles Ungerleider gave permission for his actual name to be used throughout the text. My name and his are the only two which have not been changed.

subjectivity while not succumbing to relativism. For some this has meant recognizing the essential subjectivity of all research endeavors and making that subjectivity transparent, while others feel we must also strive to minimize subjectivity or at least minimize the effects of subjectivity (Lather, 1991; Peshkin, 1991). At this point, I would like to address the issue of subjectivity in my own research, drawing on some of the current work done on the topic to assist my exploration.

Studying myself, that is my own experiences, puts me in a curious position with regards to subjectivity. Most of the recent work around subjectivity explores how, no matter what effort we make, our positions or biases enter the research process and as a result objectivity is at best a "utopian dream" (Tyler, 1986). In this study I consciously inserted myself into the research; in fact, I made myself both the researcher and the researched. So, would I really want to minimize my subjectivity? No. In fact I wanted to bring my passions, ideologies, and educational beliefs into my research and make them the site of my investigation. And, yes, I wanted them to affect people. I want people to engage with my positions. But that does not mean I want my positions to be uncritically accepted, by myself or others. I critically engaged with my subjectivity as both researcher and researched.<sup>13</sup> In fact, part of the point of this research was for me to critically examine how my beliefs and identity have been socially constructed. In essence, then, I present myself as a fully ideological, biased, and multiply-positioned person in order to deconstruct my subjectivity and discover how it has been discursively created. My subjectivity must be fully presented because it is, in part, my subjectivity I am studying.

Although Sandra Harding (1993) created her concept of "strong objectivity" with those who study others in mind, it speaks in interesting ways to what I am

---

<sup>13</sup> In the following section I engage with my positions as researcher and researched as I refer to here.

attempting:

Strong Objectivity requires that the subject of knowledge be placed on the same critical, causal plane as the objects of knowledge. Thus, strong objectivity requires what we can think of as “strong reflexivity.” (p. 69)

Harding is calling for researchers to investigate their positions as closely as those of the people they study. She feels that “objectivity” can be best pursued through what she calls “strong reflexivity”. In that sense I am taking her project to its fullest potential by making myself both the subject and the object of study. However, by doing so I do not guarantee strong reflexivity. Simply by making myself the object and subject of knowledge does not solve the subjectivity dilemma. I must continually “investigate the relation between subject and object rather than deny the existence of, or seek unilateral control over, this relation” (Harding, 1993, p. 152).

Furthermore, I must remember that this research not only involves me but many other people as well, and it is about the discourses that surround us. I tried to research with caution as I observed others through my positions. I thought about my educational self and how it affected how I saw others. As poststructuralism informs us, my position or subjectivity is multiple and changing and, therefore, requires careful reading. Alan Peshkin (1991) suggests trying to establish the various I's (eye's) from which we see, and how they affect what and how we see.<sup>14</sup> By “I's” Peshkin is referring to biases; however I have heard it suggested that a better term to use is “position”. Bias has a negative connotation and suggests a distortion from the “truth,” while position suggests the place one stands, and everyone stands somewhere. In a similar vein Michelle Fine (1994) suggests a

---

<sup>14</sup> Peshkin suggests that as well as establishing our positions (biases) and their possible effects, we should attempt to “tame” those effects. This position leads him back into striving for objectivity and detachment, and I believe this can serve to further distort or conceal our positions.

method she calls “working the hyphens” between ourselves, our research, and our surroundings: “I mean to suggest that researchers probe how we are in relation with the contexts and with our informants, understanding that we are multiple in those relations” (Fine, 1994, p. 72). To her suggestion I would add that we include hyphens between theory and methodology and the researcher and the researched.

There is no clear answer to, or methods, for dealing with our subjectivity, but there are many useful questions we can continue to ask ourselves throughout the research process and we can make the questions and responses a part of our text in an effort to make our positions as transparent as possible to those who read our texts.

### **My Subjectivities / Positions**

I think it is important at this point to provide a brief description of who I am. Who I am (my positions, my I’s) invariably affected the research I conducted and the text I produced. Therefore, it is important for my audience to have a sense of who I am and where I have been. Of course, like everything, this is a representation. I am deciding to include very specific and finite information. Obviously, I have chosen to leave a great deal out. Self-portraits tend to be different than portraits, because they are personal and the “artist” has to view the subject (him/herself) through a mirror. But, of course, both have a bias.

My father was born in Ontario and his parents were British and Irish; both were Catholic. My mother was born in Holland and moved here after the Second World War; her parents’ religion is Dutch Christian Reformed. Both of my parents are white. My father had his own small construction company and is a career politician. My mother has worked all her life, part-time, as a nurse’s aid at a seniors home. She has also raised my three older sisters and myself, an arduous job to be

sure! Our economic status remains ambiguous. We have always lived beyond our means and have therefore lived a comfortable lifestyle. However, my parents only bought their own home five years ago. Throughout my entire childhood we rented a house. But it was a large, beautiful house which was situated on ten acres of land. We often felt and were seen as "well off" but never were.

I attended grades one through six at a private Dutch Christian Reformed school. I have unpleasant memories of the school. It was highly regimented and dogmatic. I was one of a small number of students whose parents were not both Dutch by birth, and that mattered. I found the school's tight structure and traditional approaches to schooling difficult to learn or live in. I was considered a "hyperactive" student, and I found myself repeatedly in trouble. At least two, if not three, of my six years in that school were spent in total or partial isolation from the rest of the students. My desk was moved into the hall, behind a book case, or into the principal's office for months at a time. I was also suspended on numerous occasions. To be fair, my behaviour (and often academic) difficulties lasted through high school, but they were more pronounced at the small Christian school. In grade six, the Christian school suggested to my parents that I might be happier somewhere else. My parents asked me how I felt; I was eager to move on.

My early schooling and family life is important to my research perspectives. I feel that in my home (having three older sisters) and in school, I was constantly being directed in much of what I did. I was considered a somewhat hyper child, and the lack of personal control was very frustrating and remains an issue for me to this day. Where my research examines the amount of control student teachers have over what and how they learn, one can be sure that the above "educational I" will have influenced how I saw and what I said.

After high school I attended Trent University for my undergraduate and

Master's degrees.<sup>15</sup> Trent is a small liberal arts university and was clearly to the ideological left amongst other Canadian universities. While at Trent I did a minor in Native Studies and my Master's degree looked at Non-Native teachers working in Native communities (Taylor, 1995a, 1995b). Between my undergraduate years and my Master's I spent four years teaching in two First Nations<sup>16</sup> communities. This work with First Nations people is, in part, responsible for my educational concern around issues of social justice and educational equity. Again, these experiences will certainly be an important personal position for both readers and myself to keep in mind.

I feel it is important to mention briefly a few more personal details which may be important to how my research was conducted and how it may be perceived. I had never attended a teacher education program, although I taught secondary English for four years. Many First Nations communities have local control of education and have their own set of criteria for hiring, although teachers not sanctioned by the province are the exception not the norm. Furthermore, I taught EDST (Educational Studies) 314 the year before this study took place. This course is a required course for all students of teacher education at UBC and focuses on issues concerning social justice such as gender equity, anti-racism, and First Nations education. I became a student in this course as a part of my research, and it is important that people know I taught it and have a personal commitment to issues concerning social justice in education. Having taught the course certainly affected how I saw and what I saw while in that class.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> I spent my third undergraduate year at the University of Toronto but returned to Trent for my final year.

<sup>16</sup> The term Native is most often used in central and eastern Canada while First Nations is more common in British Columbia. However, both terms and others are used interchangeably across Canada and in the academic literature. Other often used terms include Indian, Aboriginal people, and Indigenous people. It is important to remember that these terms fail to recognize tribal affiliation such as Ojibwa or Cree.

<sup>17</sup> I will reflect further on this in Chapter Four, Student Teacher as Agent For Change.

This is obviously a very limited glimpse of myself and my life, but I believe it begins to reveal my positions. I only suggest a few ways my positions may affect my work. I cannot know all of the potential effects, but both the reader and myself can speculate and watch for the influences of my positions in my work using this brief personal introduction.

### **Reactivities: A Myriad of Responses**

A major concern expressed by numerous individuals familiar with my research was how faculty and students would react to my presence in the teacher education program and how that might affect my research. Of course, how one conducts themselves during the research process has much to do with how others react.

I decided, after much deliberation, that I would have two general guiding principles as to how I would conduct myself. The first general principle was in relation to my role as researcher. As a researcher I would strive for the highest levels of transparency possible, a method which might be described as hyper-transparency. Transparency has developed a common meaning in the social science research lexicon as striving to make sure everyone involved, directly or indirectly, in the research process knows what you are doing. More and more academics and university ethics committees are insisting on full disclosure in the research process.<sup>18</sup> While some might think that my findings would be more “valid” if I had remained completely anonymous, this approach is not an option even if it were desired. The days of placing the value of knowledge ahead of the rights of those involved in research are slowly fading.

So, what does hyper-transparency look like? I could have given a short two-

---

<sup>18</sup> However, it is important to note that full disclosure has been interpreted in various ways, some of which have little resemblance to others.



minute speech at the orientation assembly at the beginning of the year and received research consent from the dean. This probably would have satisfied the ethics committee and lived up to the definition of full disclosure for many. However, with my goal of hyper-transparency in mind, I began the teacher education program by approaching every instructor who would teach me and explaining in detail what my research was and how I intended to participate in their classroom. I offered every faculty member a copy of my research proposal, and two took me up on the offer. I received no comments or concerns from them. Furthermore, on the first or second meeting of each course I was in, I offered a brief but clear explanation of my research to the entire class, and I invited anyone with further questions or concerns to express them or to speak with me in person or with the instructor.<sup>19</sup> I explained clearly to all students and faculty members that they did not have to participate if they did not wish to do so.<sup>20</sup>

I considered this type of disclosure appropriate and necessary for any social science research project--but I was aiming for hyper-transparency. Therefore, I often spoke freely about having to go home and write notes about the day's events, and if I were leaving a study group or social setting to go and conduct an interview, I would say so. I felt that the true spirit of transparency meant being open and forthright about the research involved. Disclosure isn't a requirement you grudgingly perform at the beginning of a project and hope everyone will forget. It is a methodological concept whose end goal is placing the rights of the research participants above the needs of the researcher. However, I tried not to disclose in a manner that was formal or crafted, instead I tried to speak about my research

---

<sup>19</sup> I gave "my speech" at the beginning of every course which meant that some students heard it two and three times. In fact at the beginning of one course I had a student interrupt and offer to do the speech for me!

<sup>20</sup> In fact, one faculty member delayed consent numerous times, asking for meetings and materials, finally it became clear that this faculty member was intent on not giving consent while not refusing to either. It would be an understatement to say that the instructor had good reason to do so; the events of that class would be a dissertation on their own.

socially, as others would speak of a job or a family--that is to say matter of factly and without fanfare.

Finally, in a further effort towards transparency, I made reasonable attempts to contact my key research participants<sup>21</sup> after I had written the text so they could comment on my representations of their experiences. The participants I was able to reach offered only minor suggestions for clarity sake. In general they found what I had written to be fair and accurate. The only consistent response was one of general discomfort with hearing one's own words repeated and represented.

Besides hyper-transparency, the second general principle guiding my study was in relation to my role as a participant in the teacher education program. I did not have as strong a conviction with regards to this role and therefore I solicited advice from my committee and colleagues on different approaches to take and the possible ramifications of the approaches. Some felt I should say as little as possible and sit in the back of the classrooms when possible. Others felt I should participate but in a guarded manner, trying not to influence others ideas or opinions. Throughout the pilot study I attempted various approaches and settled on full and active participation for several reasons. Probably the most influential reason for choosing full participation was that I was uncertain I was capable of anything else! I am an outspoken and active learner and felt sure to fail at attempts to fade into the background. Equally important was my conviction that I could have an authentic student experience in the faculty of education despite my research agenda. In order to do so, I felt that I needed to conduct myself as much as I would were I not conducting research. To sit quietly in a corner observing and listening would be as far from my usual demeanor as could be possible.

---

<sup>21</sup> I did not attempt to receive feedback from anyone but the four key informants found in the following chapter. The involvement of others was appreciated but was limited in comparison to the key informants. Furthermore the number of secondary informants made the feedback process prohibitive.

I would like to point out that I did not make a claim for a *typical* student experience but an *authentic* one. I had several faculty members and students dismiss my research efforts by saying that I could never have a typical student experience because of the research I was doing or because I had teaching experience (unlicensed) or because I was a Ph.D. student. I believe it is important to distinguish between a typical and an authentic student experience for methodological as well as theoretical purposes. Many faculty members and students believe that there is a typical student experience to be had. For this to be true there must also be a typical student. But this simply is not the case. While in the teacher education program, I met prospective teachers who were: grandparents, bankers, lacking a B.A., holding a Ph.D., twenty-one, sixty, single mothers, First Nations, poor, children of former prime ministers, gay, handicapped, racist, activists, Christians, Muslims, and more. Most students had worked full-time in another field for more than a year, and many had advanced degrees. A few were even conducting informal research of their own. I was not a typical teacher education student because there is no such thing as a typical teacher education student, and therefore no such thing as a typical teacher education student experience.

However, all of these students were authentic, as was I. I had good days and bad days. I had good profs and bad profs. I screamed and I laughed and I learned. I worried about the practicum and I argued with profs over grades. I did every assignment, and I most certainly wanted my certification. My first and foremost preoccupation for that entire year was the teacher education program and its various demands. I socialized with other teacher education students, and I joined study groups and sports teams. While all of this contributed to my authenticity, what made me authentic was that I did all of these things because I

wanted to and had to, not because I was trying to be a student, or because I was trying to fit in. The people I studied with and grew to be good friends with knew this to be true; they would not have accepted anything else.

The question which remains is how did these guiding principles affect my interactions with others? How did others react to me? The answer to this question lies in this section's title: reactivities--plural. Too often when discussions of reactivity are undertaken, they tend to homogenize the participants into one cohesive group. The resulting discussions go something like this: "If you announce your project in every class, no one will talk to you." This tendency to see "them" as a coherently behaving and reacting group obviously simplifies the research dynamic and leads to oversimplified claims. The truth is that the reactions I encountered were virtually as numerous as the people I encountered. Obviously I cannot detail them all, but perhaps a glimpse of a few of the reactions I encountered may be instructive.

To begin with, "the research" was always there, that is to say it was virtually never forgotten. We were all, almost always, aware of that fact. I had been told by other researchers that after awhile research participants basically forget what it is you are doing. I found this simply was not the case. Perhaps it was due to the hyper-transparency I strove for, but I do not believe so. In fact I would argue the opposite. I think that instead of wondering what that quiet guy in the back corner was doing or thinking, other students were able to lessen their anxiety knowing full well what I was doing and even what I was thinking. Furthermore, it is easier to let yourself go and expound freely and forcefully when the researcher is right there with you, passionately sharing his thoughts and values. I think myself being a researcher was always a factor because people just don't forget that kind of thing. I recall one moment where I was not giving much thought to myself as a researcher, I

was fully a student at this particular time; nor did it seem that anyone else was particularly aware or interested in my role as researcher. We were busy vociferously complaining to a professor about one of the injustices of the teacher education program as it loosely related to the topic at hand. I was sitting in the back row of the class (as I have throughout my educational career) when the person holding the floor (in the second row) finished his somewhat aggressive point and turned around and said, "Write that in your paper." My role was always just a comment away!

This response leads to one of the categories of reactivities I found somewhat disturbing, which is that of "complaints department" or "general avenger of all things wrong with the program." Somehow many students had simplified my research interests down to itemizing the problems in the program, which I emphatically pointed out not to be the case. On several occasions I had students whom I did not share a class with (let alone know their name, or socialize with) come up and ask to speak with me, and then go on to detail a complaint or an analysis of what they saw as a major problem in the program. This reaction to my research gave me some cause for concern because I was worried that faculty members might get the same impression: that I was simply critiquing them and their program. In fact this response did occur as I will discuss shortly. However, after trying to suppress the impression that my goal was to itemize the faults of the program and after speaking with other ethnographers, I came to the conclusion that it is somehow a response that the researcher often evokes. I continued to make it clear in my speeches that it was identity negotiation that interested me, but I accepted the response as somewhat inevitable.

Another response I encountered was from several faculty members involved a nervous fear about how they might be portrayed. One faculty member came up to

me outside of class and after asking a few perfunctory questions about my research, said in all seriousness, "Be sure to say nice things about me." As stated above, unfortunately, some faculty developed the idea that I was there to critique their performance. I assured them when we met that that was not the case. I explained that I would only depict them to the extent that they were involved in a scenario which spoke directly to one of my major themes about discourse and identity. As practicing researchers they know that their anonymity will be protected, but perhaps they worried that they would recognize themselves in my words even if others didn't. I would suggest, however, that the presence of a researcher simply causes us to be a little more self-analytical, much like the presence of a guidance counselor in a secondary classroom might, even if she were there only to work with a student. We begin to watch ourselves as we suppose others might watch us. We become more self-conscious, because the presence of someone with some expertise in our area causes us to feel that they might be thinking that we lack some pedagogical insight or skill.<sup>22</sup> One instructor whom I had in the second term broke from her regular teaching discourse to explain to me why she was doing what she was doing. On several other occasions during class she explained her teaching rationale to me, prompting several students to comment to me in private about it. She was clearly very anxious about my presence in the room, and I was unsuccessful in relieving the tension.

The faculty reactions to my presence were as varied as those of my fellow students. The faculty member described above stood in marked contrast to another whose response to my presence was so neutral that on more than one occasion, I had to ask myself if I had indeed informed him of my study. Still another appeared to move between desire to impress me and tactics to intimidate me. It appeared

---

<sup>22</sup> Oddly enough this response is rarely evoked by students, who in my opinion often prove to have insightful critiques of their teachers.

that he was trying to use his power over me as a tool (both carrot and stick) in order to influence how I viewed him and eventually how I would write about him. There was no fixed faculty response nor was there, for the most part, a consistent response from any one faculty member.

The pertinent question that arises from the documentation of these varying responses is, what effect did they have upon the study itself? Were people so cognizant of my presence that they behaved in a manner significantly different from what they would otherwise have done? Was I witnessing a different teacher education program than I would if I were not conducting research? Obviously, the answer is yes. I myself experienced the program, partially, through the eyes of someone who had some fairly specific questions they were trying to address. The students and faculty, as I have pointed out, always had in the back of their minds that this is someone who has those questions and plans to address them. Having said this I would claim, and this is important, that I still had an authentic student experience and that the conversations I had and the experiences I had boiled down to something which would very much resemble what I would have had, had I not been doing research at all. This is one of the strengths of ethnography. I was amongst the students and faculty, and immersed in a demanding program for twelve months. The faculty and students always knew what I was and what I was doing but after a certain time they stopped caring and stopped monitoring themselves (as did I), and if they became concerned again, their concern was not constant; it would wax and wane. I was not forgotten. It was just that in the end I was not important enough for the vast majority of people to worry about.

In the midst of all the questions I asked and interviews I conducted, *I was a teacher education student !* Yes, I was more than just a student, but so were others. I was not a "typical" teacher education student because a typical teacher

education student isn't a graduate of Julliard, nor do they live on a boat, nor are they former movie directors. Everyone knew I was conducting research, and everyone knew I wrote things down, but in the end, for almost everyone, it was not important enough to alter their behaviour in any significant way. In fact it wasn't important enough for me to alter my behaviour in any significant way.

### **Studying Up, Studying Down: Resistance and Desire**

I think it is safe to say that my proposed research program was met with a little more interest and conversation than the average graduate thesis. From the minute I thought of the possibility of doing an "insider's study" of teacher education, I was met with extremely positive and negative responses, both of which were undoubtedly exaggerated. Some felt that this could be a seminal study and change the face of teacher education in Canada. Others felt it would never get done, or shouldn't be allowed to be done. How these ideas manifested themselves proved, from a methodological point of view, to be almost as interesting as the research itself.

Much has been written about studying down the hierarchies of social power and status (Fine, 1994; hooks, 1988; Tyler, 1986), but little attention has been given to studying up. We have been, appropriately, warned that when studying down we must give careful consideration to the power dynamics and how that might affect the research, the researcher, and the researched, with particular attention to the researched. Feminist and critical pedagogues asked us to concern ourselves with what affect traditional approaches to research had on those in less powerful position than ourselves; they asked us to include the researched as a full participant in the research process:

For persons, as autonomous beings, have a moral right to participate



in decisions that claim to generate knowledge about them. Such a right ... protects them ... from being managed and manipulated ... [T]he moral principle of respect for persons is most fully honored when power is shared not only in the application ... but also in the generation of knowledge. (Heron in Lather, 1991, p. 56)

Many researchers have gone to great efforts toward the goals set out by these and other scholars. In this study I have made a point of allowing the participants to control the interview process along with myself and to question me about issues of concern to them. More importantly, I have included myself as a research participant in order to share in the exposure which being a participant entails. I chose not to play the role of detached observer and decontextualized researcher. Instead I shared my opinions, frustrations and achievements with the other participants. Our focus groups and interviews often involved me speaking with participants about similar or differing experiences. It is my belief that the best way to equalize the research process is to participate in it. This, of course, does not mean I had no power, nor was I equal in every respect to the other six student participants. It was, simply, the best method I could find to reduce my hold on ALL the reins. One of the goals for research which Patti Lather lays out in her chapter, "Research as Praxis," is the need for a dialectical relationship between the researcher and the participant (1991, p. 58). This type of research relationship could be seen as a two-way street as opposed to a one-way street (albeit, perhaps, with unequal traffic flows).

Studying up the hierarchy of social power and status is much less common, perhaps due to the fact that traditionally the researcher was an upper-middle class, well educated, white man (professor), by default leaving the majority of society with less status and power than he. Although the researcher profile is rapidly changing, our fascination with those less fortunate and/or powerful has not. Not to mention

that regardless of other classifications we, as researchers, largely remain well educated and middle to upper middle class. My insider study entailed a great deal of studying up the well established hierarchies of status and power within the university and the education system. For some of the faculty and school personnel, I was unquestionably a threat, for others I was, perhaps, a hoped for catalyst for change. I will make it clear that many faculty members expressed delight and excitement at the prospect of my research. I received encouragement and support from people at the lowest ends and the highest ends of the faculty hierarchy. This was much needed and appreciated. The responses that were negative and defensive, however, were equal in proportion but far more sustained and aggressive, and it is these responses and their methodological implications which I feel may provide insight into the phenomenon of studying up and into the site of the research itself.

The most significant factor which makes studying up different from studying down is how power operates. This is where we should turn our attention momentarily while considering methodological implications. Of course, as Foucault has instructed us, power does not simply reside with one person or group or another.

For Foucault, power is a relation not a possession or a capacity. Power is not subordinate to or in the service of the economy. It is not the property of an individual or a class, nor is it a commodity which can be acquired or seized ... Foucault saw the threads of power everywhere, as woven in networks. He shifted the questions away from questions such as "Who is powerful?" or "What are the intentions of those with power?", to questions regarding the processes by which subjects are constituted as effects of power. (Orner, 1992, p. 82)

It is how we are "constituted as effects of power" which I am interested in. As stated above we are beginning to understand how the less powerful are constituted

as such by the research relationships which cause them to participate in ways they might not otherwise choose or in how they read about themselves and what others read about them but rarely the other way around. In the case of studying up, perhaps we should consider how the position of the researched allows them to control their personal and intellectual space to a greater degree and how they maintain their privilege by directing the research relationship in ways that suit their needs. The following example may help to demonstrate this point.

After having registered for my courses in teacher education, I was magically deregistered from one of the required courses in the program. The following personal journal entry relates the effect this had on me as a researcher on the day I was removed from EDST 314, the course I had taught in the previous year as a graduate student.

I had not requested an exemption from this course, just the opposite: when other people suggested I ask for an exemption I would explain that I want to take the course--I want to take the full slate of courses. *This course* is a required course and I feel that my program should look as much like other students' programs as is possible. Furthermore *this course* is the one course that explicitly deals with issues of gender, race, and sexuality--issues which are important to me as a teacher and issues I definitely want to reflect upon in my research.

I have had several faculty members and graduate instructors clearly express the opinion that they would not want me in their class. This is the furthest anyone has carried such an opinion. *Prof Jones* not only does not want me in his class (he will teach three sections in the up coming year) but he does not want me in anyone's class (there are 18 sections in all)! I have met some resistance to my research already, but I have to say that this felt particularly offensive. *He* did not even ask to see me so he could talk about his concerns or to hear my opinion about his concerns or even to tell me to my face that he was trying to have me removed from a course. In fact what is going on is a kind of censorship or silencing. *He* does not like my ideological position and perhaps he does not like the idea of being studied and so he will try to stop it. Furthermore he is censoring other instructors' experiences. Two of the 15 or so instructors expressed interest in me

being in their class. They thought it might be an interesting and useful experience for themselves as well as the students in their class. However, *Prof Jones* was not going to let them have that educational experience either. If *his* desire to not have me participate in *this course* is related to not wanting to be 'studied' I have to find this extremely ironic. I have had the feeling, as I have said, from other instructors that they would not want me in their class and even then I felt that it was partly due to not wanting to be 'studied'. The irony here is that this is a group of people who, it could be said, study other people for a living. (5/11/97) <sup>23</sup>

I have included a considerable passage directly from my data, as I will throughout the thesis, in order to provide the reader with as rich and contextualized an understanding of the experience of conducting research in this setting (or the experience of being taught to teach, in the body of the dissertation). What I believe this passage conveys is that those with greater social or professional status can control the research process in ways that others can't. The effect of this power is to constitute them in a way which maintains the privileged position they already occupy, just as those who are less privileged are often constituted through the research process in ways that continue to marginalize them.<sup>24</sup>

As researchers we are often asking others to risk exposure to the research process, and I believe we must push ourselves to levels of discomfort to do the same if we truly believe in the value of research in general. Perhaps when we research "up" we should push a little harder to achieve this end, knowing that those with less power do not have the mechanisms at hand to orchestrate the type of resistance demonstrated above. In fact I did push to be included in the course, first directly, then indirectly. I was included in the course and felt like I had achieved an important end only to discover one day before classes began that I had been moved out of the section I had chosen and gained access to, and moved into a section Professor Jones had decided upon!

<sup>23</sup> In the passage above any words in italics have been changed to protect individual anonymity.

<sup>24</sup> See Deirdre Kelly (2000) on research and the marginalization of teen mothers.

I met with many other examples of resistance to my research at the university but also at my practicum school. At the school where I did my practicum one teacher, who was not involved in my research in any way, called the university to complain that I was listening to negative comments from students about teachers. She went as far as insisting that her practicum student arrive at eight a.m. knowing full well that his only way to a distant school was in my car. Not only was she using her position to protect herself and her status, but to silence a teacher education student who would have otherwise chosen to participate in the research I was conducting.

The negative repercussions of studying down are well documented and perhaps more easily identified. However, studying up can present less conspicuous examples of how people are "constituted as effects of power". When studying up, those in positions of power are often able to use the networks of power in such a way as to protect their status or interests and to lessen the agency others have in the research process. Those of us who conduct research of any kind should attempt to mitigate such imbalances and willingly expose ourselves to the research process we so often ask others to participate in.

### **Significance of This Study: Why Bother?**

There were numerous reasons for pursuing this research and several of those make this study significant. I hoped that this study would help me gain a greater understanding of how discourses affect people as students, teachers, and individuals, and I believe it has. One of the most significant reasons for undertaking this research project was personal. I saw this as an opportunity for personal growth. It was a way for me to learn a great deal about teacher education and how people experience teacher education. Finally, I hoped that this study

would move me towards a clearer understanding of what I value in education, what kind of teacher I want to be, and why.

I also hope I have provided a text that will help other people, to varying degrees, achieve for themselves some of the goals I have for myself. This study may prove significant in its ability to provide future students of teacher education with a means for understanding and affecting their educational experiences in and beyond teacher education. As stated earlier this critical examination of discourses in teacher education may allow for a greater degree of agency around teaching identity. Furthermore, this study may prove significant if it helps to move the student of teacher education and their experiences to the center of the conversation about learning to teach. Perhaps it may also offer instructors significant insights into how their talk positions students of teacher education and the effects of that positioning.

This study represents one of the few sustained, indepth, empirical studies in a specific site using critical discourse analysis and poststructural theories (Luke, 1996). One of the clear contributions of this work, then, is the detailed exploration of how poststructural assumptions of discourse and subjectivities appear in a specific context, and how such theories provide insight into a specific context. Perhaps one of the most significant contributions of this research is that it represents the only ethnography of teacher education conducted by a student of teacher education. Hopefully, this "inside" perspective provides unique and valuable insights and offers a balance to the professorial perspective which dominates the majority of discussion about contemporary teacher education.

Poststructuralism and discourse analysis have for me proven to be significant tools with which to explore inequities in teacher education as they have for others in the primary education setting (Davies, 1993). As I examined dominant and marginalized discourses in teacher education, insights into educational

inequities in teacher education became manifest, and should be an area of continued focus in educational research.

In an educational context in which all schools are being called upon to provide access and equity to increasingly heterogeneous student populations, the tensions between official discourses and minority discourses should be principal focuses for educational research. (Luke, 1996, p. 38)

Along the same lines, I hope that this research may add to a slowly growing climate of acceptance for a diversity of ways to be a teacher. Perhaps by demonstrating that numerous teaching identities exist, future students will see the opportunities to be a teacher in many different ways, thus weakening the homogenizing effect of many current teacher education programs (Giroux & McLaren, 1986).

### **Concluding Comments**

There are many discourses and even more identities in any teacher education program. In the following chapters I do not claim to have represented all of them or even the most significant ones. Instead I have chosen to examine three discourses, two of which I would describe as dominant and one as marginal. I will refer to them throughout the thesis as: student teacher as technician, as child, and as agent for change. These are three of the many discourses I recognized through prior experience and an exhaustive literature review, literature of course being a discursive site in itself. Each of these three discourses speaks directly to the others in complex and inseparable ways. No discourse stands alone. This is a point I hope will become clear as one reads this thesis. Each discourse will be the focus of one chapter; before these chapters, however, comes a chapter that looks

generally at the idea of teaching identities and teacher education. This chapter introduces us to the key student participants, thereby offering us considerable context for the remaining chapters.

The study you are about to read relies heavily on the voices of the five student participants, myself being one of the voices. The students represented in these pages are, likewise, only five of many. They do not stand as archetypes or categories. They are simply a way in which to demonstrate the effects of discourse on teacher identity. I wanted to include enough people that it would be clear that while discourses do affect us, they do so in many different ways. That is not to say that there are not common experiences or common responses to discourses, there are, and I hope this is clear to the reader, but there are also many points of divergence in both experience and response as well.

Finally I would like to provide one last reading cue. I have included a great deal of the theory and methodology in this first chapter so as to free the remaining chapters to speak in a more direct and accessible manner. If one of my central goals is for a wide audience to read this work and find in it possibilities for new ways of being a teacher and tools with which to understand the process of becoming a teacher, then I need to write to more than the small academic community of teacher educators. Writing in a manner that makes use of theory and research while remaining highly readable is no small challenge. bell hooks (1988) has expressed the importance of writing in an accessible manner for an audience wider than our academic peers, and I agree wholeheartedly. She reminds us of the contradiction of writing about topics of power and empowerment in ways that exclude. If my goal is to assist students of teacher education to become critically aware of the process of being taught to teach, then I must make my work accessible and readable to anyone who may be interested. I hope that what follows is a clear



and compelling look at the first year of becoming a teacher. The following, then, are the experiences of five students and how we responded to being taught to teach.

## Chapter Two: Becoming a Teacher

As I drove across the bridge and looked at the fog hanging over the harbour, I thought about how strange it was going to be to be Mr. Taylor again. It really is like putting on a strange coat that doesn't fit well and feels like it must belong to someone else. (10/20/97)

I think for everyone who enters teacher education there is some discomfort with the idea or reality of becoming a teacher. Perhaps it makes you feel old, or perhaps it makes you feel conservative. I have heard some express discomfort at having to be a role model, while others dislike the grading of students. Whatever the discomfort, we all have to incorporate new ways of being into our current selves. Learning to be a teacher could be considered at the forefront of learning to teach.<sup>25</sup> During the twelve-month teacher education program, not only did we learn teaching methods and content, we also learned what it meant to be a teacher.

[L]earning to teach is not a mere matter of applying decontextualized skills or of mirroring predetermined images; it is a time when one's past, present, and future are set in dynamic tension. Learning to teach--like teaching itself--is always the process of becoming: a time of formation and transformation, of scrutiny into what one is doing, and who one can become. (Britzman, 1991, p. 8)

Learning to be a teacher involved a strange, and often indecipherable, negotiation between us and the world around us. On our side we have our past, present and future. On the side of the world we have professors, supervisors, teachers, other student teachers, students, images from popular culture, images from educational literature, and more. As can be seen, most of these ingredients are different for each of us, therefore learning to be a teacher looks very different from one person

---

<sup>25</sup> For further readings on becoming a teacher or teacher socialization see; Preskill, 1998; Cole, 1990; Hoy & Woolfolk, 1990; Huberman, 1989; Sachs & Smith, 1988 and Atkinson & Delemont, 1985.

to the next (Kagan, 1992). That does not mean there are not similarities in our experiences, because of course there are. As I introduce the research participants<sup>26</sup> in this chapter you may be struck by the different experiences they had while learning to be a teacher, but you should also take note of the similarities.<sup>27</sup>

Learning to teach and learning to be a teacher occurred constantly and simultaneously throughout the program (Danielewicz, 1998). The thought of what kind of teacher we would be was always on our minds. We constantly spoke of what professor we would like to teach like or what other student teacher we would prefer not to be like. When we entered the practica this phenomenon accelerated. I am certain that every student teacher had at least two teachers they tried to emulate and two they desired to be unlike. Talk of teachers from our past was prevalent, and I always thought of Miss Krabe, my high school English teacher, when I taught. In fact, almost twenty years later I continue to give assignments similar to ones she gave me at a time when being a teacher had not even occurred to me.

Learning to teach (and to be a teacher) started long before we entered the teacher education program (Dooley, 1998; Tatto, 1998; Britzman, 1991; Lortie, 1975). We began learning to teach in our primary years. We began to think and record what we liked about certain teachers and what we did not like. As Lortie (1975) and Britzman (1991) point out, a teacher education student has already spent close to thirteen thousand hours observing teachers by the time they enter teacher education, an apprenticeship no other profession can claim! The influence

---

<sup>26</sup> This chapter, and the following chapters, will focus on four student participants (given the names of Ophelia, Jackson, Brent, and Hannah) as well as myself. However, numerous other students will enter the conversation, as will faculty. All names, throughout, are pseudonyms unless otherwise noted.

<sup>27</sup> The similar experiences often spring from the dominant discourses which influence student teachers. The similar experiences and the dominant discourses will be explored more fully in chapters three, four, and five.

a great teacher has on a student should not be underestimated. I met a mathematics professor recently while waiting for a flight, and we speculated that, contrary to popular opinion, we ended up in math or history or English because we encountered an exceptional teacher in high school not simply because of some innate or inherent skill or predilection. In my case it was an English teacher, it might have been a history teacher; I might have been an historian. Some (Dooley, 1998; Kagan, 1992) believe that those early experiences have more influence on one's teaching than does teacher education, a claim I am inclined to believe. However, this does not mean teacher education is without influence.

In high school we often begin having our first teaching opportunities, such as tutoring or a reading program with a lower grade. At those times we attempted to employ techniques and styles of our favourite teachers. Many of us had our first thoughts of being a teacher while in high school, and we probably began to pay a little more attention than others to what we saw as good teaching and bad teaching. This process of observation and emulation accelerated as we entered the teacher education program. Every teacher around us was fodder for our evolving identities. As many have pointed out (Sumara & Luce-Kalper, 1996; Britzman, 1991; Nias, 1984), however, developing a teaching identity is not only a process of acquisition, but also of divestment:

But what occurs as well is the startling idea that the taking up of an identity means suppressing aspects of the self. So at first glance, becoming a teacher may mean becoming someone you are not. (Britzman, 1991, p. 4)

The first time I read the above quotation I was struck by its plain, yet unobvious, truth. Not only have I felt this dynamic at work in my own teaching experiences, but I found during this research that many others did as well. In this chapter we will

hear several student teachers express how they felt the need or pressure to discard aspects of themselves either permanently or at least when they were in the schools. One of the reasons I conducted this study was to attempt to broaden the discourse and hence the ways of being a teacher that exist in teacher education and our schools. It occurs to me that the broader the definition of teacher we can embrace, the less people will have to check aspects of themselves at the doors of their schools and classrooms.

In the remaining portions of this chapter I will introduce the central participants in my research. I hope that in doing so we will see who they are, but also how they attempted to incorporate being a teacher within themselves. Each participant felt discomfort or dissonance with certain aspects of what they felt or what they were being told constituted a teacher. We will see how they suppressed aspects of themselves at times in an effort to fit that mold. But we will also see them reject aspects of being a teacher and fight for their own construct. It is my hope that this chapter, by introducing us to the research participants and the process of becoming a teacher, will lay the groundwork for the following three chapters which explore in detail particular discourses in teacher education and how they influence these same student teachers and student teachers in general.

Before introducing the central participants in my research I feel it is necessary to provide some context for their experiences. Most teacher education programs in North America bear a striking resemblance to each other. The following brief description is of the secondary teacher education program<sup>28</sup> at UBC but suggests the general nature of one-year teacher education programs elsewhere.

---

<sup>28</sup> All of the research participants were in the secondary program except Brent who was in the Middle Schools Program. This program was not significantly different in structure than the secondary one.

### **The Program: So Much Content--So Little Time**

The secondary teacher education program at UBC is a two-year program condensed into ten months. The program is split into three terms and two practica. The first term and second term consist of required courses in a wide array of areas, including communications, principles of teaching, analysis of issues in education, educational psychology, and adolescent psychology. The third term allows for limited student choice. The first practicum is only two weeks long and is, for most students, observation only. This practicum falls towards the end of the first term. The extended practicum is almost three months in duration and gradually moves the student teacher from a 25% workload to an 80% workload.<sup>29</sup> This is a very basic description of the program. For greater detail the course outline can be found in Appendix A.

The division of the program is less important than the course load. We were required to take a staggering array of educational courses connected to various disciplines and subjects.<sup>30</sup> We spent approximately 30 hours a week in class. The breadth of coverage across courses was matched only by the breadth of coverage within courses. Within the educational psychology course, which dealt with students with special needs, we covered attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), the hearing impaired, blindness, learning disorders, and much more. In Educational Studies 314 which addressed social issues and education, we covered gender, sexuality, anti-racism and multiculturalism, First Nations students, and other related topics. Every course I took seemed to move from one large and important educational issue or topic to another, almost on a weekly basis. In my subject-related course taught by the language education department, we covered so much in each class that one often forgot where we began that day. Each class

<sup>29</sup> This is the model but not the rule. Some students were made to take on a 100% workload while others only ever reached 60%. The speed with which one reached maximum workload varied also.

<sup>30</sup> I examine the workload and its implications in greater detail in the following chapter.

always had three or four entirely separate topics to be covered or presentations to be made or films to be watched. Content in the teacher education program, in the form of skills to be learned or ideas to be understood, was so central to the endeavor that it became meaningless! The content began to blur together (partially due to the overlap) and disappear from one's mind the minute the relevant test or assignment was completed. Assignments and testing were also central to the teacher education program. The consistent barrage of tests and assignments gave many the feeling that they were back in high school.

This brief outline should be borne in mind as you read the following stories of the experiences of being taught to teach.

### **Brent: Going it Alone**

Brent is a banker. If someone asked me to tell them about Brent, that is the first thing that would come to mind. In many ways it defines him; in fact he referred to himself as being "totally defined by banking" (12/9/97). He has worked for two institutions in a managerial position. An increasing part of his job was training other employees. Often he would train them in small groups in a classroom-type setting. When he entered teacher education, he did so thinking he could become a teacher or improve his credentials as a trainer in banking institutions. Brent is a business-like person who presents himself as a professional. He can be quite formal and serious, something he hoped he could lessen as he moved into education:

I was hoping that, in this program, that I would be able to turn that off a little 'cause I tend to be a little too professional and too cut and dried, you know with my presentations I want to be more animated.  
(12/9/97)

Brent was born in South Africa, moved to Canada when he was six years old, and is Tamil by descent. Brent explained that his family is very traditional. They have high expectations for their children (Brent has one sister). His father worked very hard to provide for the family, but the children and the house were the sole responsibility of his mother. The expectations that Brent grew up with were very clear:

[T]hey expect certain things out of you and, let's see, how do I put that, they don't really care about what I do, they care about the results of it, the product, not so much the process. I can do anything I want so long as I get good marks, or go to school or get a good-paying job with a title; that type of thing. (12/9/97)

Brent brings the same type of structure and demands to his own life. He had set a date to be married on September the fourteenth, only weeks after the program would end. What this meant for him was obvious: "I can't fail this program." Brent was all business about education. He focused on getting everything done on time and getting good grades, preparing for the classroom, and getting a job. About all of these things, he demonstrated a considerable amount of anxiety, but none so much as getting a job, an issue I will turn to later. I use the term *anxiety* purposefully. Brent was always concerned, very concerned, about one of these issues, and his tense, somewhat hyper, demeanor enhanced the sense of anxiety one got from him.

The first area of concern Brent faced was that of preparing for the classroom. For Brent being prepared meant knowing his content. He described himself as having a lecture-style approach to teaching, and to do this he needed to know his stuff. When education courses offered up such concepts as cooperative learning or reader response theory, Brent became impatient. He wanted content, content,



content:

I want the content! I want it badly. I don't want "Discovering How I Teach" and things like that, I mean that's great and dandy, but teaching the content first so I can develop a style. (12/9/97)

Brent mentioned earlier that he wanted to develop a more relaxed, less professional style, but he believes that it must come after content mastery. He felt pressure to get ready for the practicum. This was a common phenomenon in teacher education. The idea of standing in front of thirty kids one day very soon, running a class and teaching various subjects creates anxiety in the calmest of people. This anxiety is one of the central causes of students becoming impatient with university theory. Theory seems like a luxury to a student teacher who must face classes of students in only a couple of months.<sup>31</sup>

Brent's other area of concern was being successful on the practicum and in the course work. I believe that as for Brent's Dad also for Brent. The process was less important than the result. Would he have good grades? Would he get a good letter of recommendation? Would he get a job? These pressures led Brent to an approach to the program and practica of what might be called, "give them what they want." Brent explained his style of participating in the program and the practica on several occasions, and he did not mince his words. He was going to succeed, and he knew that success meant teaching and writing for the assessor. "I don't think I have a style really. I think it's an incorporation of what they want, which is of course, I find out what they want and I write to it" (12/9/97).

However, I do not want to portray Brent here as some sort of ruthless automaton; he wasn't. His anxiety could also produce a kind of vulnerability.

---

<sup>31</sup> As I explain later in greater detail, student teachers lack of patience with theory is due, in part, to a failure of faculty to connect theory to practice and to deal with theory thoroughly enough to truly engage the learner.

Brent was well aware of the fact that to succeed he needed more than just a willingness to please. He wanted the content and the teaching skills, as much and as quickly as possible. For this, he turned to his sponsor teacher. He hoped his mentor could guide him and teach him and prepare him for what would surely be a trying experience--his first attempt at classroom teaching. Unfortunately, Brent did not have a good relationship with his sponsor teacher. He had hopes for a close personal and professional relationship in which he could grow and succeed. This was not to be the case.

Brent described a relationship with his sponsor teacher that was distant to nonexistent. He suggested that his presence was simply to free up time for her to write her Master's degree. Whether or not this was the case, Brent had little contact with his sponsor, and certainly nothing that could be described as mentoring. He described his bimonthly visit from his faculty advisor as a "blessing"; "it was an oasis for me just to talk to someone" (06/15/98). As for his sponsor teacher: "[W]e never talked on any type of informal level. That was the most painful experience I've ever had", and, "We had no regular meetings. We never debriefed" (06/15/98). There was one other student teacher at his school, and the contrasting experiences made it even harder for Brent to bear. The woman who was in the school with him had a very supportive sponsor teacher and they spoke often:

She could screw up lessons or whatever and the teacher would just say positive things and she would change and be better. For me, it wasn't like that. And they would talk every night, after the day they would just talk for even fifteen minutes. And I never had that. So I'd go in and I'd just sort of stand there, you know, can I come in? It's kind of homey in here. I felt so left out. (06/15/98)

The severity of the contrast was brought home for Brent when it came time to prepare report cards. The two student teachers and sponsor teachers had taken a

day off to write the reports at the home of the other sponsor teacher. Although Brent held out hope that he would experience a little of the mentoring he had hoped for throughout the practicum, it did not occur, and Brent ended the practicum as he had begun it, alone:

We went and did the report card marking and this was--when did we do this?--Thursday of last week. And I thought this was my bonding moment. You know, just her and I and we're going to sit together and we're going to go over each student and talk about them: "Oh, isn't this student a keener and I don't know about this." It turned out she just handed me the assessment guide, gave me the bubble sheet, did her stuff and didn't talk to me for the whole time. We were across the table! I was like, God, I hope this day ends. I hope three o'clock comes.

Then I look--all four of us, so the community leaders, right? Myself and the sponsor teacher were in the living room of this house. Then, the other student teacher and her sponsor teacher are just in the other room. And they're, like, side-by-side, like this, talking about, and I'm listening to all this as my teacher is across the table from me and just not saying a word. And I'm just like, please let this day end. (06/15/98)

Brent's memory of the practicum and the teacher education program is not a positive one. The program he summed up as "six thousand dollars for a license to teach" (06/15/98). The practicum was, well, "painful". However, that would not hinder his anxious yet determined quest to be a teacher. The last time I spoke with Brent he was trying desperately to get on a TOC (teacher on call) list. He had applied to three or more districts and had called one or two superintendents in person. However he still did not consider himself a teacher:

Until I get a teaching position--probably not even when I get on a TOC list--will I call myself a teacher. And I'm still working in the bank, right? So if someone were to ask me I'd be a banker. Until I get a full time job teaching I'm not a teacher ... I'm trying as hard as I can to get a teaching job. But I'm not a teacher until I teach. I'm a banker because I bank. (08/05/98)

### **Hannah: Agent for Change**

Hannah fights for what she believes in and believes what she fights for. She is becoming a teacher, which is very much defined by how she grew up and how she lives today.<sup>32</sup> Terms such as disadvantaged and marginalized could be applied to Hannah at different times in her life. She has had to overcome a lot of hurdles in life and continues to do so. However, she doesn't just persevere, although she does that, she fights. Her fight is two-fold. First, it is to achieve for herself what she wants and what she thinks is her right. Second, she fights to educate others about the inequities she faces, inequities that are built into the system.

Hannah's parents grew up and were married in England. They moved to Edmonton and had four children in five years. Hannah describes her childhood as being one of poverty. Her father worked at many different jobs, often two or more at one time: janitor, salesperson, custodian, appliance repairman, even Zamboni driver. They moved to Kelowna and then Vernon. Money became a little more available when Hannah was thirteen, but by then she had started working herself. She left home when she was fifteen years old just after her parents were divorced.

Hannah's adult life is essentially one of school and work, both in the extreme. She has worked full time or more since she left home, yet she has managed to attend Emily Carr Institute, Okanagan University College and UBC. Her undergraduate degree is in English and Anthropology. Anthropology remains her passion to this day. She has worked mostly in retail and once even began fulfilling the requirements to become a police officer. She was married for five years, and is now a single mom. Hannah is very concerned about issues of social justice for very personal reasons. She knows discrimination and injustice first

<sup>32</sup> Donna Kagan (1992) found in her research a "close connection between each candidate's biography and how he or she experienced the teacher education program" (p. 141).

hand. Hannah is white and her children are black; as a result she has had to deal with strange questions and looks for many years, if not outright racism. Her brother is gay and she is very close to him; she is passionate about issues relating to gay, lesbian, and bisexual rights. Finally and perhaps centrally, she is a single mom who faces poverty and sexism on a regular basis. As we all know, the world is not a fair place, and Hannah fights for equitable treatment for herself, her family, and others.

When Hannah was applying for entrance to the teacher education program, there were quite a few complications concerning prerequisites and deadlines. In the end, the program administrators were saying that her prerequisites would not be in place in time (barely) to begin the program. However, no one had explained this scenario to her earlier, and she had already quit her job and given up her house in Kelowna. She was planning on driving to Vancouver in two days! She informed them that she was coming anyway and intended to move into a cardboard box on the steps of the Education building after having called the newspapers and local TV stations. They granted her admission a few days later.

Near the beginning of the program, Hannah had to miss four days of classes. Her youngest son had become extremely sick, and after a trip to emergency, she was told that he was diabetic. This meant appointments with doctors, information sessions, learning how to administer insulin, and, of course, buying the insulin. Besides coping with a somewhat traumatic event for her family, she encountered a great deal of grief from some instructors, one in particular. This instructor informed her that she should not miss classes, would not get away with this in the real world, and should consider a different profession. Hannah was outraged. She knew about responsibilities and commitments. She was a thirty-three year old, single mother of two. She had put herself through university while

working full time, often two jobs at once. Now this senior faculty member was suggesting she consider a different line of work. What annoyed Hannah the most was that to her it was another example of the inequities faced by single moms. It was an issue of gender and poverty:

But you know, like when Bradley was in the hospital. I think you can reduce that to a gender issue by virtue of the fact that, virtually that all single parents are women and ... well you know, like it's all linked to the daycare dilemma and poverty and women with children. You know, if I had money I could have paid somebody to care for Emery or to look after my household or had some other recourse that I wouldn't have had to take so much time off of school. 'Cause part of the reason that Bradley was kept at the hospital was 'cause I had no money with which they could confidently release him because, you know, it's another large investment initially [paying for the insulin], and because I have no support on the outside. So that was part of the reason he was kept in, so that I think speaks of, you know, poverty and the daycare issue and, and everything, because [pause] you know, people in my social economic class, socioeconomic class aren't very valued. I guess, I guess maybe that's a strong way to put it, but there's not a lot of assistance, and I don't think I have a right to assistance but I think that when it's genuinely needed, there should be some way of accessing that. (07/28/98)<sup>33</sup>

Hannah's personal experiences with prejudice and sexism carried over into her teaching identity. She became a student teacher and teacher who was concerned with issues of social justice and change.<sup>34</sup> She was clear with her students about what was acceptable behaviour and language in her classroom. She would not tolerate the use of the word fag, a disturbingly common word in schools and classrooms even in the primary grades. Furthermore, she covered topics such as the portrayal of women in the media and media and violence.

<sup>33</sup> This incident and its relationship to professionalism and age are explored more fully in the next chapter.

<sup>34</sup> In the chapter entitled Student Teacher as Agent for Change, I explore many more examples of Hannah's efforts and struggles related to social justice.

Hannah was lucky; her practicum school proved to be a good fit. She was at a school that was a catchment for the university community and as a result tended to have a liberal/critical orientation. Her sponsor teachers offered her a great deal of freedom and she liked working with both of them. Hannah seemed to slip effortlessly into the role and identity of teacher; perhaps with more ease than anyone else I knew or observed. She felt that this was due, in part, to her age and her experience as a parent. Even though Hannah had a relatively smooth and successful practicum and seemed to take on teaching with ease, she was not entirely sure that she felt like a teacher. For all student teachers, feeling like a teacher is an important issue, and Hannah represented a particularly interesting case study, partially due to her clear articulation of both feeling and not feeling like a teacher.

Hannah would claim to be feeling like a teacher at one time and not at another. Seeing oneself as a teacher or not has a great deal to do with one's own conceptions of what it means to be a teacher. Hannah, like many student teachers, resisted the idea of being a teacher because of a discomfort with a preconceived notion of what teachers are like. A surprising number of student teachers expressed concern about ending up like all those veteran teachers. What was meant by that was rarely made clear; but one got the sense that they meant conservative, old, and burnt out. Hannah even went so far as to say, "I don't want to feel like a teacher in terms of how I think of teachers" (05/20/98).

But there are many other factors that made Hannah feel like a teacher. Hannah explained to me, as did others, that a big part of feeling like a teacher comes from the students and the school staff:

I was a teacher in the practicum. I was a teacher and I was ... I was a colleague and I was treated like a colleague and the students, I knew when we were doing the projects, the students were presenting to the

teacher, the real teacher and the "real teacher" was there beside me and they weren't looking at him, they were looking at me. You know how grade eights look at their teacher ... They were looking at me and he noticed that as well and I said they were looking at me and he said you're a teacher, none of them look at me any more. (05/20/98)

Hannah felt that her sponsor teachers treated her like a teacher, while earlier we found that Brent did not enjoy the same treatment and suffered as a result. In contrast Hannah flourished, and other teachers in the school keyed off her sponsor teachers and afforded Hannah the respect of a colleague. However, the students often have an agenda of their own and decide if you are a teacher after a set of elaborate tests. I found that during my practicum there was a time at the beginning of the practicum where the students did not treat me like a teacher and in part that is a test in itself. They are waiting to see if you will grab hold of that role and take it even if it is not given. Make no mistake, they notice how you are being treated by your sponsor teachers, and if they are not offering the role of teacher to you, it is doubly hard to grab hold of it. Taking into consideration these dynamics, it is interesting to understand the importance of the role students play in student teachers' acquisition of a teaching identity. As Hannah plainly stated, "I felt like a teacher I guess because the students looked at me as the teacher and I was treated like a teacher " (05/20/98).

Although the students on Hannah's practicum were treating her like a teacher, that does not mean the process of becoming a teacher was over. She would move back and forth between identifying with being a teacher and not. On the occasion of her first paycheck as a teacher on call, her reaction was extreme: "I jumped around my house when it came to me in the mail going, "I'm a teacher, I'm a teacher," holding it in my hands. I'm like wow, five years and it's paid off"



(07/28/98).<sup>35</sup> Even when Hannah was a teacher on call on a regular basis after the program ended, she wavered between feeling and not feeling like a teacher.<sup>36</sup> Her feelings of being a teacher were still greatly influenced by the staff and students around her:

I guess I, my attitudes reflected or is a reflection of the students' attitudes towards me sometimes. And how some of the administrators at some of the schools treat me. Just, I'm lucky 'cause I subbed a lot at the same school and I get requested at other schools, too, but they help me to feel like a real teacher. And I think maybe when I go to schools where I'm just alone and I don't know anybody and nobody talks to me and conversation stops when I walk in the lunchroom and I can't find out where you can get coffee and stuff. I kind of don't feel maybe like a real teacher then. (03/14/1999)

I think the salient point here is that becoming a teacher is a socially negotiated experience which does not entail a "then I was, now I am" kind of movement but more of a two steps forward one backwards kind of movement. We do not cross a magic line and are, once and for all, a teacher. Nor do we decide on our own, in a vacuum, that we are teachers. We move towards being a teacher feeling more like one, then less. We notice how others perceive us, and we adjust according to those perceptions. It is also important to note that we can't wholly feel like a teacher until we have developed a teaching identity that we can be comfortable with. Perhaps that is the reason so few student teachers feel entirely like a teacher during the practicum; they are unable to be completely comfortable with their teaching selves because the process, sponsor teachers, and lack of power force them to be a teacher unlike the one they want to be. As we find a way to teach that we are comfortable with, we are then able to feel comfortable with the identity of a teacher.

<sup>35</sup> At this point Hannah had managed to get some substitute teaching work even though she had not quite yet finished the program.

<sup>36</sup> The official term for substitute teaching is "teacher on call", but most still refer to it as subbing.

Hannah moved back and forth feeling more like a teacher, then less. She struggled with the idea of joining teacherhood. "[A]s much as I despise the fact that I have to become, belong to this culture [teaching], it is necessary or I'm never going to be employed" (07/28/1998). Just as Hannah was uncomfortable with becoming a teacher, she was also uncomfortable with not being a student. She pondered the idea that when she began teaching she would no longer be a student, something she had been for a long time. Being a student was a role she was comfortable with. Although she could be teaching full time, Hannah is currently subbing and pursuing a Master's degree at the same time. It seems that working and going to school is a combination she is going to stay with for awhile. Hannah enjoys a symbiotic relationship between learning and teaching and intends to follow that path. In fact, in our last interview she spoke of the possibility of getting her Ph.D. and becoming a professor.

**Jackson: "I Don't Want To Be One of Those Teachers"**

Jackson is young. I say this because it is a big issue for him as a student teacher. He thinks of it a lot and ponders its ramifications. He is twenty two years old, but he doesn't seem quite that young. In fact, until he raised the issue of his age, I had not singled him out as being younger than most others. Age played a big role in Jackson's attempts to develop an identity as a teacher while on practicum. In the first week, he went to the library to check out a reference book and the librarian told him that only teachers could check out those books. He had to explain that he was a student teacher, and after some awkwardness for both parties, he left with the book. But he left with more than that. He left with a conviction that he would not be mistaken again for a student. He wore a tie everyday for the following three months. The tie became part of Jackson, the

teacher:

I LOOK the role of a professional teacher, maybe just a bit too much in a sense. I don't see too many other teachers wearing a tie. And I guess I'm trying to make up for my age or something. (12/9/97)

Jackson felt that his age was a major advantage and disadvantage. He felt that being young allowed him to be cool and play the older brother role. However, he also felt that discipline was easier for older teachers and that the role of the teacher was to be a wise provider of guidance and advice; he felt his lack of years and life experiences didn't allow him to fulfill this role. He seriously contemplated not teaching until he had experienced more of life and was able to be the sage he felt he should be.

Jackson was born in Burma and came to Canada when he was four years old. He has no accent and speaks fluent Burmese and Chinese. He identifies as being Chinese. He said his parents always considered themselves to be Chinese, and he refers to his house as a typical Chinese house. Jackson began working in a peanut butter jar factory when he was fourteen. He explained that money was always a little tight growing up.

His parents placed a very high value on education, and Jackson thinks that, ironically, this led him into education--ironically, because his parents always expected him to go into business. They were disappointed when he went into history. They had hoped he would go into a potentially more lucrative area of study. But like many others he credits his love of history and eventual move into teaching to two great teachers he had in grade eight and grade eleven:

My grade eleven social studies teacher, he was also super supportive. Every day, he'd give us like a pep talk, every week, telling

us how we were tomorrow's future and all this, and it's pretty amazing how much work he put into us. When I think about it. (12/9/97)

Unquestionably, for Jackson, one of the appeals of becoming a teacher is the influence you can have on young people's lives. He recalls with a type of reverence the impact a teacher had on him:

[S]he's wonderful. She was one of those people that, no matter what you did wrong, she'd be there to say well don't worry about it, just keep on going. She's really supportive, actually one of the small things that she did that really hit me was the fact--it seems so small, but I guess, to me --that growing up as a kid in elementary school I was a bit overweight. Do you know those sports days? Sports days where elementary schools stop for one day and have all these little events, like sack races and stuff, track and field. So she made me one of the captains, and because she was in charge with some of the other grade seven teachers, and I was in grade six--so I didn't think it was going to happen, but, she chose two or three grade sixes to be captain for the day, and she chose me and I thought this is great, here I am, this portly little kid who couldn't run around the field too well, and she had decided I was going to be one of them. I think because of that moment that's how I got into sports. Just because of that one little unbelievable . . . [moment]. (12/9/97)

When Jackson speaks of the kind of teacher he wants to be, you hear echoes of his favourite teachers from the past. Jackson sees teaching as primarily about inspiring and guiding students as opposed to transferring content. He explained to me that he felt academics and grades were secondary to helping kids with real problems and showing them the link between what they studied and the real world. Jackson decided early on that he wanted to be a friend to the students and have a relaxed atmosphere in his classroom. "I see myself as kind of like a big brother, friendly type person rather than just a person in there to bark out some orders, get some marks and stuff ... " (12/9/97). But as relaxed as Jackson wants to

be as a teacher, he feels a pressure in being a role model--and he definitely sees himself as a role model. What is fascinating about Jackson's response to becoming a teacher is that he feels he must develop a new role, that of teacher, and alter his out-of-school self as well:

I can see how the whole entire idea, there's a time and place for everything, and I guess that time and place for me now is just within my house. I'm thinking about this whole entire idea of being a role model is really starting to infiltrate into the lower depths of my mind. I definitely have to be a professional, whenever I go outside, it's like a magnifying glass or something.

Like for example I won't hold my girlfriend's hand, I won't be affectionate to her in any way, even when I go for example to the corner store, I think--what if I see my students. I'm thinking, do I really want to be dressed like this? (12/9/97)

Jackson saw himself developing two distinct personas, one in the class and one out of the class. He recognized that these personas (teaching and home) influence each other, and he worried about how each influenced the other in ways he wished they didn't. When we spoke he repeatedly referred to putting on masks. He described teaching as being on a stage. This metaphor suggests that Jackson may have felt like he was acting, and not being himself. The discourses available to him as a teacher are not ones he is used to employing and they feel uncomfortable. There is an incongruity between how he saw himself before teacher education and how he now saw himself after the program:

Right here [at the university] it seems more relaxed, I don't have that whole entire weight of being a teacher and trying to role model or trying to do anything. Here I can just swear at people if I want to, I can finger them out--it's no big problem for me--I can just be myself--kind of boorish person or something I guess. But at school, I think it's made clear to us that we do have a role, that there is a mask we have

to wear and I think even when we go in public sometimes, I'm conscious of that mask. (12/9/97)

Not only is Jackson feeling dissonance between the two masks he claims to wear, but he feels some leakage between the two, and this concerns him:

It's like the idea of having two masks to constantly wear, not knowing when to let one down or the other. I'm thinking to myself. This isn't such a good idea anymore. (12/9/97)

It could be suggested that this is somewhat oversimplified, and that Jackson, like all of us, has many masks that we employ in many settings. While this is undoubtedly true, we must ask ourselves why Jackson is seeing it as only two masks. The answer is at least two fold. First of all, being in the midst of such a new and distinct role as that of teacher brings that role and its attendant "mask" to the forefront of one's mind. Secondly, the inclination to see oneself as having two masks instead of four or five is due in part to the magnitude of the contrast. While Jackson may put on different masks for his employers, friends, and parents (as I do), the shift is probably not nearly so great as the shift that takes place as he moves from teacher to non-teacher. Jackson hopes that the contrast will lessen with time as he becomes more comfortable in his new skin:

Maybe a little later on as I get more experience I'll know more what the role entails. Maybe I won't have to wear this mask, maybe it will infiltrate down into who I am. But um I can see that there's two distinct ME's when it comes down to ME outside the class and ME inside the class. (12/9/97)

Jackson looks forward to a time when he won't have to play the role so much. He hopes that the two masks will begin to look a little more alike with time. I

asked him what he thought it was that made him "play a role inside the class"? He responded, "I think it's the whole entire deal of someone coming into the class and marking me" (9/12/97). In a startling moment of self-analysis, he explained his fear of not playing a role or wearing a mask during the practicum:

The fact that I just can't be ME. I know for a fact that if I'm ME, then they're going to find something--I guess maybe that's the problem--maybe in a sense that if I'm just ME in my class and a person comes in and says, there's something wrong with the way you're doing that, then in a sense they're saying there's something wrong with you, and maybe that's why I don't ever just put myself as just ME. (12/9/97)

There can be little doubt that the intense scrutiny and assessment student teachers undergo alter the role they play in the classroom. I felt myself change every time one of my supervisors walked into the room. A certain stiffness and formality would overtake my actions and speech. At a time when student teachers are trying to develop a teaching persona they are comfortable with, they are immersed in a process that makes comfort impossible. The role that assessment plays in identity formation for student teachers will be more fully explored in chapter three.

Jackson struggled in his own mind a great deal with what teaching would do to him and what kind of a person and teacher he would become. He spoke to me on several different occasions about becoming "one of those teachers". It was a tangible fear for Jackson, and although he had an excellent practicum and appeared to be moving smoothly and steadily into being a teacher, he surprised me during our last meeting, some three months after the program was complete. I will conclude with a series of thoughts Jackson expressed leading to a profound doubt about the idea of being a teacher ... ever:

I'm looking around and saying to myself God, do I really want to be

with these people. They seem to ... they seem so bitter towards some of the kids. They see this as just a nine to five thing or eight to three, whatever, and they don't seem caring. And I think to myself, okay, well am I going to be like this ... I guess it all comes down to what is teaching going to be? Is it going to make me a better person or is it just going to make me a bitter old man. (05/15/98)

I don't want to be one of those--I don't want to be one of those teachers that kids like to make fun of. I don't want to be burnt out by the time I'm forty and just, just being there till I get, till I get, till I retire. I don't want to be one of those teachers. Seen too many of those teachers around and I decided I don't want to be one of them. I want to be somebody that's just a bit different. (03/19/99)

I've been doing other stuff. Been picking up my hobbies again and such. But I think, I think the funny thing is ever since I left the program, I guess it started around, I guess January, December, I've been thinking about quitting teaching for a while. I've been thinking I'm twenty four years old and I don't want to be one of those people that teaches till God knows how long, till they're sixty. I was thinking that's 36 years, do I really want to do this for 36 years. So I've really been thinking about quitting the whole entire thing [pause] and the funny thing is I would be doing something totally opposite. I've always wanted to go into computers. (03/19/99)

### **Ophelia: The One Who Got Away**

Ophelia described herself in the first minute of our first interview as "not feeling very comfortable in an institutionalized environment" (12/10/97). Ophelia would continue to struggle with this discomfort throughout the teacher education program and particularly in the practicum. Ophelia's discomfort was manifested, in part, through an ongoing critique of the institutions she operated in. Ophelia was not alone. Others, including myself, felt a need to point out the aspects of education we were uncomfortable with in order to lessen the sense of hypocrisy in joining a club about which we had significant misgivings. Those of us who chose to critique the schools or the university were often not met with open arms. More



than one student in the teacher education program said to another, who was being critical: "I think you're in the wrong profession." However, a decent amount of skepticism for what we do as teachers is, I believe, a healthy disposition to have. It stops us from blindly doing things simply because they have always been that way. Without critical questions change is unlikely to occur. Ophelia blindly accepted little about teaching and being a teacher.

Ophelia was born in the area of Vancouver where she did her practicum teaching. In fact she spent one week at Parkwood Secondary as a teenager but did not stay. She felt out of place at Parkwood:

[I] actually went to Parkwood for a week--did I tell you that? In Grade 10, especially Grade 11, my Mom was worried about me ... I think she just wanted me to try a new environment, and I didn't. I remember being sort of blasé about it--I guess I was used to switching schools--I was like sure I'll try Parkwood ... but didn't like it at all. But my school was the kind of a druggie school and we were all neo-hippies at that time, and Parkwood was quite conservative and upscale and I felt really out of place--I'd go to school in Levis and a jean jacket and everyone would stare at me because all the girls were all dolled up there. (12/10/97)

Ophelia was a high, if somewhat detached, achiever. She went from high school straight to the Humanities One program at UBC, an advanced Arts focused, cohort approach to first year university. Ophelia won an award in this program and moved into the Honours English program as a result of encouragement by an instructor in the Arts One program whom Ophelia continues to admire. After her undergraduate years Ophelia worked and traveled, spending most of her time working at a First Nations art gallery in Whistler. Again her distrust of the public school system came into play when she decided to move towards teaching:

I thought what I should probably do is do college and university level

instruction. I didn't think of myself as wanting to go into the high school system and I'm still wondering whether the high school system is right for me. (12/10/97)

Despite her hesitancy, Ophelia made the leap and entered the teacher education program at UBC. Up to this point Ophelia had entertained some second thoughts about being a teacher, but now she was about to enter fully into a mental debate with herself about whether this could be the right vocation for her.

Context and the acquisition of a teaching identity should not be underestimated. Every year a significant number of teacher education students struggle with the practicum and becoming a teacher often because the school or their sponsor teachers were not a good fit. In Ophelia's case it was both. By coincidence, Ophelia and I did our practice teaching at the same school, so I can describe her practicum with considerable more detail than those of the other participants in this research. Parkwood is located in one of the wealthiest school districts in British Columbia, perhaps Canada. Parental involvement and expectations are very high. Teachers in the school refer to this repeatedly. There is a feeling amongst those who work at and attend Parkwood that it is a pseudo-private school. The school exudes wealth and achievement. The talent nights involved students playing Chopin and singing opera. Not surprisingly the tone of the school is formal, and events from bake sales to school trips are highly structured and somewhat conservative in nature.

This conservative, achievement-focused, some might say, uptight environment was perhaps the least suitable for Ophelia and the teacher she wanted to become. Ophelia valued flexibility and serendipity. Ophelia prided herself on running a classroom that was somewhat noisy and loose. When I asked Ophelia what her classroom would be like, she provided the following description:

I want it to be really colourful and comfortable and full of arts. I think I'm going to take a multi-media approach to Language Arts. I'll never, I don't think, teach with kids in rows. I'll figure some other way of doing that. A little bit of creative chaos, probably. The way that my sponsor teacher runs her classes--it's a pretty tight ship and I think that's good, but I think I'll probably be a notch or two towards easy-going. (12/10/97)

If the school Ophelia was at turned out to be a bad fit, her main sponsor teacher turned out to be no fit. Ophelia's sponsor teacher, Gwendolyn, was known not only in her school but throughout the district as being an extremely organized, ambitious, strong willed teacher. She was a one person dynamo, with an agenda--what some might describe as a no no-nonsense kind of person. I met her many times and was struck by the incongruity of her appearance and her disposition. She was a small, brown haired, young woman, with a soft voice. However, when it came to running her classroom or achieving her goals, there was nothing subtle about her. In a focus group meeting after the first two-week practicum, Ophelia had some early concerns about the fit:

I don't necessarily think I want to run my classes like her, because she sometimes is a little bit too authoritarian and she, I've watched her freak out on the class for these really minor infractions and make ... a punishment pretty severe. She made an entire class write a two page letter of apology to her for misbehaving when she was changing the seating plan, they didn't do it fast enough, they weren't organized enough. That's a moment where some sort of chaos and confusion can be expected, I think, and I was really surprised that she freaked out on them, but it shows that she does have really strong views on classroom management and she does control her classes. But there's freedom within that control so it was, I think she's a good role model for me in the sense that my tendency might be to be a little too lax and I see the benefits in having structure and control and she doesn't seem to lose rapport or respect or--I think that's a question you have to ask the students I guess. Things like this letter of apology, oh, and she also with that punishment added a list of vocabulary that they had to memorize the definitions for and write a test on, along with a two page letter of apology. For a really minor

little incident. I was just, my mouth must have been hanging open and she come up and profusely apologized. She was embarrassed that I had to witness the class behaving so badly. [laugh] ... her reaction was so foreign to me. (11/20/97)

As I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, a central tool used by student teachers to build their teaching identity is comparison and emulation. In both of the previous two quotations from Ophelia, she speaks of how she will teach in relation to her sponsor teacher. Ophelia's other sponsor teacher was less structured than Gwendolyn but still not a role model for Ophelia. While Ophelia could spend plenty of time comparing (actually contrasting) herself with Gwendolyn, she had no one she could emulate. She had some clearly developed ideas about teaching and what type of teacher she wanted to be, and she was well aware that she did not represent the norm. However, as a student teacher with an unconventional approach to teaching, she felt isolated and out of place. She made attempts to fit in and reform her ways a little. In the quote above she suggests that maybe she could model herself after Gwendolyn a little, that perhaps she needed it. She even went out and bought what she called "teacher's shoes"!<sup>37</sup> However, after completing the extended practicum, she no longer had illusions that she could be or wanted to be Gwendolyn. Her lack of comfort with Gwendolyn translated into a lack of comfort with the system, a notion she harboured from the beginning:

[N]obody can tell you that Gwendolyn isn't a good teacher and it made me realize that looking at her made me think about how it's going to be really hard for me to fit into the system because if she's the ideal teacher and I thought she was hell on earth to work with, then I could be in a lot of trouble . (05/26/98)

<sup>37</sup> Dressing to be a teacher is a common phenomenon in teacher education. One of my friends in the program went out and bought her first beige bra in years. She said she got "an old woman's bra" because she "couldn't be going around looking too sexy." Sandra Weber and Claudia Mitchell (1995) look at teachers clothing and popular images of teachers in their fascinating book called, That's funny you don't look like a teacher.

The available role models for student teachers are in fact limited, not in number, but in variety. Our society has decided what a teacher should be and you can be any teacher you want to be if you fall inside those boundaries. If you do not, you had better squeeze yourself into those boundaries or leave. I am not suggesting that everyone either conforms or doesn't; it's not that simple. There are plenty of struggles and attempts to push the boundaries, but if you decide to stay and fight to be the teacher you want to be, there will be a price to pay. Ophelia witnessed such a struggle and it caused her to pause.

Ophelia had a teacher, like all of us, whom she admired when she was in high school. His name was Mr. Ames. Mr. Ames was creative and animated and more than a little unconventional. He still teaches at Parkwood, and we spent some time in his classroom. He even invited all the student teachers to his home for a visit. Mr. Ames is a bit of a hippy. He wears his hair in a pony tail and has beads and amulets around his neck. When he is in his class, he always wears moccasin slippers. Mr. Ames' unconventional ways have made him less than popular with the school staff and quite popular with the student body. However, his insistence on playing by his own rules (or at least rules that were not written for teachers) has caused him a great deal of stress and discomfort. He lives and teaches in the margins of the school community, ostracized from most of the other teachers and at odds with administration. Ophelia was very disturbed to come back and find her former mentor in the situation he was in:

Well I see that, for instance Mr. Ames who has created quite an alternative niche for himself, has done it at a huge expense--his professional reputation and his own personal comfort. But he, for instance they won't let him touch the IB [International Baccalaureate] program, he would be a fantastic teacher and he would like to do that,

they would never let him. So they give, you know, they give the IB program in [the area] probably to the most stunted thinkers who are, who fit most easily into the box. He's been really alienated and he's probably encouraged and influenced and reached more students over the course of his career than any other English teacher in [the area], I bet that he's totally vilified . (05/22/98)

Ophelia was almost brought to tears the first time she went and spoke with Mr. Ames. He was now a somewhat beaten down and depressed man, with only occasional sparks of the teacher he once was flashing in his eyes. I believe that Ophelia feared such a future for herself. As each month passed in the program, she moved further and further from the idea of being a teacher. She spoke of maybe just subbing for awhile or finding a position in alternative education or adult education. In our final interview some six months after the program, she had not taught a single day in any way but was still thinking of ways she could fit in-- somewhere.

I am just so glad to be done and I think it really confirmed what I knew going into the program that I--I would probably be looking for an alternative school environment as a teacher and it just confirms that because it didn't work for me, being in the public school system. Maybe there's a school out there where it would have worked, but the program was stressful and the placement that I had was stressful and it just sort of confirmed that I was going to have to find a niche to make it a long term thing for me. (03/11/99)

I still speak with Ophelia on occasion. She is now living in Toronto and working in the area of First Nations art. She has just published a book on First Nations art, which she had been working on for some time. She is also working in the film industry. Ophelia is an energetic, frenetic, creative person who values fun and spontaneity over structure and testing. Ophelia could not find a teaching identity which would satisfy both herself and the education system, and because of

this she will probably never teach, certainly not in the public system. The loss is not only the loss of Ophelia but of a possible way of being a teacher that others might look to in the future. Every time we lose an Ophelia we lose an opportunity to expand the repertoire of ways of being a teacher. A loss indeed.

### **John Taylor on John Taylor: Pushing (But Not Breaking) The Boundaries**

I like to push the boundaries, as much to see what will happen as for the conviction that the boundaries need to be pushed. In fact, I think I chose this research project because I felt it would be pushing the boundaries. In my methodology section where I try to convince everyone of the validity of my study, I claim to have wanted the faculty to be as comfortable with my presence as possible and I made attempts to put them at ease. In truth, I chose this study, in part, because I knew it would make some people uncomfortable. I liked the power it would give me. They (professors) are used to observing us, studying us, assessing us. Now it would be my turn. So I chose this study as much to see what would happen when I pushed the boundaries (and much did happen) as for my conviction that well worn channels of power need to be disturbed and a student perspective on teacher education was past due.

It was John Taylor the boundary pusher who entered the teacher education program and went on practicum. That is my default mode. I am not obnoxious or conspicuous, I don't grandstand: I think I am pretty subtle. There were many students like me, students who would say things like: "Wouldn't kids be better off learning on their own?" or "Students should be able to choose whatever they want to study." When these students spoke up, some turned around and looked at them like they were crazy, yet others stopped and began to imagine the unimaginable. I know it's corny, but I kind of imagine myself as Robin Williams in the film "Dead

Poets Society”.

I once explained to a kid who had used the F word in my class that teachers swear and students swear, but we are not supposed to swear in front of each other. If we do one of us, probably both of us, will get in trouble. That's just the way things work. Maybe people will relax in the future and worry more about the intent and less about the word, but for now we had better play by the rules because I don't want to lose my job and you don't want to get suspended. That moment is in some ways a microcosm of who I am. I almost always play by the rules, but I like to expose the rules and laugh at them and bend and stretch them, and even occasionally break them. But I'm still a rule follower.

On the occasion of teaching “The Crucible” by Arthur Miller to two classes of grade eleven students while on practicum, I was searching for ways to contemporize the play and expand the learning opportunities outside the boundaries of the novel and the typical English classroom. I recalled that a good friend of mine had introduced me on a couple of occasions to a Witch, that is to say a man who studied and practiced the Wicca religion. “The Crucible” is about freedom of thought and religion and speech, and, of course, it's about Witches. I decided that it would be more than a little interesting to bring a modern day Witch into the school and the classroom. Besides learning a little about a highly misunderstood religion (or belief system), we could explore our own reactions and prejudices. The speaker arrived at the school and I had arranged for him to present in the library to two classes at once (another teacher asked if her class could attend). He showed up in very unusual clothing: lots of frills and pendants. He explained the history of Wicca and the persecution of Witches through the ages. He had numerous props and books and overall gave a thorough presentation. He also played the guitar and sang a couple of loud and emotive songs of journeys to



the underworld and such things. Much of the school staff who were not teaching showed up in the corners of the library to listen and to watch. At the end our speaker gave me a big hug and took his stuff and left.

Suffice to say, it had an impact on students and staff. Our class had an engaged discussion about freedom of religion and speech and the difference between cults and religions and Waco and all sorts of other interesting things, particularly for teenagers. Some teachers congratulated me on an interesting and provocative presentation. Some questioned its appropriateness for a high school. Other teachers asked other student teachers if I was a Witch or perhaps even gay (the big hug?). Of course, I received permission from my sponsor teacher to do this. She warned me to be careful and get permission from the vice principal, which I did. I played by the rules but pushed the boundaries a little. It all went well and I felt like I had achieved one of those rare (for all teachers) great moments in education: interesting, provocative, informative.

Like other student teachers I was struggling with becoming a teacher. My attempts to push the boundaries was a way of convincing myself that I could be an educator in a system that I found constraining and limiting. Like many other teachers I was trying to fit into an organization with which I was not entirely comfortable. Its rules and regulations and lesson plans and Integrated Resource Packages and union regulations felt stifling. But I was also struggling with my new identity of student teacher. In many ways I didn't like being a student teacher. It felt like a demotion. I had already taught for four years, albeit without official certification. I had been a graduate student and even taught a course to prospective teachers the year before as a teaching assistant at UBC. Now I was just a student teacher and I felt I was constantly reminded that I was JUST a student teacher by everyone around me. Student teachers are not given a great deal of

respect or recognition. As I will explore in chapter four, we are seen as knowing little or nothing and considered to be naive neophytes in need of constant supervision and instruction. You don't feel very important as a student teacher.

On our first day on practicum, all of the student teachers were taken around the school and introduced to the school staff. Many teachers gave us pieces of advice<sup>38</sup> and offered warnings. Much of the help sprung from genuine good will, but much also came from a need to say "been there, done that, know so much more." My journal from the first day of practicum demonstrates how some teachers viewed us and also my defensiveness at such treatment:

As student teachers we were greeted kindly and most people were friendly and helpful. I must say though that most teachers' tones had a subtle tone of condescension or at least one of "I've been there and done that, you poor soul." We were introduced to one teacher as student teachers from UBC and she simply laughed at us--literally laughed at us! Then she said, "well this will be completely different from the university. Welcome to the real world--it's completely different here." I felt like saying, "oh really it sounds so scary out there in the real world can you please tell us what it's like." Then another teacher introduced herself and another teacher by saying "this is Julie Anderson and she was my supervisor when I was just a little student teacher." (10/20/1997)

During the practicum I was always aware that I was a student teacher, a special category. As student teachers we were asked to put up the tables and chairs for an assembly by one teacher. And her request was clear: "Would the student teachers please set up the tables and chairs." After awhile I began to wonder if we weren't a different species. One teacher was playing cribbage against me at lunch and while deciding what card to lay, he said, "I have to try to think like a student teacher, what would a student

---

<sup>38</sup> Unsolicited advice is given to student teachers on a regular basis by many teachers. A great number of student teachers tire of the advice and the condescension implicit in much of it.

teacher keep" (02/17/1998). He was actually implying that because I was a student teacher, I would play cribbage differently than someone who wasn't a student teacher, say a teacher for example!

I found that I was always fighting for a little status as a student teacher, a little self-respect. It is a position which is imbued with virtually no status, respect, or power. I simply wanted people to see me as more than JUST a student teacher; perhaps that is why I often caught myself explaining my past teaching experience to one person or another:

I have noticed that I always somehow manage to get around to telling other teachers in the school that I used to teach. I do this partly because it feels dishonest to participate in a conversation when the other person is saying everything based upon the assumption that I have never taught before. But I think I must also be doing it because I don't like the identity of student teacher; it feels too juvenile and without status. Perhaps all of the other student teachers make a point of explaining their previous experiences because nobody wants to be the know nothing. (02/ 5/1998)

As for becoming a teacher, I am not too sure. I have extremely mixed feelings, yet somehow doubt that I will go back and teach high school English again. I taught for four years in a First Nations community on the prairies. I had a fabulous time and left to do my Master's degree with a feeling of satisfaction and pleasure. I loved teaching. However, as I suspected this practicum demonstrated to me that teaching in the public system is different than working for a First Nations community. I had a great deal of freedom in the First Nations school to innovate and explore areas of interest to the students and myself. The public system feels constraining and highly regulated and systematized. I am not sure I could work for long in that environment. Also, notice above that I used the phrase "go back" when

I referred to the possibility of teaching again. I guess I feel like I have gotten a lot out of teaching and I am afraid that either there is not much left to get or that I may ruin what was a good career. Most people have two or three careers in a lifetime and I think I have had one; now I will look for another.

## **Conclusion**

I hope the above introduction to my five key informants (of which I am one) helps to contextualize the following discussions about discourse and identity. My goal for this chapter was to explore the idea of teaching identities in a general way and to familiarize readers with the five people who will reemerge throughout the remainder of this text. The following three chapters will look closely at the interaction of discourse and identity using these five people's experiences to illuminate the interactions. It is my belief that while many things influence our emerging teaching identities, one of them is the discourses which circulate throughout the teacher education program. These discourses speak to us as we find ways to be teachers. These discourses can participate in either limiting or expanding the scope of possible teaching identities. It is my hope that if faculty and students are more aware of the interaction between discourses and identity, then it will be more likely that the role of teacher will become open to many more enthusiastic and motivated people than it currently is.

## **Chapter Three: Student Teacher as Technician**

The first discourse examined in this study will, amongst other things, demonstrate the multidiscursive nature of teacher education. As one reads, attention should be paid to the way in which the discourses in this study interact and influence each other in ways that reinforce particular constructs of student teacher and teacher. In the following three chapters we will see how student teachers were told in various ways that they were to fit within the system, and not rock the boat. This is related to a construct of student teacher as someone who would not or should not work for social justice or educational change. This construct is reinforced by a discourse that positions student teachers as children and non-knowers, hence not equipped or ready to take responsibility for their own learning.

In this chapter we examine the discourse of Student Teacher as Technician. This discourse has clear and significant connections to the other two discourses, and, as we will see, they rely on each other for reinforcement:

Discourses derive their meaning against the background of other discourses. The meaning of discourses is intertextually constituted, in the sense that texts always bear the ideological imprint of other texts. (Hicks, 1996, p. 79)

The discourse of Student Teacher as Technician provides the basis, it could be said, for the other two discourses; perhaps it is vice versa, it is not important. What is important is that educators and student teachers see how discourses combine to situate the student teacher in ways that may be antithetical to the

learning and teaching enterprises.

The Student Teacher as Technician is one of the dominant discourses in teacher education today (Halliday, 1998; Giroux and McLaren, 1986). In contrast, much of the literature that critiques teacher education draws attention to the attendant problems of the "technocratic impulse" (Britzman, 1991). One of the most well known objections to the technical approach to education comes from Paulo Freire in his seminal work Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970). This work suggests one of the many connections between the discourses examined in this thesis. Freire posited a dichotomy between the traditional approaches to teaching and his own "problem posing education." He claimed that the *status quo* approach was one that treated information or knowledge as neutral, accessible capsules of truth. These pieces of knowledge were to be transferred, unaltered, to the students who were treated as empty receptacles waiting to be filled. Freire called this the "banking concept" of education. "In the banking concept of education knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those who they consider to know nothing [p]rojecting an absolute ignorance onto others" (1970, p. 58). Freire goes on to elaborate about "problem posing education," which involves teacher and student as active co-investigators. Freire clearly sees a link between technocratic discourses and those that situate the learner as non-knower.

To understand Freire's ideas is to understand the basis of much of the current critique of teacher education based on an objection to the teacher as technician. Inherent in Freire's theory of the banking approach are two criticisms central to the objections heard today within the teacher education literature. The first is that the banking approach (technical approach) treats the student as a non-knower, as someone who can only passively receive knowledge. Freire points out that the banking approach actually constructs the student as non-knower. This can

be seen in the above quotation in which he claims that the banking method *projects* ignorance onto the student. The second point central to his critique of the banking model is that it is a political structure which maintains the current social relations, to the benefit of the powerful in society. Hence the “pedagogy of the oppressed” is how he refers to problem posing education.<sup>39</sup>

It is possible to hear Freire’s description of the banking approach to education and its attendant problems in much of the contemporary critiques of the teacher, or student teacher, as technician (Britzman, Dipbo, Searle & Pitt, 1995; hooks, 1994; Phelan, 1994). Those who are concerned with issues of diversity, race, and class, not surprisingly, often have the clearest parallels to Freire. bell hooks in her book Teaching to Transgress (1994) makes clear her indebtedness to Freire in her thoughts on how to “transgress” (step across) a model which is based on sharing information to one that involves sharing in intellectual and spiritual growth and encourages critical engagement as opposed to passive reception (p. 13). This is a theme that, as we will see, recurred throughout my conversations and experiences in teacher education. The need to create an equitable educational experience for everyone is at the root of the rejection of the technical approach. However there is concern that educators have the banking or technical discourses so ingrained within their teaching subjectivities that responses to educational inequities will continue to be technical in orientation (Bartolome, 1994; Britzman, 1991).

[S]ince they (implicitly) perceive the academic underachievement of subordinated students as a technical issue, the solutions they require are also expected to be technical in nature (e.g. specific teaching methods, instructional curricula and materials). (Bartolome, 1994, p.174)

---

<sup>39</sup> The political effects of the technocratic approach to education will be explored more fully in chapter five. The ways in which one dominant discourse can support or subvert another will become clearer at that time.

This technical response will continue to marginalize already marginalized groups because technical "solutions" usually fail to recognize social and institutional barriers and reinforce the status quo. It appears that many believe that the technical approach works in opposition to teaching for social change (Beyer, 1996; Bartolome, 1994; Hollingsworth, 1992; Giroux & McLaren, 1986). The technical approach privileges and protects the dominant forms of knowledge from critique and hence lessens the possibility for pedagogies of change to be enacted.

Giroux and McLaren (1986) see the technical approach to education as an attempt to divert attention from issues of equity and justice which serve society's marginalized groups, to a focus on excellence (as defined by neo-conservatives <sup>40</sup>) which tends to serve the dominant groups. They see this in part being done by a redefinition of teacher work which, I would add, involves a redefinition of "teacher" and "student teacher". This redefinition is accomplished in part through what they refer to as a deskilling of the teacher. "The growing removal of curriculum development and analysis from the hands of teachers is related to the ways technocratic rationality is used to redefine teacher work" (Giroux & McLaren, 1986, p. 220). This technocratic rationality speaks directly to Michael Apple's (1989, 1990) concept of intensification (which will be explored more fully later in this thesis). By intensifying the amount of technical (and often trivial) tasks the teacher needs to attend to, the time needed to think or act for change is eliminated. The claim of intensification and resulting lack of engagement could easily be applied to teacher education at UBC.

Others feel that the technocratic impulse creates a false sense of stability and control within student teachers and that we need to work to foster comfort with

---

<sup>40</sup> The Holmes Report was a major American document which attempted this shift to excellence through a greater emphasis on the technical aspects of teaching. Current initiatives in Ontario (as in B.C.) such as standardized testing, teacher testing and increased emphasis on learning outcomes can also be seen as enforcing the dominance of a technocratic discourse.



contradiction and complexity in the practice of teaching. Hollingsworth (1992) feels the technocratic approach dominates teacher education programs and is coupled with a reproductive model which favours established expert knowledge and keeps a more critical approach from taking hold (p. 393). In several articles concerned with the technocratic impulse in education, we see a desire to remake the student of teacher education into someone who is comfortable with uncertainty (Britzman, 1991; Clark, 1988). Britzman, Dipbo, Searle, & Pitt (1995) see "technical rationality" as oppositional to complexity and heterogeneity.

We believe that the problem is that the contradictions and multiple realities implicit in the work of teacher and student are typically and mistakenly viewed as a barrier to be overcome, remedied and in a sense defensively occupied. This occupation mentality presents education as if it were a thing to be acquired, possessed, mastered, and settled. This after all is the technical rationality of teacher education. (p. 9)

Technical rationality, and its attendant discourse, does not prepare student teachers for the multiple realities they will work with. There is a perceived need to move from a "language of management to a language of learning" (Britzman, Dipbo, Searle, & Pitt, 1995, p. 14). Britzman, Dipbo, Searle, and Pitt (1995) leave us with a provocative question about the possibility of a different system:

What if teacher education began from the assumption that a great deal of its work is to produce debate, multiple perspectives on events, practices, and effects, creative dialogue on practices, and a more negotiational and hence active stance within learning and teaching? (p. 12)

### **Teacher as Practitioner: Theory and Practice**

Perhaps one of the most speculated on, and contentious, issues in teacher

education has to do with "Theory versus Practice". Students speculate endlessly about how valuable theory is to them in this crucial year of preparation for their careers as teachers. Most feel it is of little value to them, particularly now when they need to be preparing for what concerns (frightens) them most--running a classroom. Theory is relegated to the realm of a luxury (not now--not yet) or a diversion (not now--not ever). In the simple dichotomy (which has grown to mythic proportions), the school represents practice and the university represents theory. Both camps protect their turf like religious zealots or Macintosh users.

In the midst of this virtual battle over two ill-defined ideas (theory and practice) are the student teachers. They are forging an identity(ies) of teacher as these discourses of theory and practice pull at their sleeves. Make no mistake about it, the technocratic impulse wins, the sexiness of practice pervades, and theory is either forgotten or laughed at as might a small man with no armor going into battle. The student teacher is, I believe, greatly influenced by the technocratic talk of practice. This discourse is clearly dominant in the schools, but it is surprisingly present at the university as well--the defender of theory, the bastion of reflection.

While unquestionably student teachers need to wrestle with the reality of teaching, I will argue in this chapter that the university has acquiesced to the pressure of students, professional organizations, and more importantly schools in allowing the emphasis on practice to pervade even the program itself. I will further argue that a respect for and emphasis on theory could reconstruct the student teacher and hence teacher in very important ways. Universities have allowed the technocratic discourse to remain dominant and have allowed an image of teacher as technician, not theoretician, to flourish. The Associate Dean of Education, at the

time of this study, Charles Ungerleider,<sup>41</sup> shared this concern:

I think that the program we presently have, which is not unlike some of the better programs elsewhere, does a good job preparing people technically for teaching but not asking the broader questions. What is this in aid of? Why is it that we teach? Why is it that we have an education system? I worry that a person who successfully completes the program and performs at a high standard could see the technical part of teaching, the strategic part of teaching, as being all of teaching and I think that would be unfortunate. (08/06/98)

Ironically, I found that there was a great deal of student interest in theoretical questions and intellectual inquiry surrounding educational issues. Unquestionably there were many students who simply wanted to focus on what they thought were the real issues in education: "the how to's" not "the why do's." However, many other students showed a great deal of interest in theoretical inquiry. This should not be too surprising, given the fact that most of these students have recently completed a bachelor's degree in a specific discipline which was almost surely theoretical in nature. In fact, several students in the program commented on the contrast between their undergraduate experience and the teacher education program. There was an element of culture shock as these students moved from an academic program to a professional program. One student, Ashley,<sup>42</sup> had the following to say regarding the contrast:

It was no such kind of intellectual challenge here, but it was [a] different kind of challenge. It was like, can you do this on time? Can you manage your life to fit all this, your school practicum experience and your work--because I had to work, right--and you know, family life and volunteer working and stuff? Can you fit all that in? So in a way

<sup>41</sup> This is not a pseudonym. Charles offered permission to use his real name, insisting that his views were widely known.

<sup>42</sup> This pseudonym represents one of the two students who were part of my focus group but not part of the final four key informants.

it's more like practical life experience, time management, that I learned than intellectual things because it wasn't hard. I couldn't call it hard. (07/28/98)

Some students seemed to miss the intellectual challenge of their undergraduate years. Ophelia felt the de-intellectualized environment was "because it's a professional program and what I like is the university environment that values ideas, the pursuit of knowledge and truth. And it doesn't feel like this program is focused on those things" (12/10/97). In fact as the program progressed, Ophelia became frustrated with the lack of intellectual inquiry in the program:

Is there a chance--does anyone ever think of how intelligent students can be just drowning in lack of stimulation here? Does that cross their minds at all, that it's designed for the lowest common denominator? Is that the message about education? That if you're intelligent, you shouldn't really get involved? ... You end up--I don't know--The whole system is going to appeal to a lower intelligence, functionalist nature, and that's so not ideal. I think I'd want--I thought that institutions of higher learning were supposed to be pursuing a sort of ideal of intellectual accomplishment and I just don't see that in this faculty. Idealism is just killed by this program. (08/04/98)

I was surprised to discover a strong current of desire among students for theoretical and philosophical engagement with educational issues. I had developed a stereotype of the teacher education student as being preoccupied with discipline and lesson planning, and this turned out to be inaccurate. The fact of the matter was that many students felt intellectually deprived in the program and showed great relief when they came into contact with an instructor or course which was inclined towards broader, critical questions about the nature of education. There was a clear sense of relief and excitement when students encountered a class that dealt largely with educational theory, as can be seen in Ashley's

comments:

It was kind of enlightening and he valued everyone's opinion. I liked watching him freak out sometimes when people made comments. Yeah, it was kind of nice. Like, it made me feel more like a student but also at the same time sort of made me think. It was kind of nice.

JT: What do you mean, it made you feel more like a student?

Like when I had to think more, like in 3rd and 4th year, it was more like learning something new and I felt like I had to think. So, it was sort of--It put me back in that mode. (07/28/98)

The student above is talking about her Educational Studies 314 course--a course that is clearly seen by students and faculty as one of the more theoretical courses in the program. I found that many students enjoyed this course more than any others. This would appear to go against many preconceived notions (including mine) that students in teacher education do not want theory, that they are fixated on the practical aspects of teaching. If this finding is true, and I believe it is, it could provide significant support for those who would like to see teacher education move in this direction. Perhaps a deeper, more focused study in this area could produce useful and surprising conclusions.

I am not suggesting that teacher education students are, as a whole, angry because there is not enough theory in teacher education. What I am suggesting is that perhaps the notion that student teachers are preoccupied with the practical, technical aspects of teaching is overstated. If we look more closely at the discourses of theory and practice, we will find student teachers bemoaning the absence of both, not just the practical.

In the program, there is unquestionably a significant amount of theory presented to students in a staggering array of areas. However, as has already

been suggested, the breadth of this coverage limits the depth of this coverage, so that the theory student teachers do engage with is often limited or cursory, as Ophelia suggests:

And I like the theory. I'm not against learning all this theory. I would like to learn more theory. I just wish it wasn't done so shallowly. So I think that if they're saying--because we keep being told just bear with the fact that your time at school is theory and I know it's hard to imagine applying it to practice--but I don't feel like I've learned enough theory. I feel like I've learned all these silly formulas and how to get by. It's like they're trying to teach us basic teaching survival skills. It's just what you do. That's just how you get through the day when you're out there. So I don't want to be told that and given--Like even all the emphasis on POT [principles of teaching]--it was like 1-2-3-this, 1-2-3 that. It's all formulaic ... and that is--like what is that teaching me about teaching? (12/10/97)

I had experiences similar to Ophelia's. In Principles of Teaching we spent considerable time exploring learning outcomes and how to achieve them. Both instructors stressed that a good learning outcome is clearly measurable. This point was emphasized over and over again. For example, we were told that if we wrote that our objective was for our students to become familiar with poetic devices, we were being too vague. Our learning outcome should be, 'that students know seven out of the ten poetic devices studied'. In fact we were given a pattern of "ABCD" (A=audience, B= behaviour, C=condition, D= degree of proficiency). We were told that all of our lesson plans should follow this formula. An example would be: "In the classroom (condition) the students (audience) will be able to explain (behaviour) seven out of the ten poetic devices studied today (degree of proficiency)." We practiced writing measurable learning outcomes over and over again. On one of these occasions, I asked the instructor if it wasn't a good thing to have learning *objectives* sometimes and not *outcomes*? I asked if it might not be a good outcome

to have simply thought about an idea for a while--no level of proficiency to be measured: straight exploration (09/12/97)? The instructor deferred the question explaining that those types of exploratory approaches to teaching were difficult and complex and that we needed to stick to the formula we have. This was a possible moment to explore the theoretical differences between learning outcomes and learning objectives or inquiry versus proficiency. This was a moment in which a theoretical discussion could take place, but the instructor made it clear that now was not the time. We were told to focus on the technical, tried, tested, and true approaches to setting learning outcomes as mandated by the government. The instructor employed a discourse of development to reinforce the discourse of student teacher as technician. The implication of the response was that as apprentices we should stick to practicing for technical competency ... for now. "For now" can last a long time, perhaps forever.

Technicism flourished throughout the program. In one of my methods classes, I had to complete a one hundred lesson plan syllabus as the major assignment. This assignment was famous with prospective English teachers. All of us had heard of it before it was assigned. It required that students, in pairs, submit one hundred lesson plans for a grade and subject of their choosing. At this point we did not know what grade or school or subject our practica would take place in, so the chance of these being of use was slim. We were not required to explain our choices or to provide a theoretical justification for the subject matter or the approach we took. It appeared that the central point was repetition--a "you'll be able to do it in your sleep" kind of mentality.

To a great extent the Teacher as Technician discourse maintained its position in the program by claiming to prepare students for the reality of school life. Faculty were heard repeatedly justifying an exercise or lesson based on the fact

that it will prepare us well for teaching. Charles Ungerleider referred to this phenomenon with skepticism as "anticipatory socialization" (08/06/98). This phenomenon drew a great deal of anger from Ophelia:

And I think it feels like people are working really hard to buffer my entry into the profession. Well I don't want that kind of protection or help. I want to learn. I don't want to be told: this is how you can make your life a little easier. This is how you can impress someone in an interview. (12/10/97)

Although I see the value in a professional program preparing someone for the culture and environment they are about to enter, I think there are many ways this can be done. The approach that seems to have been chosen is "trial by fire". The logic behind this approach is if you can survive this, maybe you can survive what lies ahead. Implicit in this approach is that survival is your future goal. However, if this is true, the teacher education program may provide one of our last opportunities for sustained intellectual engagement with what it means to teach and what it means to be a teacher. We may never have the luxury of time, the time needed to stop and ask deeper, broader questions about education and its goals.

What did lie ahead proved to make the program appear heavily theoretical by virtue of contrast alone. The schools were not the university and they were proud of it. Teachers enjoyed making this clear, scoffing at "university ideas" and espousing the "real world". There is a clear sense, in the schools, that this is where you learn to teach as suggested by a school administrator:

Because the university can only provide you with the theoretical frame-work, you know, like cooperative learning sounds good and you can play around with it with the people in your class, but to come into a classroom setting and actually put the theory into practice, this is where our responsibility falls, I think, and sort of um, welcoming you



into the school culture, you know, you can't learn that on a campus, sort of just the day to day stuff that goes on in a school, the extracurricular things for example. You have to be at a dance to know how the dances go and you see the kids on a different level.  
(04/28/98)

Unfortunately, what I learned in the schools during the practicum was that my job was technocratic in nature. I did not have time to think about what I was teaching or why I was teaching it. If I was putting theory into practice, I didn't have time to recognize it as such. I did not even have time to plan the exciting lessons I imagined I would, let alone theorize about them. I simply tried as best I could to find ways to keep the students busy each day and hopefully make them think a little about literature and life. Attempts for meta-planning or broader educational thinking were, in effect, negated by the demands a teacher has to simply keep hundreds of students organized and occupied. This realization provides a great deal of frustration for most beginning teachers as it did for me:

Tonight I got home and told my friend Julie that I just didn't see myself as a teacher in the future. I told her that I just didn't feel like I could do what I wanted to do or should do within this system. And I don't want to go through life feeling like I am not doing my job the way it should be done. The system does not allow me the time or the freedom to innovate and experiment. Yeah, sure I have some freedom--but how much freedom do I really have? I am working my ass off right now and I don't even have a full teaching load. I estimate that I am putting in no less than 65 hours a week (probably over 70) just trying to keep up, and I use that phrase purposefully. I am still forced to throw together lessons at the last minute, and I am forced to stick to (I regret to admit) fairly formulaic approaches to teaching. These students are getting from me pretty much what they have gotten from every other teacher in their life. Yes I admit it, this is a real let down for me--I am disappointed. (03/30/98)

As the above scenario becomes your reality, thoughts of educational change or social justice fade, and thoughts of "teaching tactics" and "classroom

management" take over. Perhaps, then, it should not be surprising that the discourse that pervades the schools and teachers is one of technicism. Teachers appear to become less concerned with "why do I do this" and more concerned with "how do I do this." To illustrate: in one teacher education course I took, the class had both practicing teachers and student teachers in attendance. When the class was engaged in a discussion about deconstructionism and Rosenblatt (one of the lead thinkers on reader response theory), it was the practicing teachers who objected to the "overly theoretical" nature of the discussion. One teacher beside me asked, rhetorically, "What does this have to do with teaching"? (11/13/97). The student teachers, for the most part, were engaging actively and critically in the discussion.

Given this scenario and the prevalence of the technocratic discourse, it could be suggested that the further into the profession one goes, the less inclined one is to interact with theory or to think of education in broader philosophical or political terms. If this is true, the idea that student teachers are not yet ready for theory and need to focus on practical issues may be entirely wrong. Perhaps teacher education is precisely the time for theory, because it may be the last time!

What does this technocratic orientation to education suggest for the prospective teachers in the program? The program and the practica combine to form a discourse heavily laden with the construct of student teacher as technician. The emphasis on what I have called the "how to" approach tends to de-intellectualize the experience. The student of teacher education in their professional year of training is given the distinct impression that teaching is not about intellectual discovery or critical inquiry, but instead it is about task completion and classroom management. Student teachers are sent a message about the nature of education which they may carry with them into the schools. The message

is that teaching is what Paulo Freire described as the banking approach: the routinized and standardized transfer of segments of knowledge from the teacher to the student. Therefore student teachers are not encouraged to see education as a process of inquiry and discovery of contested meanings and debatable ideas.

I would propose that one way to approach this problematic construct of teaching and learning is to bring theory and practice together. If we can create a discourse in teacher education which does not dichotomize these two areas but instead employs a language which binds the two into the necessarily symbiotic relationship they actually operate in, perhaps we can bring a new intellectual energy into teacher education and create a construct of teacher as thinker and inquisitor. The idea of theory and practice working together is not a novel one (in theory!); many have seen the two as inseparable. One of the instructors in the program recognized the false nature of the theory/practice dichotomy:

And I think that when the students first come into the program, it makes sense to help people think and talk and work through questions of, you know, what do I do in a classroom if...? I've always thought a lot of those questions, if not most, are theoretical in nature. They're speculative. What do I do if a student uses a racist remark to another student? That's an important practical issue, but also there's a lot of theoretical stuff to be worked through. (07/31/98)

If we stop to think about it, every practical question has a theoretical basis to be explored if we choose. If we take even some of the simplest practical educational questions like what to do when Johnny swears, there are multiple theoretical levels to respond to. We could ask ourselves why swearing is seen as such a major issue in education and society. How did he swear? Was it abusive? or was it simply exclamatory? Should we consider what caused Johnny to swear? Is Johnny frustrated by an academic or social failure? If we decide that action is necessary, is

punishment the best avenue? The point is that the practical issue of swearing is also, inevitably, a theoretical issue. Likewise, a theoretical issue like traditional education versus progressive education has very practical ramifications for how we will approach our students and subject matter in the classroom. Jackson, one of the participants in my research, appeared to discover the link between theory and practice when he was explaining why he liked a particular instructor:

I guess the reason I liked it was 'cause Ken, one of the great things he can do is he can make you think about how it applies to your life so you kind of actively, "actively" engage in the information ... So [we're] given that real chance to work with ideas, even though it won't be applicable to, maybe to us in terms of the actual class teaching. It does show who we are as teachers and it shows us what our teaching styles are and how it's going to affect maybe how we teach other kids. Maybe, you know, how to relate to their learning styles. So in a sense I think it is, I think it is quite practical because of the fact that you're just getting a chance to realize who you are as a teacher. (07/30/98)

For Jackson, this instructor seemed to know how to make the link between theory and practice clear, necessary even. If teacher educators can use a discourse which brings theory and practice together instead of apart, perhaps we will see teachers conceptualize themselves more readily as intellectual leaders and see teaching as a process of guided discovery. However, it appears that for now the dichotomy remains powerful and student teachers are surrounded by a technocratic discourse which emphasizes control over discovery and information over inquiry. One of the most powerful tools education has for maintaining the focus on technicism is that of assessment and evaluation. There are many other subdiscourses of technicism which could be examined; discourses of evaluation are only one. Hopefully, a look at one will begin to suggest how student teachers are kept in lock step with the technocratic nature of teaching which lies ahead. A

brief look at assessment and evaluation in the program and the practica will demonstrate how one aspect of education maintains our focus on practice and issues of control.

### **Student Teacher as the Evaluated / Student Teacher as the Evaluator**

My feeling ... [as] it's ending is not to jeopardize what I've worked so hard to do over the last 13 weeks. Right? So shut my mouth, make myself invisible and do what they say. (Brent--06/15/98)

There are many subdiscourses which make up the Student Teacher as Technician discourse, such as Student Teacher as Disciplinarian. Although not all of these can be explored in this thesis, an in-depth examination of one such discourse should prove both instructive and enlightening. Prospective teachers and teacher educators can see how one such discourse is woven into the very fabric of teacher education and perhaps can strengthen their personal agency through such awareness. The discourse I would like to explore is that of evaluation. While technical discourses such as discourses of discipline and planning were dominant, I was surprised to find a strong presence of a discourse of assessment and evaluation. Student teachers are, quite literally, exposed to an endless array of assessments of their performance throughout the program and the practica. Furthermore, evaluating students on the practica and in the future was a major preoccupation. The discourse of evaluation was technical in nature and presupposed a major component of the teacher's role as one of assessor and evaluator. This role usurped other potential roles the student teachers might take on as teachers, roles which might have suggested a greater focus on exploration and learning. The level and type of evaluation the student teacher had to endure in the teacher education program suggested a type of education which was heavily

reliant on rote memorization and the ranking of students. Of course, there was plenty of less structured forms of assessment, some clearly employed to increase student thinking and learning. However, as the following look at Discourses of Assessment will demonstrate, a heavy reliance on technocratic approaches to assessment used as forms of discipline and knowledge display were common.

The teacher education program was assessment intensive. I was constantly writing small papers and studying for tests. Having done my undergraduate degree in English and graduate work in educational studies, I was not prepared for the level of assessment I encountered in the program. In fact I could not remember the last time I had written an exam. My senior undergraduate years and graduate years focused on exploring ideas and developing personal theories related to literature or schools. The expository essay was the central, almost only, form of assessment I faced prior to starting the teacher education program.

As I have already stated, I had to take a course in linguistics in order to gain entry into the secondary English stream of teacher education. This course consisted entirely of rote memorization and regurgitation:

I was feeling completely overwhelmed today in class. I was concentrating every minute of class in order to record and understand an astounding number of pieces of information. I just wanted it to end. I am getting really, really frustrated with this constant barrage of technical information which I have no interest in. I seriously question the need for me or any teacher (English or otherwise) to have this detailed an understanding of linguistics memorized and locked away in their heads. The way I see it is if for some bizarre reason I may need to access some of this information in the future, I can always pull a book off a shelf and remind myself of the needed part. This obsession which educators have with committing things to memory (a vice I have been guilty of) is at best annoying. "You'd better write this down--you'll be responsible for it on the exam" are some of the most annoying words I can think of. (7/24/97)

This course prepared me for what was to come: a staggering array of detailed

capsules of information which I was supposed to commit to memory and display when required. The focus on content and testing of that content leads students, at any level, to concern themselves with what they will be tested on. Students refuse to take the time with an idea or body of knowledge that does not pertain to what will be tested. Any teacher can tell you that this is the case. Students, all of us, if tested repeatedly or excessively, will think only of the test: hence the oft heard refrain, "will this be on the test"? I suffered from this syndrome, like anyone else.

The mid term exam is a week away and our thoughts and concerns are slowly narrowing in on that ultimate event--our *raison d'être*. I find myself, along with others, thinking and asking "will this be on the exam?", "Do we have to know this for the exam?", "what is on the exam?" I said to a student next to me "I wonder if this will be on the test." That is all I care about at this point. I have already told the student next to me that I don't plan or want to be the highest grade in the course I just want to complete it with a 70%. That is my goal for this course, not learning certain concepts or skills. I have no goal of personal growth or enlightenment, I just want a 70. I do not find myself drifting off into esoteric discussions or personal thoughts about something that caught my interest. Not true--because what catches my interest these days is what will be on the exam. I actually caught myself saying to my neighbour "she may nail us on this one on the test." But didn't she set this up? She started the course by telling us the course would have a mid-term and a final 60-40. That's it.  
(7/21/97)

Many faculty members went to great lengths to justify the amount and type of assessment in the program. One instructor even scoffed at the idea of less assessment and a more exploratory approach to education:

In the 70's we got away from measurement. Let's just say we were all in love with each other [sarcasm]. They didn't believe in grading. We have come full circle. Teachers have to be accountable. How do we tell if they're accountable--through this stuff here--[she points at the overhead full of graphs, stats, means, standard deviations: numbers].  
(05/28/98)

Some instructors clearly believed that content was central to teacher education and that testing ensured that we, the students, acquired that content. However, many instructors engaged in the tests and exams grudgingly, demanded to do so by the faculty of education or their department. Several courses had a mandatory final exam largely in order to encourage a standardized curriculum across twenty or more sections. The reason most often given for the desire for a standardized curriculum was that students complained that they were not having a standard experience!<sup>43</sup> The exams make both the students and the instructors accountable for the required information to be taught. But does that aid learning? Of the material covered and tested in the linguistics course, I remember virtually nothing. I had to commit endless amounts of rules and facts to memory, yet I am hard pressed to remember anything except that a diphthong is the combination of two vowel sounds ( I think).

Ideally, we are told, testing should not only tell us where students stand in comparison with each other, but it should reveal to both teacher and student areas of weakness and strength. However, in a study by Philip Jackson (1990) which examined fifty "outstanding teachers," he found that most distrusted testing and felt that it told them little or nothing that they didn't already know through observation. I am not suggesting that testing does not have its place in education, but like those teachers, I distrust our reliance on it and question our true intent when using it. Too often we rely on testing as a means of control. We use evaluation to bend our students to what we see as appropriate behaviours--in the case of student teachers, behaviours appropriate for future teachers. We also use evaluation to ensure compliance to our world view. This is how history occurred, right? (pass or

---

<sup>43</sup> This is an ironic complaint given that their desire for a standard experience was born out of a desire to have a fair examination process!



fail). This is how you should teach, right? (pass or fail). If we are looking for educational change (and I am), we should consider the barrier to change that a heavy reliance on evaluation represents.

If assessment played a large part in the program, it played a huge role in the practical! On more than one occasion, I heard a student teacher refer to the practicum as "one giant test." I believe that the dominant role that evaluation played in the program critically shaped the experience we had as student teachers. The continuous assessment led us to a technocratic approach to teaching which limited our chances for personal exploration and effective learning.

The practicum experience is structured almost entirely around evaluating the prospective teacher. The sponsor teachers would announce a visit to "my" classroom by saying, "I'm going to do an evaluation tomorrow." I did not have a visit from either my sponsor teachers or my faculty advisor except for the purpose of evaluation. There were various evaluative forms to be filled out during the practicum by my various supervisors.<sup>44</sup> There were forms for regular visits, end of two-week practicum, mid point of extended practicum, and final reports. These reports generally listed things my supervisors liked or did not like about my teaching. After the evaluation, I was provided with a copy (white), and various other copies (canary, pink, gold) went elsewhere. I ended up with quite a large collection of reports that formed an extensive list of "goods" and "bads". Examples are: "good example--aware of the pervasiveness" (04/16/98), "good introduction to the play" (03/25/98), "No one is listening to the announcements. You might want to mention that when you talk about their behaviour in START [silent reading]" (02/27/98), "handouts need to be three-hole punched before they are handed out" (01/30/98).

You become very self-conscious when your every move is being recorded

---

<sup>44</sup> Various evaluation forms used by UBC can be found in the appendices.

and evaluated, and your teaching becomes self-conscious as well. I could actually feel myself change and tighten on those days I was being evaluated. How we taught was structured by the evaluative nature of the experience. Brent commented on this phenomenon repeatedly:

The kids need time to talk to one another. You can't have them for three hours where they don't interact at all. You're assuming that the last teacher let them talk, but you can't assume that. You know, you gauge it as you go through the lesson and everyone's tapping their pens and giving sign language to other students and you go, OK, time to be a little flexible. But then when you're being evaluated, how flexible can you actually be. (06/15/98)

I think most students during the practica feel an overwhelming, yet unsatisfied, need to experiment. Beginning teachers have been thinking about the act of teaching for at least two years if not more. They have rehearsed possible scenarios, lesson plans, and classroom procedures in their heads numerous times. I know, I've done it myself. When a beginning teacher gets in a classroom, they want to try to implement these ideas, and when they do, they want to experiment over and over with different ideas depending on what worked and what didn't. In order to discover what doesn't work, a student teacher needs to be able to make mistakes. It could be said that mistakes are crucial to the learning process, but many students felt they could not risk mistakes. Brent referred to mistakes while teaching as "learning mistakes":

Well, in anything you do you can make mistakes. I didn't feel like I could make mistakes on this practicum. Right? You learn from your mistakes. Even the students. They can make mistakes because they're learning from their mistakes. I didn't think that I had the ability to make those learning mistakes. Because you were being evaluated and the practicum reports were what you were all about. I mean, that was your final. They say that no one looks at your grades, they only

look at your practicum report. You make a mistake, it's your practicum report that follows you around. How are you going to get a job?  
(06/15/98)

Student teachers' ability to experiment is already limited by the fact that the classroom they are in is not really their own. The overly evaluative nature of the practica, however, is the most limiting aspect of the experience. Many students reported how they were not able to experiment or develop their own teaching voice due to the constant evaluations.

It was generally understood that if you failed teacher education, you did so on the practicum. Few students failed teacher education as a result of the course work. With this knowledge tucked in the back of our minds, we did not want to do anything that might offend or annoy our various supervisors. Furthermore, we wanted to please these people and convince them that we would make competent teachers. Having had plenty of experience as students, we knew that the best way to please most teachers was to give them what they want, and in the case of the practica that meant being as much like our sponsor teachers as possible. Experimenting with different teaching styles or approaches to classroom management was a risk we could not afford to take. Unquestionably, some students had sponsor teachers who were willing to let their protégé experiment and become a teacher very different from themselves. But, from the extensive interviews, conversations, and observations I participated in, I would say with confidence that this was the exception and not the rule.

My observations in teacher education, as in life, suggest that although we live in a world of numerous cultures, competing realities, and contested histories, people still tend to believe there is only one way to do things: their way. For many people, the very act of someone doing something in a way they would not, directly

challenges their approach and beliefs. Instead of simply accepting that there are multiple ways to approach an issue or problem, we tend to see another way as a challenge, perhaps maybe even as a hint that our way is wrong. The result of this in teacher education is a practicum experience for most student teachers of trying to please their sponsor teachers through mimicry and compliance. There is no room for debate. If, as a student teacher, you feel there might be another way to do things, it quickly becomes apparent that you should keep this to yourself. Debating approaches to education with your sponsor teachers is not generally seen as a smart way to succeed in your practicum. In fact, one of the categories you are evaluated on is "accepts and acts on advice and suggestions". It was another student teacher, Karen,<sup>45</sup> who pointed out the beauty of this category. If you do insist on your own approach to an aspect of teaching and you present a sound argument for doing so, they may have a hard time failing you for doing things your own way, but they can say that you do not "accept and act on advice and suggestions." On one occasion, Karen attempted to defend herself against what she felt were decontextualized and unfair criticisms. She suggested they go back and look at the comments in their original context, on the evaluation forms. This suggestion was seen as defensiveness: "She would write everything down, everything I was saying. So I just thought forget it, I'm just not, I'm just not going to even say anything. I'll just listen to what she says and say 'thank you'. I wasn't going to say anything until the final report was signed ..." (05/11/98).

Student teachers throughout the program quickly picked up on their no-win situation and came to the obvious conclusion, which Jackson articulates in the following passage:

---

<sup>45</sup> Karen is the pseudonym for one of the two research participant who was first recruited as part of the group of six but not included as one of the four case studies, for reasons already explained. The sixth member will appear later in the thesis.

I think for the time being all I'm going to do is. . .the best advice I got from my girlfriend, [she] said well don't do anything controversial. Don't make them do anything that would make your parents upset for the time being, especially right now. Or don't do anything that would get you kicked out of the faculty for the time being. Wait 'til you get your job. Wait 'til you get your contract, then do what you think is right. I think I probably will do that. I probably won't do anything with my class that's overly critical, or overly subjective. . . .actually I've talked with other students about this and they've all said, Yeah, that's the way to go for the time being. Just jump through the hoops, just jump as high as they want, and at the end when it's all said and done, you have your job and go for it. (12/09/97)

Jackson goes on to express his frustration at the bind he is in:

I think we all came here with ideas how we would like to teach a class, how we would like schools to be run, how we would like to just be with our students, and it's great and everything that they're telling us these different insights and stuff, but the fact of the matter is, they're not really giving us an opportunity to explore or even to practice what we think. (12/09/97)

Many students expressed similar ideas to those Jackson expressed. Repeatedly, students would explain how they had no choice but to jump through hoops and dream of the future when they had their own classrooms and could do what they wanted. Constant assessment and its weighty nature caused students to give their supervisors what they wanted whether the demands were stated or not. Student teachers learned quickly, through experience or stories, that experimentation and developing personal teaching styles were luxurious risks they could not afford. Student teachers learned, primarily, to give their supervisors what they wanted. As one student teacher said, "I didn't even think of the students when I planned my lessons full of smoke and mirrors. [I just thought] hey my FA's gonna

love this!" (05/29/98). Brent made a similar comment:

I stopped flowing, as we use the word now. I stopped flowing--I just gave them what they wanted. They want to see strict--I'll give them strict. You sit on the floor, you in the cloakroom, fine, done. I was totally teaching for the sponsor. I was teaching for the fact that she might be underneath the window, listening in on my lessons. I was teaching for the PA, because that can be turned on! (06/15/98)

This emphasis on pleasing your supervisors clearly inhibited creativity and experimentation. Student teachers' opportunities to learn were also unquestionably limited by this dynamic. I know that I did not experiment to the level I would have if there had been less assessment. Of course, I did experiment somewhat, as other student teachers must have. But I did so in quiet ways when I felt a "visit" was unlikely. To be fair, my sponsor teachers did afford me more freedom than the average student, ironically in part due to the fact that I was, in a sense, assessing them, and because they were aware of my (comparative) extensive teaching experience. Even having certain freedoms, I felt very constrained in what I could attempt. I wanted my certification as badly as anyone else, and we all felt and knew that our certification was very much on the line. There are two or three people who have the power to allow you to become what you have decided you want to be, and those people hold power over you in every other way because of that one piece of power which allows them to say, "yes you are a teacher" or "no you will not be allowed to teach." This power continually reinforced through moments of assessment leaves the student teacher in a position of taking no risks, making no mistakes, and leaving learning until later in order to focus on the only thing that matters--pleasing their supervisors.

## **Conclusion**

I recall that before I began this study I was speaking with a group of faculty members and graduate students about my ideas for studying teacher training, when I was stopped mid-sentence and corrected. I was told that what I meant to say was "teacher education," not "teacher training." I corrected myself and carried on, using the term "teacher education". More recently I was in a similar situation and again I used the term "teacher training" and someone corrected me, but this time I didn't budge. I told them that in fact I meant to use the word "training" because that is exactly what it is. When we decide to start educating our future teachers instead of training them, I will reintroduce the term "teacher education" into my talk; for now it will remain "teacher training."

Technocratic discourses still dominate teacher education after decades of reform-minded faculty have attempted to change this reality. It appears that part of the reason technicism continues to dominate the teacher education landscape is in part due to demands by the students. However, this research suggests that a demand for practical, technocratic solutions to teaching problems does not mean an absence of a demand for more theoretical and inquiry-oriented approaches as well. The students' demand for both only reaffirms what some have suspected for a long time, namely that the theory/practice divide is an artificial one which needs to be broken down. Furthermore, while we strive for less technocratic discourses to take hold in teacher education, we must recognize the powerful influence that the practicum has in maintaining a technocratic focus. Many students come to the practicum with creative ideas for change but must abandon them to the school culture which demands the maintenance of the status quo and has some powerful levers in the form of student teacher assessment to enforce compliance. If teacher education at UBC and elsewhere chooses to acquiesce to the schools and allow them the final say on who will and who will not be a teacher, they can continue to

expect the technocratic discourses to dominate and enculturate future teachers. Finally, if the practicum experience continues to rely heavily on assessment with virtually no instructive (teaching) component,<sup>46</sup> the opportunities for learning through risk taking (or otherwise for that matter) will be limited.

### **A Final Thought**

I would like to close this chapter with one final thought. The practicum for almost every student is a stressful experience. Many believe it should be so. Many believe that it should be trial by fire--weed out the weak. I do not think so, but that is not my central point. My central point is that for many it was an unbelievably stressful experience, and for a significant number of people it was more than that. In fact, I was amazed, nearing the end of the practicum, to discover that quite a number of people were in my opinion close to a nervous breakdown--some were having one. I witnessed several people crying on a regular basis. At the risk of overstating it, there were many people who were being introduced to what would be their lifelong vocation in a manner that was unquestionably negative. Certainly we need to expose prospective teachers to the tougher sides of the job, but must they live through hell as some sort of perverse testament to their suitability for the job? I would like to think that in a preparatory year we might expose our future teachers to a little stress and a whole lot of the joy of teaching and learning--the same joy they will hopefully expose their future students to. Unfortunately student teachers see and hear little about joy and a whole lot about survival and stress. Survival and stress were part of a noticeable discourse surrounding teaching. This discourse says, "This is your future, get used to it." This discourse is one of pain and despair, and should not be the welcome mat to the teaching profession. An

<sup>46</sup> I experienced only one formal moment of being taught to teach (a district workshop) and few, if any, non-formal instances of being taught to teach. The practicum involved either learning through observation, or being evaluated. There was no instruction.



entry from my journal depicts the tone near the end of the practicum:

It is unfortunate that we are glad to leave. It is unfortunate that many people walk away exhausted, beaten down, and wondering a little if they can and if they want to do this for the rest of their lives. This experience should be, for most, a positive, exhilarating, reaffirming experience. We should leave the practicum thrilled with our new found vocation. On Saturday night I saw a handful of student teachers at a party and we talked about how hard this has been--what a test of fortitude it has been. I told them that I had taught before and that it wasn't this bad. I told them that I had my own room and I wasn't constantly being judged and when I was exhausted I could take a day and say to the students "let's just relax". The other student teachers looked at me and one said, "You mean teaching isn't this bad?" It's a shame that in the last week of the extended practicum there are people asking this question. (04/26/98)

## Chapter Four: Student Teacher as Child

Perhaps the most dominant discourse in teacher education at UBC is that of Student Teacher as Child. There are numerous sub-discourses which fall under this general heading I have created, and all of these discourses serve to position the student of teacher education as a child. The program and the practicum were littered with talk of hierarchies, development, and authority; in fact the program structure was a text in itself and said many interesting things without a word being spoken. The virtual absence of discourse that positioned student teachers as adults was startling.<sup>47</sup> All of these discourses have serious ramifications for how others and ourselves conceptualize the role and identity of teacher. I felt the influence of these discourses, as did others, but that does not mean we accepted them passively.

It is interesting to think of the place the words "adult" and "child" play in education. It would be hard to deny that the word "student" is almost inextricably linked with "child", as "teacher" is with "adult". Prior to my study and during it, I began to notice more and more that faculty members almost uniformly referred to their students as kids. This term is so pervasive that graduate students teaching for the first time often referred to their students as kids also. This is particularly amazing given the fact that most graduate students (and some faculty) will inevitably have students in their classes who are older than they are. Of course, this link between student and child should not be surprising given that historically few people went to school beyond their childhood years. Furthermore, up until the last decade it was rare to meet an undergraduate student over the age of twenty-

---

<sup>47</sup> However, I will include a couple of the few examples I encountered because I think they are valuable for the potential for discursive change they represent.

three or twenty-four (Manos & Kasambira, 1998). Today students are getting older, not to mention that teacher education is a post-degree program.<sup>48</sup> The average age of a teacher education student in the year of this study was between 26 and 27 years of age (Charles Ungerleider, personal communication, 08/06/98). In an interview Charles Ungerleider, then the Associate Dean of the faculty of education, ruminated on the status and age of university students:

But we even have a category of mature student. Right? So it tells you something that the student role in North America, and I suspect worldwide, is inherently one of diminished status and seen as one of diminished capacity. I think it's unfortunate, but I think that is structurally the case. (08/06/98)

It is now much more common to have people coming to teaching from other professions (Manos & Kasambira, 1998), with the result that most classes have people in their thirties, forties, and fifties, and every teacher education program is sure to contain more than a handful of grandparents and plenty of parents. The time when one could unproblematically associate student with child is long over, yet the discourse survives. As critical discourse analysis suggests (Casey, 1996; Hicks, 1996; Luke, 1996), we should concern ourselves with the possible impact this discourse has on student teachers and on teachers as they negotiate the public spaces of teacher education and education in general. "It is through language that we ... negotiate a sense of identity, since language does not merely reflect reality, but plays an active role in constructing it" (Giroux & McLaren, 1986, p. 220).

In this chapter I will look at several sub-discourses of the student teacher as

---

<sup>48</sup> UBC chooses to list almost all of its teacher education courses using numbers in the three hundreds indicating that not only are these courses not post graduate in nature, but they are not even fourth year equivalents. Furthermore, The vast majority of teacher education programs in North America are one year post-degree programs. However, there are some concurrent degree programs in which you earn your B.A. and your B.Ed. simultaneously over a five year period.

child discourse and how they were a daily influence on us as we were taught to teach. The sub-discourses are as follows: discourses of knowing, discourses of authority and hierarchy, discourses of development. I conclude by examining the teacher education program as a text.

### **Discourses of Knowing: Student Teacher as Non-Knower**

I will begin by acknowledging a bias which will become clear as I explore the constructs of student of teacher education that are possible within this theme. I feel strongly about the need for teacher education to work towards a more respectful construction of the student teacher, one that views them as a knower. As C.P.T Diamond (1993) points out: "In many teacher education programs, the existence and legitimacy of teachers' individual words and knowledge seem rarely acknowledged" (p. 513). To change this norm means recognizing the value and validity of the student teacher's experiences, skills, and knowledge. The respect for student experience and knowledge about which I am speaking has also been referred to as recognizing "voice" (Fine, 1987). However, as many feminist theorists and critical pedagogues have been careful to point out, we must not unproblematically accept voice or experience, or knowledge (Ellsworth, 1992; Orner, 1992; Giroux & McLaren & McLaren, 1986). I concur, but I believe that we can respect students at all levels as thinkers and knowers without unproblematically accepting voice as beyond critique. Such respect will, I believe, lead to a richer, more active form of learning for everyone involved.

As stated above, however, the student of teacher education is repeatedly being discursively constituted as a "child". Obviously anyone is capable of realizing that a thirty year old is not a child. However, one can see a person as, physically, being an adult while simultaneously viewing them, socially or

professionally, as a child. One way we, in teacher education, were positioned as a child was through our relation to knowledge. Traditional approaches to education viewed the child as lacking knowledge and the teacher as having the knowledge the student needed. Therefore, it was simply a case of transferring the knowledge from the teacher to the empty vessel, the child; an approach we saw as central to a technical approach to education examined in the last chapter. This model of education was what Paulo Freire called the "banking concept". Freire contrasts the "banking concept" with "problem posing education" which involves teacher and student as active co-investigators. Using Freire's concepts we can see how the discourses of Student Teacher as Technician and Student Teacher as Child are linked. One discourse supports the other.

Of course there was some lip service in the program to approaches to education similar or indebted to "problem posing education."<sup>49</sup> We were often reminded that we should take a constructivist approach to learning, building on what our students already know. Our texts often warned us of the dangers of not respecting the learner:

Admittedly, keeping those wonderful bits of knowledge to oneself is difficult, but telling students too much puts the teacher in the role of holder of the truth and the students as those who know little or nothing. Such an arrangement encourages passive learning. (Maxwell & Meiser, 1997, p. 188)

But our experiences in teacher education classrooms and on practicum repeatedly suggested that we knew little or nothing about teaching. For example, in one class related to evaluation, the professor explained that next class we would examine creativity. I felt enthusiastic about the need to evaluate creativity and nodded my head as she pointed out that most people see fostering creativity as an objective in

---

<sup>49</sup> Such approaches include student-centred education, democratic education, and problem-based education.

education. She then went on to say that we needed to consider this area because "none of you have a clue what creativity is or how to evaluate it". At this point I became defensive. I thought, "of course we do, we may need to think more about it, but that doesn't mean we are completely ignorant" (06/03/98). This discourse is commonplace in teacher education and education in general for obvious reasons. The very notion of being a teacher involves knowledge. For many teachers their identity is linked to what they know. If I don't know something that you don't, how can I be a teacher? Many teachers focus on content and relaying what they know to those who don't: their students. Of course, knowledge transmission is part of the educational enterprise, but it is not the essence of it.

It is not surprising, then, that we as student teachers participate in this discourse. As we prepare to teach, we develop an identity based on a notion of us and them; that is us as knowers and them as non-knowers. One extreme example of this discourse came during a student presentation in one of my classes as the presenter issued the following five statements in sequence, with reference to the high school students we would be teaching:

"they're not like us"  
"they don't know about English"  
"they don't have years of English experience"  
"they don't even know how their experiences connect  
to the poem"  
"they just don't know!" (09/08/97)

As stated earlier, the discourse of student as non-knower causes teachers to position themselves as knowers or often as all-knowing. Kenneth Zeichner (1993) calls for teacher educators to make our deliberations and uncertainties as teachers more visible to our students, allowing them to reject the construct of teacher as expert to and become more comfortable with ambiguity. One of the repercussions

of the construct of teacher as expert is that learners rarely get to see the messiness of learning being modeled. If as a teacher we know everything, then our students will never get to observe us in the process of learning. We try to teach them how to learn, but we rarely show them how to learn. Often for teachers it is seen as embarrassing to not know something; to be caught out, so to speak. We try to conceal our inevitable ignorance in certain areas, and absolutely never ask for student input on a problem we have encountered. The following excerpt from my journal during the practicum offers my reaction of having the messiness of teaching and learning concealed from me:

A couple of days ago I walked in to Tracy's [my sponsor teacher] class and she was talking to a student and asking him if he would be okay with the same mark as he got on the previous assignment. I couldn't quite understand what they were talking about, but it was clear that Tracy was a little awkward with my presence, almost embarrassed. It quickly became clear that she had lost his assignment (but remembered receiving it) and was offering him the 'B' he received on the previous assignment. Hardly a spectacular or unusual moment in education. Shit happens, as they say. But it struck me as odd somehow. It came back to mind yesterday when I had some students complain to me that they had been waiting for 5 weeks for their tests back in Rhonda's [my other sponsor teacher] class and yet she had not mentioned anything about a backlog or some such thing. Neither of these events is particularly unique in a school, nor, would I say, do either speak badly about either teacher, they simply represent the reality of a complex and demanding job. What struck me as interesting is that both of these teachers [my sponsor teachers] never speak to me about their difficulties or struggles. They do not share confusions or questions. Instead they present themselves as knowledgeable and organized veteran teachers (although Tracy is younger than I).

I believe the structure of the S.T. [student teacher], F.A. [faculty advisor], sponsor teacher relationship (not to mention the structure of schools and universities) is such that they are placed in the position of authority and expert and must play that role consistently in order to retain the right to judge me worthy of teaching or not. This means that we must have the same hierarchical and distanced relationship that we have with the kids in the schools. In my opinion this is a great loss.

We cannot (due to the norms and structures) have discussions about approaches to education, we cannot debate each other's styles, and we cannot be willing or able to learn from each other. Therefore, Tracy never says to me, "God, John I am having a real problem in my grade 8 English class, do you have any ideas," because she is supposed to be the one with ideas and I am supposed to be the one without ideas. (02/26/98)

The discourse of student teacher as knower or adult also exists, albeit to a lesser extent.<sup>50</sup> In fact a look at the literature suggests that there are a great many teacher education faculty members across North America talking the talk of student as knower. A portion of the literature is particularly interested in how the relationship that the student teacher has with faculty and school advisors is influenced by the perception of student as knower or non-knower. This concern could be classified as relational. Kathe Taylor in "Letting Go of the Bike" (1995) describes an alternative teacher education program which attempts to reconstruct the student of teacher education as knower through a "community of learners" approach. Using this approach they attempt to weaken the traditional hierarchy of learning situations that position the teacher as knower and the student as non-knower. The shift away from the traditional framework can be seen in the theme of the first term of their program, which is "teachers as learners, learners as teachers" (Taylor, 1995, p. 71). She describes a learning community as "a diverse group of people who come together ... to learn something through each other's experiences" (Taylor, 1995, p. 73). It is interesting to note that diversity is emphasized in this definition. Perhaps it is emphasized because when we assume homogeneity we assume that there must be one expert within a group of people who have the same experience and knowledge base. That student teachers are

<sup>50</sup> Perhaps that is not entirely true. It may be accurate to suggest that the two discourses co-exist in a written form, but that the 'student teacher as non-knower' discourse is accompanied by a significant amount of verbal and non-verbal discourse which outweighs the written 'student teacher as knower' discourse. That is a fancy way of saying that many faculty talk the talk but don't walk the walk.



diverse in their backgrounds helps to remind us that we all have something to learn from each other (Beyer,1996; Cole, 1996; Clandinin,1993; Hollingsworth, 1992). Barbara Kennard (1994) wanted to reconstruct or "re-story" the relationship between student teachers and cooperating teachers. The fact that she refers to herself in her article as a "cooperating teacher" suggests a certain attempt to re-story herself out of the position of "supervising teacher." Much attention has been paid to a democratization of the supervisory relationship, in part, by recognizing the student of teacher education as knowledgeable. I think it is important to notice the emphasis that these educators and theorists place on language and discourse in their attempts to reform teacher education.

An example of the democratic impulse in teacher education can be found in Susan SooHoo and Thomas Wilson's (1994) work in which they explain (ask) in the introduction to their teacher education course the value of everyone being seen as sources of knowledge:

This course begins with the assumption that each member of the class is a valuable resource of knowledge. The instructor and students are all teachers and learners, whose jobs are to make this course meaningful. We are equally responsible to contribute to the pool of knowledge. Do you agree? (p. 64)

SooHoo and Wilson's work is part of a considerable body of literature which concerns itself with reforming teacher education through an emphasis on democratic education (Shah, 1996; SooHoo & Wilson, 1994; Novak, 1994; Kelly,1994; Beyer,1996).

In the teacher education program at UBC there were several professors who made significant steps toward a more democratic relationship with teacher education students, thereby constructing them as knowers and seeking to give

them some control over their educational experience. Early in the year I walked into a class and was pleasantly surprised to hear someone talking to me as one adult to another. This faculty member clearly was attempting to implement the democratic education theory. The following passage from my journal captures, I believe, my excitement over the distinctly refreshing tone this class offered in contrast to the norm:

The instructor began by introducing himself and saying, "I'll be teaching this course and hopefully you'll be teaching me." My head popped up and I took a long look at this man. This was a good start. He sounded relaxed and the hierarchy bullshit of "I'm the expert and I'll try to enlighten you novices," was gone. Perhaps there was a reason for this. One of the reasons I slowly discovered was that because this course was at 4:30, teachers working on further diplomas and degrees could make it after their classes finished. These teachers were as surprised to see T.E. students in the class as we were to see them. But after several effective, and I stress effective, icebreaking exercises, we were getting to know each other and the distinction slowly dissipated. The class was a great mix of B.Ed. students and M.A. students and teachers, and the energy in the room was distinct from the classes I had been in all day. Mr. Jeff Richards had a great deal to do with this 'distinct energy'; he immediately created an informal atmosphere where a group of adults had come together to explore an area of mutual interest: teaching literature to adolescents. The language he used was important to the atmosphere being created. He spoke of us teaching him. He spoke of "looking at the trends that we see." At one point when someone asked him what some part of the course should look like, he said: "It's not what I want to do, it's what you want to do. You should have fun reading--read what YOU like to read ... Everything should be geared to what's useful to you--that's the point of the course." (09/04/97)

Of course, discourses that construct students of teacher education as knower and non-knower are often found within one site as we struggle with our attempts to move from one discourse to another "since access to a new discourse does not undo or outrule the other" (Davies, 1991, p. 47). In fact, it is not always a case of not having effectively or completely moved from one discourse to another, as Davies

suggests. It can also be a case of negotiating between two or more discourses in order to find an identity or subjectivity with which we are comfortable. This middle ground could be called an interdiscursive position; although this may make discourses sound fixed and unitary which they are not. In this sense we do not entirely accept or reject a discourse but attempt to find an interdiscursive position. When we choose/are located in a new interdiscursive position, the ever changing metadiscourse is affected; in that way we all affect more dominant discourses to varying degrees. For example, if a professor in a faculty of education attempts to discursively reposition student teachers by recognizing their knowledge and using language that reflects them as knowing beings, s/he might slowly push and nudge the dominant discourse of student teacher as non-knower. With enough people pushing and shoving, the dominant discourse may become one of student teacher as knower. However, along that discursive journey many people will practice a discourse that positions the student teacher as knower and non-knower. Discourse and discursive change are not easily identified, and we all relate to dominant and marginal discourses in different ways. It would be unwise to suggest formulaic patterns, or four-step schema, in relation to discourses. Discourses remain dominant or marginal for a wide variety of reasons be it political, historical, or social. What is important to keep in mind is that all discourses are constantly changing and everyone participates in the change to varying degrees.

### **Discourses of Authority and Hierarchy: “STUDENT-teacher”**

Schools and classrooms are ingrained with subtle and not so subtle discourses of authority and hierarchy. Certainly, these complex and translucent patterns of talk and behaviour were a serious stumbling block for many of us as we tried to find our place in the schools of British Columbia. The university has many

discourses of authority, some of which are more benevolent than others, such as the faculty member in the previous section who explained that "it's not what I want to do, it's what you want to do," in an effort to democratize his classroom. Much of the discourse, however, positions the student of teacher education as powerless and without status. In the schools, while on practicum, the clarity and frequency of the discourses of authority was intensified, and not to be missed. The talk that related to status was meant to be noticed, and we were meant to take our cues from it, appropriately and wisely. Part of learning the school culture involved learning "our place" in it.

One of the ways authority is established and maintained is through the use of titles and positions, as most teachers who attempt to use their first name in a school will be reminded.<sup>51</sup> At a university there are undergraduate students, honour students, master's students, Ph.D. students, Ph.D. candidates, instructors, sessionals, visiting scholars, associate professors, assistant professors, full professors, department heads, assistant department heads, deans, assistant deans, etc., etc. I have left out many levels of status and hierarchy in the area of support staff and of course by subject area or discipline. I was not even partially aware of these many levels until I had spent many years of my life in and around universities. I still remain unclear on some subtle distinctions. Elementary and secondary schools, while perhaps less tiered, are not less ingrained with hierarchies and the titles that accompany them. There are student teachers, substitute teachers, first year teachers, part-time teachers, department heads, union representatives, vice-principals, principals, freshies (first year students), seniors, and multiple social categories that are no less important for students.

The title we were given at UBC was student teacher. Let that sink in for a

---

<sup>51</sup> I have experienced and heard of experiences where teachers were reprimanded or scoffed at for allowing students to address them by their first name.

minute, because it was a phrase that we heard thousands of times and that became an integral part of us for that year. For twelve months we tried to make sense of an identity that asked us to be both student and teacher, both adult and child, both knower and non-knower. We became adept at shifting from student to teacher and back again. But make no mistake, it was never suggested that the two were compatible. The following entry from my journal explores a particularly interesting day with regard to being a student and a teacher:

Today we had an information session (Educ 315) about the upcoming practicum. Pamela Heath made a few introductory remarks and then introduced the day's speaker, a Petter Roy. As I sat and listened to Petter talk about his experiences as a student teacher, a teacher, and a sponsor teacher I noticed that he referred to himself on several occasions as Mr. Roy. I found this very interesting. I wondered what he thought it meant to be Mr. Roy? Was Mr. Roy a big part of his identity? Was he only Mr. Roy at school or did he feel like Mr. Roy all of the time? I immediately began remembering when I did some teaching and how on that first day of teaching I became Mr. Taylor for the first time in my life. Being Mr. Taylor didn't sit well with me and I tried to reject it. I told the students that they could call me John if they wanted to. Two days later I realized that very few of the students wanted to call me John. For them I was Mr. Taylor. Not many days later the principal called me in to tell me that she wanted me to be Mr. Taylor and in fact several teachers had complained that I was not being Mr. Taylor. So as I sit here in this lecture theater I realize that very soon I will have to become Mr. Taylor again soon. I wonder what that does to me? Is it simply the name my students will use or will I become Mr. Taylor internally in some way too? And there are hundreds of students sitting around me and soon they will become Mrs. Emerson and Mr. Kensit and Mrs. Smith. What will that mean for them?

Is it important to the school or the university that we become Mr. Taylor and Mrs. Emerson? When Mr. Roy was speaking today he showed us four or five overheads which listed categories on which we will be evaluated. One of those categories was: "Assumes the role of a teacher." Wow! What's the role of a teacher? Would I have scored poorly for letting students call me John? Does the role of a teacher include being Mr. Taylor? Mr. Roy told us that we should clarify with

our sponsor teacher what they see the role of the teacher as. I was relieved to see that Mr. Roy saw that the role of the teacher could be seen in many different ways, but I was a little concerned that I needed to check with someone else what the role of a teacher was going to mean for me.

As I think about what it is going to mean to become Mr. Taylor again and what it will mean for my friends in this program to become Mrs. Emerson and Mrs. Smith I can't help thinking of what Deborah Britzman said;

"becoming a teacher, for many, means becoming something you are not."

But, right now I am still John and we are still students and that means something completely different from being Mr. Taylor and a student teacher. I was reminded of my current status when Pamela Heath closed the lecture by saying she had recently been at a poster sale and had found a poster which reminded her of the 1997-98 class. She said she was going to hang it in the lobby and call it Pot [principles of teaching] 97-98. It was an Anne Gedde's print of about fifty to a hundred babies sitting in ceramic pots. Right now I am John--one of the babies, but soon I will have to become Mr. Taylor, something I am not. (10/03/97)

Much has been made about titles in the teacher education triad (student teacher, sponsor teacher, faculty advisor). Different faculties across North America have tried out new titles hoping that the title would signify or effect a changed attitude to the structure of the relationship. Today, the word supervisor is seen less frequently, while terms such as sponsor and cooperating teacher have become more favoured. Efforts to lessen the sense of surveillance and hierarchy to one of cooperation and support led to the changes. However, although words have power, actions tend to have more, and if the title change was not accompanied by a change of actions, the effect was, no doubt, minor. In fact, when students spoke in the UBC program, they still often referred to sponsor teachers or faculty advisors simply as "supervisors." As mentioned earlier, Barbara Kennard, a faculty member

in teacher education in the United States, wanted to reconstruct or "re-story" the relationship between student teachers and cooperating teachers. She felt trapped by the discourses and histories that positioned her as expert:

I cried, in anguish, dreading the moment when I would have to look at Lynn and say, "I'm not an expert. I don't know, after all." Now, as I remember this, I wonder: Who storied me as expert? Had I, after all, told my own story of myself as Expert, keeping distance between us, making things difficult? Was it that we were caught in a myth, the myth that a university education and being named a teacher confers authority and status as one who knows, that without that rite of passage one cannot be expert, one cannot know? This myth lived out in practice constructs a particular relationship between cooperating teacher and student teacher. It constitutes the old story of the practicum. Were we merely caught in the plot line of this old story? (Kennard, 1994, p. 165)

I want to be careful not to suggest that teachers have nothing to teach, and that authority is bad or avoidable. Such a notion would, obviously, be too simple. "[A]s feminist and critical theorists have increasingly recognized, researchers and teachers can never stop being authorities or having authority" (Kelly, 1993, p. 8). I am not suggesting that we vilify authority or attempt to eliminate it. Instead I am suggesting that a teaching/supervisory relationship that does not recognize the learner's base of knowledge may miss an opportunity to build on it. Furthermore, students can, at times, teach the teacher and teach each other, and these are often powerful learning opportunities for everyone. Finally, it is important to recognize that faculty advisors and sponsor teachers will always be in a position of authority as long as they evaluate and write reference letters. Authority is not bad, but it can be stifling if applied indiscreetly or indiscriminately. Perhaps those in positions of authority can try to lessen the sense of surveillance and assessment their authority confers in order to provide the student teacher with greater flexibility to experiment and develop their own teaching identity.

Many sponsor teachers and faculty advisors struggle to maintain their titles and the authority it affords them. One professor I had in the program was taken aback when I referred to her in class by her first name. I had referred to my professors by their first names for many years (most graduate students are allowed this privilege!), and it just slipped out. She made a comment about having been called by her first name and then said that perhaps it was okay because it was summer school. Of course, many faculty members go by their first name, partly due to a resistance to the discourse of authority by younger faculty and students. In fact, when the professor was deliberating about her title, one student in the class said, "You mean I can't call you by your first name; then you can't call me by my first name": a moment of clear and conscious resistance.

There have also been many titles given to people as they learned to teach. UBC uses the common student teacher. Other titles include practicing teacher, teaching intern, preservice teacher, and more. All of these were attempts to "re-story" the relationship or the position, but if it is not accompanied by structural and behavioral change, it means little. My experience in the field suggests that the title took on different meanings, in part, by how one's faculty advisor and sponsor teacher viewed you. The context each of us were in played a large role as to what 'student teacher' meant to us and to others.

Brent, one student teacher in my study, experienced a great deal of difficulty assuming the role of a teacher (which is one of the categories we are evaluated on) because, in part, his sponsor teacher put a greater emphasis on the student portion of student teacher. As I explained in chapter two, Brent felt he received little support from his sponsor teacher. Apparently she did not see herself as a cooperating teacher. As we know, Brent was, prior to entering the program, a banker. He left banking because he thought teaching would offer security. The



importance of one's occupation was something he carried with him into teaching; therefore being seen as a teacher was something that was very important to him and to his success. The following exchange demonstrates the difficulty he had taking on a teaching identity due to how his sponsor teacher related to him in the classroom:

JT: Any sense that the parents addressed you any differently or felt any differently about you because you were a student teacher [as opposed to a teacher]?

B: Oh yeah, but it was made clear that I was a student teacher when I walked through that door.

JT: Through which door?

B: Through the door of the school. I was never treated as a teacher walking in; I was treated like a student teacher.

JT: By?

B: By my sponsor teacher. So that was made purely evident and the students took advantage of me right away. It took a long time before I was able to say, look, I'm in charge of your grade. That's the bottom line. So, you respect me or you don't, but what's your grade going to be?

JT: Can you describe at all how she set you up or treated you as a student teacher?

B: Oh, just overriding. If I let someone go to the bathroom--"no".

JT: Oh really. She'd be sitting off to the side somewhere and say no?

B: Well, this was when she was teaching as well. If she is teaching and there is an activity going on and she's teaching someone one-on-one and someone comes up to me and asks to go to the bathroom, I have no right to say they can go to the bathroom, even though I'm sitting there observing and I know the lesson. Or helping out with math. If I'm helping out with math and I give a kid a way to do a certain problem, if the kid goes back to the sponsor teacher, she'll say well who's your teacher? This is the way you're doing it. You know, stuff like that. What else? [pause] If I give a consequence for something, the kids felt free to go and complain to her about the consequences. She would listen and come back to me and say you may want to rethink this.

JT: And do you think the students knew it worked that way?

B: Oh yeah. And they did. Several times I changed the consequences as I saw them. She undermined my authority to

a certain degree.

JT: Especially at the beginning?

B: The beginning, yeah, and through the middle.

... ..

JT: What about the kids--by the end did they perceive you as a teacher?

B: Oh no, still a student teacher.

JT: You think that could have been quite different?

B: Oh yeah. When I look at my peers and [how] their sponsor teachers have set them up as teachers...

One of our instructors in the teacher education program tried to prepare us for this reality when he described for us our position as student teachers: "I don't want to say de-valued, it is de-authorized. Students know your position. But it will also depend on your sponsor teacher and how they hand the class over to you" (9/07/97). Brent had a difficult practicum relationship because he felt he was never given the respect or status of a colleague, something that was very important to him and his developing identity as a teacher. Brent: "That was the most painful experience I've had" (06/15/98).

Brent was not alone. Ophelia also experienced an interpretation of the title student teacher in a manner similar to Brent, which made for a phenomenally stressful practicum. In part, it was due to the verbal and non-verbal discourse relating to Ophelia's role as student teacher. Ophelia had the following to say in relation to her position in the classroom:

Oh it was never my class . It was never my class . She was always there and she was always sort of, I couldn't, I couldn't even, I mean I really enjoyed the sevens, but I was always nervous because she'd ... her expectations were so high and or, I hate the word high because it implies my standards are lower. She has very, she runs her class as a tight, tight, tight ship and she believes very strongly in absolute order and that's how learning gets done . And [pause] she's very rule

oriented and, and so any time I was in class and there was a slight lack of complete order I would have, you know, half of my attention on her even if she was marking papers or something. I would be thinking I'm going to get in trouble for this or she's hating every minute of it .  
(05/26/98)

In fact, Ophelia's sponsor teacher never left the room! She never allowed Ophelia to be in control, alone, in the classroom as virtually every other student teacher was. Finally, Ophelia's faculty advisor had to intervene and ask that Ophelia be given some space to experiment. From my experience it was, unquestionably, those times when I had the classroom to myself that I was able to relax and most fully assume the role of teacher as I saw it. I explained to Karen, another student teacher, how I felt when being assessed;<sup>52</sup> "I think the students knew--they could see me change. It was almost embarrassing. I was almost embarrassed that they saw me, you know being changed, I guess" (05/11/98).

As many student teachers experienced (and discussed), we were constantly reminded of our positions in the school and of where we fell in a clearly defined hierarchy. Most student teachers spoke of how they were given a table or an area in the staff room where they would eat on their own. Jackson, who you will remember, had serious concerns about age and being a teacher, relates the seating arrangement in his practicum school as follows:

[They had] this huge long table for us at the very back so that we could eat and I remember they told us there is a table there so you guys can all sit there and talk during lunch and at first we thought oh that's pretty nice, they give us our own separate table. And then, I think it was the second or third day, there were about three of us, we decided that we would go sit right next to the telephone, right at this very front table where you come in and see the front table, so we thought we would sit down there. And we sat down there, we opened our books, had our lunch, and then one of the really senior teachers

---

<sup>52</sup> My sponsor teachers only observed me teaching during an assessment, never for less structured reasons.

comes by and knocks on the table and goes: "old dogs can't learn new tricks." And then he said, "well this is our table so you're going to have to go sit somewhere else" ... [so it's] like you're the ones, you're kind of the bottom feeders here. (05/15/98)

In one school I was told they listed every teacher in the school with regards to seniority; those with the most teaching years were at the top of the page. The list was displayed in the staff room! In the school where I student taught (not taught!), we were given specific instructions for photocopying, as were students in several other schools. In another school, the student teachers had to do photocopying before eight a.m. so that the photocopier was free for "real" teachers in the hour prior to classes starting! The student teachers were teaching classes and responsible for student learning as were the teachers, but they were either to complete their photocopying before eight or go without. The most blatant reminder of my status took place in relation to photocopying. The following excerpt from my journal portrays my amazement and frustration at the rigidity of the hierarchies.

This morning I went in at 7:30 a.m. because the quiz I had intended to write on the weekend didn't get written because I left the play I needed to write it at school. After I had finished writing it around 8:00 a.m. I went to photocopy it. There was a line up of five people, and while I was waiting, three more moved in behind me. Tracy [my sponsor teacher] was away at a workshop today and so she had a substitute in. This sub didn't have much to do because I was teaching three of Tracy's classes that day. Just before leaving Tracy asked if the sub could sit in on one of my classes--I said sure (it turned out that Tracy had asked her to write a formal evaluation of me--an idea I like because it is a new perspective). It turned out that the line at the photocopier was building because it was having one of its days. After many paper jams people were getting clearly frustrated and panicked. I printed my test off on the computer but waited in line to photocopy my handout for second period. I was getting frustrated--mostly at myself for leaving things to the last minute. With about 5 minutes before classes started, I realized this waiting was unnecessary. I had been chatting with Sue [a teacher in the school] and I said to her, "I should just ask Tracy's sub to do this for me [because] she isn't

teaching and I don't need it 'til second period." Sue responded by saying, "Oh no, I don't think you should do that, it wouldn't be right politically--you being a student teacher and her being a sub."  
(04/20/98)

### **Discourses of Development: Student Teacher as Neophyte**

I recall, when I first started working in roofing, I was always reminded that I was "low man on the totem pole."<sup>53</sup> I was reminded endlessly about my status on the crew and how little I knew. On one instance I was told to go looking for a tool that did not exist. After looking for twenty or more minutes (not wanting to fail and be laughed at for not knowing what it was), I returned only to realize I would be the butt of a joke that would be repeated and repeated for what would, surely, be an eternity. I worked on that crew for eight summers and recall how happy I was when someone was hired the second summer and I was no longer the least knowledgeable, and I got to laugh with delight at his ignorance when he searched for the tool that did not exist. It is a rare human being that does not get some form of pleasure out of knowing more than others. I have not worked in construction for more than ten years now, and I am certain that at no time since then have I been reminded of my lack of knowledge and status until I entered the teacher education program. While being reminded of how little I knew, I was also always told how that would change, how I would eventually learn: "you'll see."

In the teacher education program at UBC and during the practicum, there was a great deal of what I have termed Discourses of Development. A central feature of these discourses was our position as neophytes. In fact the teacher education literature is rife with references to neophytes and their development. Donna Kagan, in an article about professional growth, paints a picture of student

---

<sup>53</sup> In fact, this is a cultural misinterpretation. The low "man" on the totem pole is not necessarily of lower status.

teachers which would have them banned from schools if some parents were to read it. Constantly in Kagan's writing we find terms that position the student teacher as non-knower using such phrases as: "novice teachers", "inadequate knowledge" (p. 145), and making such claims as, "novices' images of pupils are usually inaccurate" (p. 145), or "[they] did not even possess minimal skill" (p. 144). She borrows a developmental model from Berliner<sup>54</sup> (1988) who does not see teachers as competent until they reach stage three, where "performance is not yet fluid or flexible" (Kagan, 1992, p. 160).

It should not be surprising to see similar discursive representations used by student teachers themselves. Many student teachers internalize this notion of themselves as incompetent and without pertinent knowledge or experience. In one study (Berman, 1994) a student teacher makes the claim that, "as fledgling neophytes to the profession of teaching, ... I had no idea what to look for in the classroom or what I was supposed to see" (p. 44). Perhaps one of the most startling examples of the discourse of development comes from Donald Schon (1988), who applies the Meno Complex<sup>55</sup> to explain the difficulty of teaching people to teach. In this example the student teacher is not only positioned as someone who lacks knowledge but who also lacks the ability to acquire it! The Meno complex is described by Schon as the problem of:

looking for something [which] implies a capacity to recognize the thing one looks for but the student lacks at first that capacity to recognize the object of his search. The instructor is caught up in the same paradox; he cannot tell the student what he needs to know,

---

<sup>54</sup> Berliner proposed a model of cognitive development that sees teachers moving through five stages from novice to expert, a model Kagan uses as the basis for her model of teacher development.

<sup>55</sup> Plato explains the Meno Complex: "But how will you look for something when you don't in the least know what it is? How on earth are you going to set up something you don't know as the object of your search? To put it another way, even if you came up right against it, how will you know that what you have found is the thing you didn't know."

even if he has words for it, because the student would not at that point understand him. (Schon in Grimmett, 1988, p. 10)

And Schon's editor Peter Grimmett (1988) believes "the Meno paradox accurately describes the experiences of learning professional practice. The student is attempting to learn things, the meaning and importance of which cannot be grasped ahead of time" (p. 10). This use of the Meno paradox appears to discursively position, in an extreme manner, the student as a non-knower.

One facet of developmental discourse dealt specifically with professional development. Unquestionably, many faculty and school personnel believed a central aspect of their job was making the student teacher into a professional. The discourse related to professional development was highly contested by students and some faculty and was perhaps the clearest example of open discursive tension in the program. It began the first day of the program in the orientation assembly, when an administrator said: "We expect you to become professionals. We expect you to carry out your lives the way you will once you are a professional teacher." Of course, it is never made clear what exactly the program thinks a professional is; that is not to say that there is not a lot of rhetoric about professionalism. In fact, one course, which was referred to by some students as "Indoctrination 101," was basically a week by week look at such topics as unions, professional organizations, and pertinent laws. The students seemed to feel that this course was one of indoctrination because it uncritically asked us to accept and abide by the numerous rules and regulations which surround the teaching profession. There are many aspects of professionalism that came up, in and out of class, too many to enumerate, but perhaps we can gain some insight into this discourse and its effects by looking at an extremely contentious issue: punctuality.

Hannah, a single mother of two, to whom we were introduced in chapter two,

had to deal with this issue immediately due to unfortunate circumstances. I mentioned these circumstances earlier, but I think a thorough examination of the incident will provide interesting insights into gender, age and punctuality. The following, then, is a detailed look at Hannah's experiences with punctuality and professionalism in her own words:

Okay. Well I moved here the day before the program ... got here that afternoon and had everything arranged. My ex was taking the day off of work so he could take the kids to school and daycare and do all those introductory things; then I can go get into the program ... As we're leaving, Jason threw up all over the boxes and the couch and the floor, he was violently ill, turns out he had a virus. He was really sick, like he's never been sick, which is very odd how it happened. So I was able to go to one thing that day, but he just got sicker and sicker, so I ended up missing the first week of school. I was concerned, as that's not a good impression to make, I was a bit nervous and everything ... I phoned the teacher education office and I told them and they gave me a slap on the wrist about it. Told me I had to get a doctor's note, and at this point I'm just moved here, don't have a doctor, don't have a car, don't have a friend and don't have a family that will or can help ... So I didn't even know where to go to a doctor, I didn't know how I was going to carry him there. I didn't have a penny to my name, I had like \$6 in my pocket 'cause I hadn't gotten my student loan yet. I just had no money, even if I was ordered to buy a prescription, I couldn't buy it. Couldn't take a cab as well. [pause] So then I finally did take him to the doctor. I brought the doctor's note in.<sup>56</sup> (12/10/97)

Some instructors were understanding and others were not. One faculty member, for whom it turns out punctuality was an important issue, "takes a strip off" of Hannah, to use her words. He told Hannah:

that I was professional and if I couldn't commit myself to the course, to the program I should consider my options--"what's it going to be like when you're a teacher. Doctor's note or no your principal's not going

<sup>56</sup> In chapter two I explained that Hannah's son was found to have diabetes. This was the case. I assume that she refers here to his sickness as a virus due to the fact that this conversation took place in the first minutes of our first interview, and I had not yet developed a rapport with her.



to put up with that very long. You can't have a job if you're running off. I understand your children need you but .... " So I felt like he was sort of attacking as I do often when people jump on me for something ... You know, if I sat on welfare, he wouldn't be happy, and if I did a great job, he wouldn't be happy. You can never please anybody. He said I was quite behind and I'd have to do something about that and if this was going to continue I wouldn't be very successful. So, and this, in spite of my protestations that I've been working since 11, I've had children for 7 and a 1/2 years and can count on one hand how many times I've missed a day because they were sick. I know what it's like to work and going to school is not like having a job, I'm assuming that money's not great when you're a teacher but at least you have enough money to pay a baby-sitter to help me out if the kids can't go to school. He scoffed and said "How much money do you think you're going to make?" And I said, well right now I live on welfare, so I think I'll be a little bit better off. [laugh] ... I defended myself diplomatically and as politely as possible. (12/10/97)

What unquestionably shocked Hannah the most about this encounter was the assumption that she needed to be told how to behave in relation to issues that involved her personal life and her personal decisions. She marveled at the fact that she was spoken to as if she had never had to make decisions before or had previous experience in the workplace.

I think he's been doing it for long enough that he's forgotten that we're not [pause]. Prospective teachers ... aren't people fresh out of their degrees ... They're people that have a life ... he said to me that [pause] you know, once, my principal is not going to put up with this crap and all that kind of stuff. That's ridiculous. It's a job, it's a vocation I guess but it's a job and you can phone in sick or if something really awful happens, you can be late. You don't want it to happen very often, just like you don't want it to happen with any other job, but sometimes shit happens. (12/10/97)

Hannah also saw a connection between professionalism and gender equity, a

connection that Nel Noddings<sup>57</sup> (1990) amongst others (Acker, 1996; Freedman, 1990) has commented on. Hannah felt that the dominant definition of professionalism attempted to exclude her. She was angry that the position she was in was likely to happen mostly to single mothers, and this was not taken into consideration.

Several student teachers who participated in this study had a disagreement with a faculty member over attendance. In one class I was in, the instructor had made several comments about the importance of punctuality and attendance. He explained that he believed that no student should feel comfortable coming into a classroom late. He explained that if the action was in the hall, and that you had better do something to make sure that the students left the hall and got into your class on time. I couldn't help thinking that maybe one way was to make sure the action was in your classroom. He kept making comments until one day he refused to let a group of eight students in the room. Karen, one of the excluded students, described to me how she felt at the time:

I arrived less than five minutes late with three other people. He took us into another classroom with four other people already there. There was an assignment on the overhead, an assignment about being late. We were then given a little lecture about being late. I was absolutely furious! I was fuming! I literally felt like I was 12 years old again! Okay punctuality is important to him, but no one should be made to feel like I did. (09/21/97)

Later in one of our interviews, Karen expanded on why she was offended by the incident. More than being put in a room with other latecomers, it seems she was angered by the suggestion that she needed to be taught how to be professional.

---

<sup>57</sup> Noddings suggests that teachers, in particular women, should resist the emphasis on professionalism because it reflects a model which calls for increased stratification. Furthermore she points out that professionalization suggests a movement away from working directly with children and devalues those who do.

In fact it's sort of this whole notion of professionalism kind of I think flies in the face of the fact that we all have histories and we have all been being professionals probably for quite a few years in one way or another and uh, yeah I actually find that quite offensive when somebody tells me I have to learn how to be a professional by being here on time every day, well excuse me, I already am a professional.  
(12/10/97)

The instructor involved in this scenario felt he was doing what was right because he was preparing them for what it would be like after the program (an oft heard refrain). He related a story of a teacher who was told to find a new job because she was repeatedly late for work or absent. He explained that this issue was a battle with students each year, but he would continue to push his point next year. He clearly believed it is part of his job to work with students so that they will become professionals. Of course, he is inevitably molding them into his concept of professional; he failed to realize they might have one of their own.

I experienced a wide range of approaches to the "problem" of punctuality. There was the extreme example which I witnessed above (I was in that class). In two other classes, I had instructors place sign-in sheets on desks at the door in the hope that such a device might discourage tardiness. Other instructors took a more personal approach, explaining to the class that tardiness was disruptive to other students' learning, and that it was difficult to teach with numerous interruptions during the first half hour. Most faculty addressed the issue at one point or another, and many student teachers with teaching experience knew that it could make teaching difficult.

Punctuality and attendance were problems, in part, due to the nature of the program. If students are forced to spend upwards of thirty hours a week in classrooms that favour superficial treatment of endless topics over prolonged

intellectual engagement, the inevitable result will be people finding ways to minimize their exposure. It should not be surprising. The disagreements which arose over attendance and punctuality between students and faculty can be seen as students taking control over their learning environments and resisting discursive attempts to situate the student as unprofessional or rude in favour of one which situates the student as protesting their predicament.

In the examples above we saw how Karen and Hannah attempted to resist the position they were being discursively situated in. Perhaps, we need to see these moments as attempts to influence a discourse and the resulting effects on identity. When Karen refused to see herself as lacking professionalism, she was fighting a discursive battle which could be seen as an attempt to decide for herself what it means to be a professional--a teacher. Karen resisted her discursive positioning to the point of transferring into another section.

Discourse and identity are not things that happen to us; they are things we participate in. We are constantly negotiating our identities through the numerous discourses around us. We accept some, we reject some, and we manipulate some to suit our needs. Of course, our acceptance or rejection does not make them thrive or vanish. We are not that powerful. We can't simply pick and choose and build ourselves into the teacher we want to be. But we can take action, as Karen did, that may alter our identity and the concept of teacher in little ways.

Punctuality is also an issue of control. Teachers and students at all levels have for years struggled over punctuality and attendance. Attempts are made to suggest that failure in these areas have academic repercussions, and I am sure this is somewhat true. However, as Linda McNeil (1986) points out in her book Contradictions of Control, tardiness was an issue for most teachers and administrators whether or not a problem existed. I found, to my surprise, that many

of my evaluation reports from my practicum asked about attendance forms and issues of punctuality. What was I doing? I don't recall this being an issue at all, yet it was referred to over and over. It seems that punctuality and attendance are one of the front line tools teachers have to control students, and are also a measurement of that control. We come to see punctuality as an end in itself, punctuality for punctuality's sake. But of course, it is really a test: are you doing what I say? Are you following the rules? So when instructors insist on attendance and punctuality, they are really testing compliance. And a professional complies with their superiors. The dominant discourse framed a professional as someone who follows codes and rules, not someone who takes responsibility for their actions, beliefs and development. Ophelia, who also had a run-in over attendance, explained her perception of faculty fixation with attendance:

But I think what happens is that professors become vigilant because attendance seems like a virtue in itself. It seems like they fall back on, you know, if you're planning to be professional--this is a professional program--then professionals are punctual, professionals attend.  
(08/04/98)

I would submit that Ophelia has a good point; however I would modify it to suggest that for professionals, it is not that attendance is a virtue in itself but that compliance is a virtue in itself!

### **The Program as Text: Jumping Through Hoops**

It was not long after I had been in the teacher education program that I realized that the program was a significant part of the student teacher as child discourse. Often when we think of text or discourse we think of words, but this is not always the case. Discourses are generally seen as the social engagement of

various texts, and those texts are viewed as "language in use" (Luke, 1996, p. 13). Therefore, one tends to see discourse as related to language in its various forms. I would suggest that while discourse has at its foundation language and text in one form or another, we often experience discourse as something other than words. Most poststructuralists define text more broadly than just words. For example, John Fiske (1989) includes such things as the beach and a pair of jeans as examples of text in his analysis of popular culture.

The structure of the teacher education program at UBC can and should be seen as a text. As a text it participated in many discourses, one of which is student teacher as child. I mean to suggest that the structure of the program and its courses said a great deal with regard to student teachers and how they are positioned. So how did the program speak to us? What was it telling us as students? The most common phrase I heard about the program, during the year, from faculty and students offers a point of departure: "jumping through hoops."

A very close friend of mine, Chris, was in a teacher education program in Ontario in the late eighties. As Chris tells it, he had been doing exceptionally well by faculty standards but was experiencing difficulties finding ways to interest himself in the work he was given. Late in the year he was required to write and submit one week's worth of lesson plans. He was extremely pleased with his effort, only to receive a poor grade. When he asked the instructor where he had gone wrong, he was told that he had not followed the prescribed format for lesson plans. Chris argued with him trying to defend his approach. The instructor, who had clearly become frustrated, finally said to him, "Listen, in this profession if someone holds out a hoop, you'd better jump through it." Chris quit the teacher education program that day.

At UBC it became common to hear students refer to one assignment or

another as a hoop to jump through. And there were plenty of hoops. The following is a list of the required assignments I was expected to complete over the first three months of the program:

- Course A --class presentation  
--laboratory activities  
--mid-term exam  
--final exam
- Course B --10x1-page book critiques  
--3 to 4 pages: 'defense of a novel'  
--3 to 4 pages: study of an author
- Course C --in-class assignments  
--class presentation  
--mid-term journal  
--final journal  
--draft statement of philosophy (1000-1800 words)  
--final statement of philosophy (1500-2500 word)  
--essay (1200-2000 words)  
--final exam
- Course D --"100 lesson plans"  
--mid-term exam  
--final exam
- Course E --two page article summary  
--group "IEP" assignment  
--group presentation  
--two-page synopsis
- Course F --group text presentation  
--individual presentation  
--formal presentation and facilitated discussion  
--guided record of progress
- Course G --10x1-page reading responses to required readings  
--group presentation  
--final exam

Furthermore, in each class we were required to read an average of approximately

forty pages each week for a total of over two hundred pages of reading each week. Keep in mind that we were in class approximately thirty hours a week! I literally never stopped going from seven-thirty am to eight pm seven days a week. I am not suggesting that the program should not be demanding, but the truth of it was that it was not intellectually demanding; it was more a matter of stamina. We were told on more than one occasion that it was a type of preparation for teaching, that teaching involved innumerable small tasks. We needed to get used to it.

If we think of the program as a text, or part of a discourse, we need to ask ourselves what it is telling us, how it is positioning us. I believe the program itself suggests several things about the student of teacher education which positions us as children or child-like. Unquestionably, a great deal of the frustrations students felt in the program were related to how they were being positioned, even if this was not always articulated.

The program is laid out in such a way that students have very little choice as to what they will study. In other words, the vast majority of courses are required. Charles Ungerleider, the Associate Dean of teacher education at the time of this study, explained with startling clarity how he felt the program may speak to a student of teacher education:

Everything is laid out for me. I exercise no choice. I might exercise whether I take a section at 8:30 or 10:30, but that's pretty much the limit of my choice within the program. And so, what it leads to is a certain kind of intellectual passivity where people say, OK, do it to me or do it for me. And then, when they [the students] feel that their needs haven't been met, they say well you [the faculty] didn't do it for me. It becomes your failure, you withheld it from me, and you defaulted in your obligation.

JT: And that's not an entirely unreasonable position to take. If you're going to give me no control, then you'd better deliver, if you want all the control.



CU: Absolutely. And the thing is that we can't have that kind of control, it isn't appropriate to have that kind of control because we can't deliver on the implicit promise in that kind of a relationship. If, as a beginning teacher, a person doesn't take responsibility for managing their own intellectual development and professional development, they're going to be in bad shape as a teacher.  
(08/06/98)

Not only did the structure of the program suggest to prospective teachers that they need not take responsibility for their development as a teacher, it suggested that someone else knows what you need to know to become a teacher. It suggests that someone knows what a teacher is, and if everyone is to be prepared in virtually the same manner with the same courses and the same content, then a teacher must be a very specific creature. A greater variety of student control would suggest that there is more than one way to become a teacher; it would suggest that there is more than one way to be a teacher.

The lack of student input into how they experience teacher education can be explained in many ways. There are political aspects that cause departments and faculty members to fight year after year to maintain or expand their courses. With required courses in a given department come teaching credits and resources, and no department wants to give up resources or teaching hours. In part, within the faculty your departmental status is related to how big you are, which is directly related to how many courses you teach. Also, many faculty members strongly believe that what they teach is essential for a teacher to know. As one instructor put it: "The courses that I've taught, I think the content's important--all the courses I've taught I think that teachers should come in contact with to some degree" (07/31/98). Almost all faculty believe their material is crucial for students to learn. In part this is due to a view of teacher education (and education in general) that

ends when the program does. There is an urgency created by the idea that a prospective teacher must know everything about teaching when they leave the program; nothing is to be left until later. This reinforces the concept of the teacher who knows everything; "you can't have someone going out to teach if they're haven't mastered the material". It also does not encourage the concept of the teacher as life-long learner. Perhaps the program wouldn't be so over-stuffed if there was a recognition that learning and development would continue to occur during the teaching years. I would suggest that we need to be comfortable with the idea of a teacher who does not know everything; inherent in this position is the idea that teachers will continue to learn as they teach.

However, the most potent explanation for the over-prescribed nature of teacher education at UBC is the notion that the student simply does not know what is best for him or her. I attended a meeting about program revision just before I began the program myself, and I asked the faculty members at my table why they thought there were no teacher education students at the meeting. The response I received was indicative of how the student of teacher education is perceived. I was told that the students were "too close to the trees to see the forest." The students' concerns were too immediate to have perspective or vision. When I related this comment to a student in the program, his response was that the same would probably apply more aptly to the faculty themselves!

I find the idea that students can't know what is best for them limiting at best and condescending at worst. I am frustrated at all levels of education by notions that students should not participate in decisions of what to learn and how to learn it. Personal experience tells most of us that we learn more thoroughly when we are studying what interests us, as opposed to what we have been told to learn. Furthermore, it could be said that we teach with more enthusiasm when we teach

what interests us. Ophelia clearly recognized this dynamic:

If pros were teaching what they were interested in. It feels like we are all being put through such a standardized set of requirements and no one really likes what we're doing. Very few of the pros seem excited about what they're teaching, but we just gotta do it because someone decided that this was the way that you become a teacher. (08/04/98)

I would submit that the teacher education program would be a more vital one if it offered more freedom for both students and faculty in course selection and program design. In the following quotation Ophelia explains why she was largely disengaged from the program:

They've got to find a way to make it less boring and repetitive in the curriculum, it's ridiculous. It feels remedial. It's so frustrating because you're so busy and it's all so shallow. So if I'm going to work that many hours and work that much, I'd like to be doing stuff that I care about, that has some depth, some quality. You know, most of what I was doing, I had so little--I was unable to care much about it because it meant almost nothing to me and I put nothing but busy work into it mostly. (08/04/98)

She mentioned twice that she was not interested in what was being covered. She had little choice as to what to take or what material would be covered, and this left her alienated from the process and frustrated with the program.

While the structure of the program positions us as unqualified to judge what we should study or how we should study it, it also positions us, as prospective teachers, in perhaps a more disturbing manner, by suggesting that we be concerned with task completion and not intellectual engagement. I believe the program participates in a discourse, through its structure, which positions student teachers, and by default teachers, as non-intellectuals or as practitioners. When I

use the word practitioner, I do so in order to place the emphasis on one who practices or does, not one who theorizes or thinks. This programmatic discourse works in two ways. First, it sees the student of teacher education as lacking knowledge and even ability. Second, it discourages the position of student/teacher as intellectual, focusing more on technique and superficial knowledge.

In the teacher education program, we were kept so busy with small assignments and tasks that the possibility of deep thought, intellectual rigor, or the much talked about reflection, were virtually impossible. Ophelia:

The few thinkers and writers and so on that I got introduced to that I thought were good and valuable and interesting, I didn't have time to read them the way that it's set up. You can't do anything in-depth in this program and that's ridiculous. Why so much emphasis on process? Why so many itty-bitty, absurd, silly little assignments? Are they trying to tell us that that's what we should be making our kids do? Is that it, you know? It's like someone's trying to instill this sort of make-work mentality; anything to keep busy so that we don't actually have time to think about what it all means. It's just all busy work. It's a joke. (08/04/98)

Ophelia expressed grave concern numerous times about the structure of the program and the lack of intellectual rigor. Her question regarding what the busyness suggests and her assertion that there is no time to think deeply, reverberates with Michael Apple's (1989) concern about what he calls "intensification." Intensification is the process by which professional control and intellectual inquiry are eroded in the face of continually escalating, tedious tasks. This process creates an overload of numerous, small jobs which must be dealt with in an ongoing, in fact never-ending, manner. However, these tasks involve little deep thought or decision making. Instead they are technical and administrative in nature. The end result of intensification is "intellectual deskilling," in which the time

to enter into complex and abstract thought is lost in the overwhelming barrage of minutiae. This process also removes control and power from the professional as the decision making processes are removed from them and they are left to a rigorous schedule of executions.

In a sense we were being prepared for teaching by starting the intensification process in our preparatory year instead of in the schools. The process to which Michael Apple refers can be seen in Ophelia's comments above and in the comments of one of the instructors I interviewed:

I think students coming in are treated as functionally ignorant about education, despite the fact that everybody's had at least twelve years of experience, if not more, being educated. But they're treated as if they don't know anything about education. They're treated like--sometimes in the worst sense--good old traditional vessels to be filled with the pertinent information about schooling. They're shuffled from course to course on a regular time schedule. There's increasingly stringent requirements for being in class and if you don't, you get punished. You know, it's almost like bells going off--Your day's very full. You have an overly excessive amount of homework, a lot of which is pointless--recognizably pointless. (07/31/98)

Students were often left out of decisions about what courses they would teach on practicum or how quickly they would assume the full teaching load. Furthermore, in the program itself, they were rarely afforded the luxury of pursuing areas that interested them or they felt they needed further work in. The overt control of students' time, and lack of trust in them to prioritize, was often taken to ridiculous extremes. Hannah related her frustration with the lack of control, and hence respect, she was afforded:

I actually had some courses where they said okay, they had so much time on their hands, class time, three hours a day for, you know, months, that they would say okay, now for the next hour I want you to

read this article ... Like when somebody says that to me I feel like saying give me the friggin article and I'll go home and read it.  
(07/28/98)

Students were found to respond in many ways to this programmatic discourse. Some made a point of fulfilling the innumerable demands to a phenomenal level, demonstrating that they accepted the role and would excel at it. Those people usually were rewarded with outstanding marks. I chose early on to acquiesce to the demands. It seemed like more work to rebel than to simply keep a checklist (and I did keep a checklist) and execute each task as it was doled out to me. I excelled in the area of compliance to the point of receiving the Dora S. Simpson scholarship for academic achievement in teacher education. Here we see the link between student teacher as child and as technician. The technical nature of the program with its innumerable assignments demanded a child like response in order to survive. Behaving like an adult and challenging the system would have taken enough time and energy that success in the program would be seriously inhibited.

I think it is important to recognize that while the vast majority of students behaved as I did and attempted to fulfill the course requirements no matter how tedious and trivial, many did so well aware of the fact that this was in opposition to what was best for their personal development. Many students spoke of surviving the program and the practicum, thus allowing them to do things the way they wanted to when they were teachers. As one student said, "I don't care anymore as long as I pass and I get this degree, I'll worry about learning next year" (09/16/97). So for some, resistance meant physically complying but not mentally.

Students did not always passively accept this programmatic discourse or the implications of intensification. Some chose to put learning ahead of compliance

and resist the discourse of hoop jumping. Most students made conscious decisions at one time or another to refuse to participate in certain ways that they felt were unreasonable. Some students realized that if the program kept you so busy that you did not have time to reflect on what you were learning, or it did not allow you to pursue personal areas of interest, you had a choice not to participate fully. You could simply choose to participate in other ways; you could resist the dumbing down. One student said in class one day, "I'm not going to do everything. I'm going to stop reading things and start to take time with what I want to learn, what interests me" (09/21/97).

The UBC faculty of education has been discussing programmatic reform in a significant way for the last few years. The changes which have been proposed have much to do with de-intensifying the program and giving students more choice. The changes were to be implemented in the 2000 calendar year but have been put off for one more year. Any changes in this direction would be well received by faculty and students, but I am not too hopeful for significant or rapid change. These types of changes have been called for for many years and little has changed. The Coffe Report of 1969 on teacher education at UBC was hopeful, but I suspect the commissioners would be disappointed today. Among other things they said:

We are convinced that student teachers must be given responsibility consistent with their future roles as professional teachers. This responsibility cannot be achieved by incarcerating them in large numbers of required courses that purport to prepare them for every contingency they are likely to meet in professional practice. Even within specialties we insist that a premium be placed on student choice and that programs not be unduly hedged by restrictive requirements. (Coffe Report, 1969, p. 63)

### **Conclusion: Being the Discourse**

Not surprisingly, after being repeatedly treated like children we began to, at times, behave as such. One instructor saw this connection clearly;

I went and did a guest lecture in a class yesterday and there were these five guys who were snickering. No matter what I said, they'd snicker. I wasn't saying anything funny and I don't think I had my fly unzipped. It was like it was their obligation to snicker because that's what they do. I think that a lot of faculty are much too quick to accuse the student of being infantile and immature and not seriously think about how the structure has created immature and infantile people.  
(07/31/98)

As this instructor suggests, child-like treatment begets child-like behaviour. Sometimes we resisted the discourse; however at other times we simply (knowingly and unknowingly) played the part that was cast for us. The manifestation of these responses and their effects were, of course, complex and unpredictable.

As stated earlier, discourse does not operate in a simple, easily traced, manner. The complexity with which it affects us and our identities can only be supposed and never fully understood. It would be ridiculous to suggest that there are a specific number of discourses in teacher education and that students either pick or have foisted upon them one of these which they wholeheartedly embody. In fact, the opposite is true. There are innumerable discourses circulating throughout any given site which interact with each other and those from other sites in complex ways. "All texts are indeed multidiscursive; that is, they draw from a range of discourses, fields of knowledge, and voices. In this way, discourses are dynamic and cross fertilizing, continually relocated and regenerated in everyday texts" (Luke, 1996, p. 15). Furthermore, individuals and groups of individuals are coming



into contact with numerous discourses simultaneously. These individuals are affected by these discourses involving an unbalanced and unstable relationship between agency and social control, either of which may be more dominant at any given moment. While I have suggested earlier in this chapter that often human agency can be crucial in rejecting or reframing a discourse (such as the always contested site of professionalism and compliance), I would like to conclude with a brief look at how we can quickly come to embody a discourse or aspects of it.

I was not the only one to notice that the more we were treated like children, the more we were inclined to behave as such. On more than one occasion I observed myself behaving in a manner that was, to put it bluntly, retrospectively embarrassing. In the early part of the year, I found myself getting angry with some fellow students for what I viewed as immature behaviour. I thought that they should simply not attend if they were only going to sit in the back of the room and talk and laugh. Later in the year, at times, I found myself doing the same. Eventually, I think many of us came to the opinion that if they were going to make us attend, and serve up simple fare, then we would start to throw the food. The following exchange between myself and Hannah displays how we participated in and rejected the position of immature student:

JT: Yeah, I also found that I was amazed at the lack of respect that a lot of people had for, not for the person as a teacher, but for the person that's trying to stand up at the front of the room and conduct a classroom. I just couldn't believe how common it was for people to carry on conversations over top of and, I mean these are people who are going to school for teaching ...

H: Well what's that course we had in January, I mean we were just as bad as anybody else at some points--but people throwing spit balls and stuff, like that was ridiculous. I felt so bad for that instructor.

JT: Yeah, snickering and making fun of the teacher, making fun,

passing notes back and forth about the teacher.

H: Yeah. And when other people were giving their presentations too--  
Some pretty rude behaviour. (07/28/98)

With regard to studying, I also found myself behaving in ways that a person would if someone else were responsible for their learning, not themselves. I would pass over sections in the text, while studying for an exam, if they didn't pertain to one of the areas we were told to review, even if it interested me. I unquestionably put my efforts into the assignments that weighed most heavily on my grade. We had one course that was pass or fail. This course was designed as pass/fail with the idea in mind that the absence of grades would allow you the freedom to experiment and take chances. It was a course called Communications and it was thought that grading people's attempts at public speaking and the like would inhibit them. The irony was that the end result for most, myself included, was that the work in that course was the lowest priority. I would decide my public speaking topic on the way into class and I would write assignments with the least amount of effort. As an example, I had a meeting with four women about a class presentation we had to do for that course. We had spent an hour and a half going over strategies for presenting and had a pretty good plan formulated. Two of the women wanted to meet again to polish it up a bit. I said, "I'm sorry if this sounds bad, but I barely have any free time and this is a pass/fail course so I really don't want to meet again if it can be avoided" (09/10/97).

In the past six or seven years of university, I cannot recall having simply regurgitated what an instructor wanted to hear. High school and my first year of university were times when I told them what they wanted to hear. But later in my B.A. and in graduate school, we were encouraged to be independent thinkers and to be comfortable with contentious issues. The following excerpt from my journal

demonstrates how the programmatic discourse caused me to regress:

WOW it's a real throwback to the undergrad years to be sitting in huge anonymous gymnasiums writing final exams. We have studied a little in groups trying to figure out what they want us to know. It is an embarrassing experience in the sense that you are regressing to childhood learning. There is not ownership here, we simply give them what they want. In fact, I had a little moment of private embarrassment today writing EPSE [Educational Psychology and Special Education] 317 [exam] and I wrote down that one positive aspect of inclusion was that all those previously undiagnosed kids would be caught by more aware teachers and diagnosed properly as ADHD [attention deficit hyperactivity disorder] or LD [learning disorder] or BD [behaviour disorder]. The embarrassment lies in the fact that I was writing what she wanted to hear and not what I believe. I don't know why this embarrassed me because this is what EXAMS do, that is in fact what they are designed to do. I believe we are currently grossly over diagnosing kids with behavioral disorders, and ADHD and learning disabilities. But she didn't want to hear that and I didn't write it--after all it was an exam!! (12/04/97)

The same day, with more than a little irony, my journal explains that a student emailed our class the following quotation from Giroux telling us to "think about the following statement he makes as we go through the final round of exams" (12/4/97).

... the regulation, certification, and standardization of teacher behaviour is emphasized over creating the conditions for teachers to undertake the sensitive political and ethical roles they might assume as public intellectuals who selectively produce and legitimate particular forms of knowledge and authority... (12/4/97)

When hearing myself or seeing myself positioned in ways that made me appear to be a child, I sometimes resisted and challenged the discourse, other times I blindly bought in and acted accordingly, while still other times I chose to laugh and do both.

## **Chapter Five: Student Teacher as Agent for Change: Exploring a Marginal Discourse**

While it was clear that the Student Teacher as Child discourse was present every day of the program in tangible and less tangible ways, the same cannot be said for the discourse of Student Teacher as Agent for Change. It existed in the nooks and crannies of the program as an unwelcome cousin might. If the Child discourse buzzed throughout the program, it could be said that the Agent for Change discourse could sometimes be heard humming from the end of a hall as you walked past. However, this does not make it less worthy of investigation, perhaps just the opposite. If we are to try and understand discourses and their effects on us as teacher education students, we must understand how those discourses in the margins exist and interact as well. I do not want to suggest that any given discourse is either dominant or marginal; present or absent. Just as a discourse is not easily defined or delimited, neither is its status within a given social site. However, I believe we can identify the Agent for Change discourse as one that fights for a space in the teacher education program, even though it is given considerable space in the teacher education literature. Its presence on the practicum, in the schools, is considerably less apparent and is a major cause of its marginality in the program itself, as we shall see.

There has been a great deal of literature within teacher education that is concerned with the potential for the student of teacher education (and teacher) to work for social change and educational equity. Various terms have been used to describe this teacher and obviously the descriptive language used is significant. Some of the terms used are transformative intellectual (Giroux & McLaren, 1986),

change agent (Britzman et al.,1995), agents for change (Cochran-Smith, 1991), and education as the practice of freedom (hooks, 1994; Freire, 1970). There is an endless number of terms given to teaching for social change that involve words like “empowerment,” “democracy,” and “liberation,” and there has been a great deal of debate about the appropriateness of various terms and how such terms position teachers (Ellsworth, 1994; Gore,1992). I use the term “agents for change,” as borrowed from Cochran-Smith (1991), as I find it the term I am most comfortable with. It suggests a direction and effort for change without assuming it will occur (e.g., change agent), and it is not a vague or utopian term (e.g., transformative intellectual) which may place unrealistic expectations on the teacher.

Central to an understanding of student teacher as agent for change (or not) is the understanding that all approaches to education are political. The political position of the mainstream approach to education often goes unnoticed because it is the norm by which all other positions are judged and because those who support it prefer to mask the ideological position of the *status quo* as neutral. However, as Zeichner (1993) points out, all education is political and serves someone’s interest: “we must recognize the reality that neither teaching nor teacher education can be neutral” (p. 2). The recognition of this concept, as straight forward as it may appear, may be the most difficult and critical step in advancing the discourse of student teacher as agent for change. This discourse is surely in need of advancement given Grundy and Hatton’s (1995) finding that their “analysis would ... lend support to Giroux’s & McLaren’s (1987, p. 267) assertion that ‘teacher education institutions are ... bereft of both social conscience and social consciousness’” (p. 20). Perhaps this indictment is too harsh, but it suggests a need for concern just the same.

Part of the teacher as Agent for Change approach to teacher education involves unmasking the ideological and political positions of the dominant

discourses in order to influence a moment, classroom, school, or approach to education towards a more just and equitable end. Deborah Britzman, in her study called Practice Makes Practice: A Critical Study of Learning to Teach (1991), asked two specific questions about students of teacher education and their potential as agents for change:

How do student teachers see themselves as resisting cultural hegemony? How can student teachers come to take up discursive practices that both challenge the taken-for-granted passivity presently dominating learning and teaching, and fashion activist and participatory styles of knowing and being? (p. 11)

This query of Britzman's is shared by Cochran-Smith (1991), who asks the question, "[c]an prospective teachers learn to be both educators and activists?" (p. 279). By asking these questions the authors have become a part of the discourse and construction of student teacher as agent for change. I hope that this chapter not only makes these discourses more transparent, but also begins to answer the questions Britzman and Cochran-Smith pose.

The data suggest to me that one productive way to examine this discursive theme is to examine how it positions the student teacher in three different ways. The first discursive positioning that clearly exists in the literature, but only marginally exists in the program, is that of the *student teacher as agent for change*. That is to say, someone who is capable and obligated to engage in issues of social justice. The second construct is that of *student teacher as someone who is not yet ready to be an agent for change*.<sup>58</sup> The third position is that of *student teacher as agent of the state*. Another way of framing this third position is student teacher as teacher! In other words positioning the student teacher to, as effectively as possible, fit the norm.

<sup>58</sup> This construct has clear links to Discourses of Development examined in the previous chapter.

## **Student Teacher as Agent For Change**

Within the teacher education literature there is an impressive scholarly effort that aims to construct the student teacher as an agent for change. The majority of social justice perspectives are to be found within feminism and critical pedagogy, but they are by no means guaranteed to be found there nor limited to those locations. Giroux and McLaren (1986) introduced the term "transformative intellectual" in their article "Teacher Education and the Politics of Engagement: The Case for Democratic Schooling."

By the term "transformative intellectual" we refer to one who exercises forms of intellectual and pedagogical practice which attempt to insert teaching and learning directly into the political sphere by arguing that schooling represents both a struggle for meaning and a struggle over power relations. We are also referring to one whose intellectual practices are necessarily grounded in forms of moral and ethical discourse exhibiting a preferential concern for the suffering and struggles of the disadvantaged and oppressed. (p. 215)

However, several poststructuralist feminists have found the approach of Giroux and McLaren, and other critical pedagogues, to be problematic. Elizabeth Ellsworth (1994),<sup>59</sup> in particular, began the critique of critical pedagogy by suggesting that, amongst other things, the language used was utopian. Ellsworth describes herself as coming from a tradition of critical pedagogy but finding it problematic in several ways. Therefore, she felt that "it made more sense to see my task as one of redefining 'critical pedagogy' so that it did not need utopian moments of 'democracy', 'equality,' 'justice,' or 'emancipated' teachers--moments that are unattainable" (Ellsworth, 1994, p. 100). Furthermore, using poststructuralism, she problematized terms such as oppressor and oppressed. She suggests that people

<sup>59</sup> Ellsworth's controversial article first appeared in 1989.

embody various discourses and are not unitary, therefore one might be both "oppressor" and "oppressed". This brief review of one academic debate serves to demonstrate that while there are numerous texts which aim to construct the student of teacher education as agent of change, they do so in ways that discursively position people in subtly different but important ways.

Within the UBC teacher education program itself, there were significant efforts being made by students and faculty to engage such theory and to see the classroom as a location for an equity oriented agenda. However, as stated above, the discourse used in relation to issues of social justice suggested very different positions for the student teacher, soon to be teacher. Concerns regarding social justice were far from absent in the teacher education program. Faculty could be heard reminding student teachers to be aware of issues of race and gender in the classroom. In particular issues of race and ethnicity received a good deal of attention. We were reminded to be sensitive to cultural differences and to remember that many, if not most, of our students would speak English as a Second Language (ESL). These issues were usually framed within a liberal discourse of fairness and justice. They were often addressed in a vague manner, and the central message student teachers received was the need for awareness. As a result, many student teachers reported that social justice issues most often received "lip service" and nothing more. It was felt that there was plenty of superficial talk about such issues (perhaps too much) but a general reluctance to critically engage with them, and more importantly a hesitation to actually discuss what action could be taken. Several of the participants in my study said something about the superficial nature of the social justice discourse in the program. Hannah's frustration with it can be heard in the following passage:



We talk about it a lot, and that's what they want us to do, like take gender issues for example. We're sitting in the class, talking about it, talking about it to death, and that's all I ever hear, is talk about it. Nobody in the class changes their behaviour towards the men and women, whoever else is in the class. The teacher doesn't--isn't paying attention to the dynamics of, you know, that interaction between the genders. Like it's just talk and it drives me bananas 'cause that's not giving me the tools to go out there and teach. I'm getting the rhetoric reinforced, and reinforced and reinforced which I've, you know [had] up to my eyeballs cause it's so important that I'm into it. But I don't need the rhetoric. I need models or examples [of] how to broach this in class. (12/10/97)

The course Educational Studies 314 (Analysis of Issues in Education) evolved into the course that addresses social justice issues in the program.<sup>60</sup> EDST 314 instructors are mandated to cover the following issues; "First Nations", "Gender", "Sexuality", "Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism." The level to which these are framed as "issues to be aware of" or "issues to engage with," has a great deal to do with the individual instructor; there were eighteen sections in the year of this study. Some instructors unquestionably approached it from a strong position of concern for social justice and change. The concentration of issues regarding social justice in one course has caused it to be referred to by many students as "political correctness 101". One unfortunate effect of this concentration is that it ends up being seen as an "add on". The course which says "oh yea and don't forget about." This type of treatment relating to social justice issues has been referred to as "ghettoization," causing many people to call for the integration of such issues throughout the program. Whether social justice issues (race, class, sexuality, etc.) should be explored (1) as a group, (2) individually or (3) integrated

---

<sup>60</sup> The purpose of this course and what it should cover has been a contested issue over the years. It was originally a course that was meant to provide students with conceptual skills with which to analyze issues in education. It could be said that it was not about the issues, but how to analyze them. Since then, due to pressure from certain faculty, and programmatic pressure to "cover" certain issues, it has become more political and issue centered. This could be seen as a move away from neutrality to positionality.

throughout a program, has been hotly debated and discussed, and little consensus has emerged (hooks, 1994; Ellsworth, 1994).

This is not to say that concern for issues of social justice cannot be found elsewhere in the program, but exposure to such issues is serendipitous and solely a result of personal interest by one faculty member or another. I had several brushes with discourses of change. In a class on adolescent literature, we were given an assignment called "defense of the novel." It turned out that this assignment was given with the rationale that we would be teaching novels that might deal with controversial issues in order that they relate to the lives of our target audience: adolescents. Issues such as homosexuality, drugs, teen pregnancy, and more are becoming more common in adolescent literature. The assignment was given to prepare us for defending a novel with controversial subject matter from, perhaps, a parent or another teacher. This assignment not only encouraged us to raise issues that could be used to encourage student discussion concerning social justice, but it provided an obvious and clear break from the status quo; obviously the status quo does not need defending! One of the books provided for us to read was entitled Deliver Us from Evie by M.E. Kerr which introduced young readers to a lesbian teenager and the types of pressures she faced. This instructor, by his actions, was saying "you may want to include literature by and about gays and lesbians." In the following excerpt from my "defense" of this novel, I was able to depict why I felt it was a social justice issue.<sup>61</sup>

Studies have shown that gay and lesbian youth are over-represented in numerous social categories of concern, including: homelessness, victims of hate crime, high school dropouts, and suicide. As educators we can not correct this depressing situation alone, but we can participate in the solution. The importance of including information about gay and lesbian people in the curriculum is one

---

<sup>61</sup> In the spirit of transparency I believe it is important to disclose my sexuality, which is heterosexual.

way we can do this.

“The absence from the curriculum of valid information about homosexuality cuts both ways; heterosexual students are given no reasons not to hate homosexuals, while homosexual students are given no reason not to hate themselves. Both groups suffer a loss. (Unks,1995:5)”

As you can see from what I wrote in my assignment, I have entered into a dialogue with the instructor (and with the class) about how to effect change in our schools and in our students. This assignment represented an opening in the dominant discourse. My instructor created a small space where a marginal discourse could be heard. In the midst of the booming voice of the status quo of teacher as agent of the state, we were able to suggest another possibility. This assignment stood in particular contrast to instructions given to us by a different instructor in the same department. This instructor<sup>62</sup> told us directly, many times, that we were to teach only what the curriculum prescribed and nothing more. He made it clear to us that it was not up to us to create new topics or to introduce new texts, that was up to the school board or the province.

Hannah, one of the student participants in this study, offers us insight into one student teacher as agent for change and how her discourse is received in the program and the schools. Recall that Hannah is a single mom who has lived a great deal of her life in poverty. Furthermore, she is white and is raising two black boys on her own. Her brother is gay. Needless to say she is familiar with gender, racial, and socio-economic discrimination. In fact, I think it is safe to say that Hannah's identity is linked to issues of social justice. She fights hard whenever necessary for the proper discursive representation of women and minorities:

---

<sup>62</sup> This instructor's firm stance on innovation or change will be discussed in more detail in this chapter under the heading, Student Teacher as Agent of the State.

So there was a few times in all of my classes when there would be a homophobic remark said and not necessarily out of any spite, 'cause I don't think, especially with kids, it's not always generated by spite. They're just repeating what they've heard or what they think the appropriate response is. So it was quite a new development to have somebody say that you're not supposed to call somebody a fag in class. (05/20/98)

Hannah, using her commitment to and knowledge of social justice issues, began to interrupt the dominant discourse relating to homosexuality amongst the students in her practicum school. This type of intervention was an aspect of her teaching identity. She used the discourse of Teacher as Agent for Change in a way that created a safer and more inclusive environment for gay and lesbian students.

I would also characterize myself as a person who has concerns about social justice, and I believe that education is a moral enterprise. In fact, I would consider myself to have failed as a teacher if I had not made my students aware of social justice issues and encouraged them to think about how they might act on their beliefs (and I have failed many times). If we take the premise offered earlier by Kenneth Zeichner that no position is neutral, than I believe it is safe to claim that no action in relation to gay and lesbian students' oppression is an affirmation of the status quo, and the status quo is, unfortunately, allowing gay, bisexual, and lesbian students to suffer terribly and even die. Having said that I think it is important to point out that the schools, our practica, are lonely places for a person with a commitment to social justice issues.

My personal experience on practicum reminded me that the marginal discourse of social justice and teacher as agent for change was not particularly welcome, although it was not without resonance either. The dominant discourse had several ways of confronting the marginal discourse of change and trying to silence it. One way to silence a discourse or a person is to be silent. This may

seem preferable to open hostility, but even hostility leaves a place for discussion, no matter how antagonistic. I experienced forms of silence on practicum when I attempted to engage in issues of social justice. The silence, particularly for a student teacher, was profound.

Today I was sitting at the round table eating lunch and a discussion started up about a small piece written in a teacher's magazine. The article was written by a woman and talked about issues of gender equality and the need to address such issues with our students. The first two teachers on the topic trashed the article as not being understandable because of the heavy-handed academic type language. After reading out a section, one of the teachers said, "What does that mean?" A few more people read it and agreed it was someone trying to impress people with big words. I said yes maybe it's a bit overstated, but it's an important issue. My comment pretty much ended the discussion. The day before someone was reading a newspaper article about Native land claims. He said that he was going to marry an Indian because that was the only way to get rich these days. I said if you look at the welfare rates or infant mortality rates, being an Indian stops looking so great. That pretty much ended the conversation. As a staff member in a school or a person anywhere, I feel always like I am doing a balancing act between saying what I think (is right) and being seen as the too serious "politically correct" guy (it's a terrible thing to be politically correct now--worse than being a racist). However, when it came to the classroom today, I chose not to speak out (it's always a choice). The students were saying this was gay and that was gay--using gay as a derogatory comment. I believe that we need to try to stop students from using gay as their everyday, common, catch-all, negative comment. But, today I just didn't have it in me. I felt like I had let myself down. I made excuses in my head, like I need to get to know the students first or I need to establish my credibility first before I ask them to rethink the way they talk or act. Perhaps that's true, but I think I was just afraid of looking like the guy who takes everything way too seriously. (02/05/98)

The context a discourse circulates in is important to the nature of the discourse and how individuals interact with it. In my case I was at a particularly

conservative school located in one of the wealthiest school districts in Canada. Parental involvement in the school was the norm, and more than one teacher commented on the level of scrutiny they endured. As I was reminded on several occasions, this was the school district where a parent sued a teacher for not following the curriculum. It was within this context that I raised social justice issues. As the journal entry above suggests, this conservative environment helped to support the dominant discourse and made the introduction of a marginal discourse of social justice difficult. In fact, I think the journal entry actually depicts my withdrawal from a discourse I am usually comfortable with. In contrast, Hannah was at a school that served as a catchment for the university and was originally created as a progressive alternative to the mainstream, and a significant number of her students were children of faculty and university students. Although there were high levels of parental involvement as in my school, the atmosphere was unquestionably more liberal and open to teachers as agents for change. Having said that, I think it is important to recognize that Hannah had a greater level of commitment to her beliefs than I did, a quality I admired in her. She would always put the issue or those affected ahead of her own concerns. However, Hannah, too, recognized the importance of context in efforts to be an agent for change:

The school I was at was pretty, like do whatever you want and, pretty much. They knew I was doing okay so they just let me to it. So I was quite free to address some of these things, but professionally I'll be hindered by the fact that I refuse to teach in Surrey, I refuse to teach in Coquitlam. I won't teach anywhere outside of, I guess New West would be the farthest I would go--'cause like in Surrey teachers are forbidden to like bring same sex books into the classrooms, or to even talk about it in a positive manner. In Coquitlam there's a person who's a teacher who quite frequently appears in the media condemning gay and lesbian people--so as a person, yes it's very, going to be very hard and I can imagine I'm going to get into trouble if I'm not careful about where I teach. (07/28/98)

Students bringing a discourse of change into the classrooms on practicum are in a vulnerable position and feel the silences more than veteran teachers might. However, concerns about social justice are not always met with silence. Another common response to discourses of change are calls for neutrality. The status quo position often engages in a humanistic liberal discourse of fairness and neutrality. This discourse calls for teachers to be either "neutral" or "fair" in their presentation of material to students. Such talk is rarely, if ever, accompanied by an unpacking of what neutrality or fairness is. However, as Zeichner (1993) points out, "neutrality" when examined usually turns out to be the status quo position. In other words if you support things as they are, you are neutral; if you have a different position you are biased. I ran headlong into such a discourse when I was teaching a unit on media literacy. I will let my journal entry tell the story because I think it offers immediacy and a direct link to my thoughts and emotions at that time:

I had a fascinating couple of days this past week. I had designed a unit on Media Literacy a month before the practicum and I had spent a great deal of time on it. It was at a time when I had a great deal more enthusiasm, time and energy than I do now. This past week I came to a point in the unit at which I would examine controversy in the corporate world. In particular we would look at the Benetton ad campaign and the Nike Boycotts. I was in the teacher work space printing off a couple of "Anti-Nike" web sites when a teacher at the printer said out loud "who's Anti-Nike stuff is this?" I said, "Mine" and he replied, "Right-on". I jokingly said "shhhh--not too loud in front of my sponsor teacher." By this point I had discovered that Tracy was a walking Nike advertisement herself and everyone else knew it, too. When I made my comment the almost consistently jovial Tracy shot a look around at me and without a smile said, "As long as you're fair!" I then realized that we had a potential conflict, although not likely a serious one, because both Tracy and myself are fairly relaxed, non-confrontational types. I also knew almost immediately that Tracy would drop in to evaluate one of my "Nike" classes. When she next mentioned that she would need to drop in soon I thought I would beat

her to the punch line, and I said, "Why don't you drop in and see my class on Nike. She liked the idea. I also said that I had had a hard time finding pro-Nike material and perhaps she would be able to speak about the company and defend them a little--offer some balance. In class we watched an excerpt from the "scanning television" series called "Nike Town," which is a relatively uncritical look at one of the mega Nike sales complexes. I then showed the class some overheads of web sites that advocate the boycotting of Nike products. These web sites list a series of charges against Nike. I explained that it is hard to tell from the internet or even newspapers and magazines which accusations are true and which are not but that I must wonder at the level of protest and coverage both on the internet and in national magazines and newspapers. I pointed out that Nike claims that some of the accusations are false and that they have responded to others. I then began to talk about Michael Jordan's 20 million dollar advertising contract and Nike CEO Philip Knight's estimated worth of 5.3 billion in comparison to factory wages in Nike plants in Vietnam of \$1.60 a day. I asked if these kinds of disparities were justifiable. At this point Tracy jumped in and explained that they shouldn't be paid the same and that Philip Knight started Nike out of the trunk of his car and worked hard, and took risks to build it to the point he has. Students joined in and said it would be crazy to pay people in the two countries the same wages when things are cheaper to purchase elsewhere. I pointed out that *perhaps* Philip Knight and U.S. workers deserved more than the Vietnamese workers, but couldn't Michael Jordan do with 10 million and give the Vietnamese workers three or four dollars a day. And couldn't we provide workers in other countries with safe and clean and abuse-free workplaces? Tracy pointed out that Nike monitors its plants for all of those things and any cases of sub-standard practices were either corrected or found not to be in Nike plants. The class ended and I felt that the students had not moved much from their original position. Like most people (including myself) they didn't really want to accept the injustice because then there would be a subtle obligation to do something. They instinctively attached themselves to Tracy's position and left skeptical of my suggestions of wrong doings or needs for change. Tracy left comfortable (I believe) that I hadn't come on too strong and that the students had received a balanced presentation. I found myself thinking back to her comment "as long as you're fair." I wondered what she thought fair meant--balanced?--objective? Did she feel that she had been fair by not having raised this issue before? Did she feel she had been ideologically neutral by wearing a virtual wardrobe of Nike products and placing Nike posters in her classroom? Was it fair to unequivocally defend Nike while explaining that her brother works for Nike in Chicago at a head office or by telling



the students that she has been sponsored by Nike for many years and continues to be so? It reminds me of the contention by several educational theorists that many educators believe that their silent support of the status quo is ideologically neutral, while a protest against the status quo is not.

Life got more interesting when I went to teach a similar lesson for my other sponsor teacher, and she decided to sit in as well. In this class, I admit, I gave myself more freedom to assert my (others'?) points regarding American corporate imperialism and Nike's abusive practices around the world. However, I had also continued in my usual moderate approach knowing from experience that by coming on too strong, one can lose their audience. In fact another student teacher (Enzo) and myself had recently discussed the need for subtle persuasion when dealing with relatively apolitical youth. The students in this class were, not surprisingly, much more receptive to my message. After all, Tracy was not present to provide the status quo position (one which students have plenty of access to in my opinion). Although the students were a little more receptive, they still showed little compassion for people in Vietnam or Indonesia and felt comfortable with the position that the world is simply "that way." When the class was over, Rhonda came over to speak with me as she often does. She told me that she was appalled and disturbed by the students' lack of compassion and simple acceptance of blatant injustices. But, this is where my little story gets interesting. She then went on to commend me for attempting to remain objective, but she feels that at certain times we as teachers need to be a little more aggressive and assertive. She felt I should have challenged them to think about the poor, starving, abused people who work in these factories, while Philip Knight and Michael Jordon take home millions and billions. I tried to explain that I had tried to subtly make them face those issues, but she felt I was too subtle. Ironically I felt as if I had not lived up to my own political ideals and had allowed complacency to reign.

I had gone quite literally from one extreme to another (as so many student teachers are forced to do over a multitude of issues and styles). I was also left wondering how strong one's message can/should be. I was left amazed that so many people still think that no message is neutral and that a message is political and biased and ideological. I was also left wondering how things in this world will ever change when most sixteen and seventeen year olds have not begun to question the order of things and are virtually apolitical (their politics are so severely status quo as to appear apolitical). (04/13/98)

If you look at the words I use in the entry above, you can see how both the

dominant and marginal discourse related to social justice issues are operating within me simultaneously. I use the term "balanced presentation" in reference to the lesson and I refer to students as "apolitical". The first term suggests neutrality is desirable, the second suggests it is possible! Neutrality and the discourse of student teacher as change agent is an interesting one. Student teachers can often be heard in the program talking about opening their students' eyes to issues such as racism and sexism. However, the same student teachers can also be heard talking about avoiding bias and letting their students make up their minds for themselves. In the following quotation, Jackson can be seen to be struggling with these ideas. He feels the need to push students to think of social justice issues, yet he has this sense that he should remain neutral, unbiased;

If you really want us to create a liberal school that makes students think and everything, then I think you've got to give the teachers, who are student teachers, the leeway to think critically, to think for themselves about "what do I think is right, what do I think is wrong." And I guess I can also see a problem with that--is that old argument about teaching about morals and ethics and I guess we shouldn't do it but, should we do it or shouldn't we do it. Maybe we should be, maybe there's all these universal ethics--you can't kill someone, that's wrong--and all these other ethics are floating in and out, but maybe, we should have it so that our students can address these issues, some ethics. We don't have to teach it to them, what we think is right, but we can present both arguments. We can play devil's advocate if we really want to. (12/09/97)

The level of confusion Jackson is experiencing in this passage can be seen as a direct result of two discourses interacting with him at one time. He is wrestling with the ideas of remaining neutral and engaging students in moral deliberations. He feels a need to face the political and ethical nature of education, but he feels the pull of the status quo which requires that we, as teachers, remain "neutral."

Perhaps he even senses that neutrality is only a cloak. I think we have all felt the tension between engaging the political and remaining "neutral."<sup>63</sup> These contradictory discourses affect us all.

One of my explicit goals for this thesis is to break the hegemonic hold of some of the dominant discourses in education and allow for multiple ways of being a teacher. One way to do this is to introduce or make room for marginal discourses. Although the discourse of student teacher as agent for change is marginal, it is still present. In the above examples we found faculty members, sponsor teachers, and student teachers all finding ways to address social justice and act as agents for change. The following two sections will examine representations which work in opposition to student teacher as agent for change. Understanding such discourses is essential in the effort to make room for others.

### **Student Teacher as Not Yet Ready to Be an Agent for Change**

Many students in teacher education demonstrate a great concern for issues of social justice and suggest a desire to change our schools for the better. Against this desire is set a discourse which represents a kind of discursive middle ground between "agent for change" and "agent of the state." This discourse has close ties to "discourses of development" and the "discourse of student teacher as child". This sub-discourse proffers the idea that student teachers are not yet capable of complex moral deliberations or at the least are not ready to attempt to enact them within complex social settings such as a school. This discourse could be seen to say to student teachers that their concerns are admirable, but they had better set them aside for a few years and concentrate on the day-to-day of teaching. Donna Kagan (1992) sees student teachers as incapable of taking on complex moral and

---

<sup>63</sup> Kelly & Minnes-Brandes (2000) found that even student teachers in their social justice-focused teacher education program struggled with this tension, almost to the point of paralysis.

political concepts or actions until they have had time to explore their own identities as teachers and establish classroom routine. However, Pamela Grossman (1992) takes objection. Grossman points out that Kagan left out of her review literature that demonstrated that student teachers do take on moral and ethical issues in education and are capable of wrestling with such issues (p.176). Ultimately Grossman (1992) clearly sees the direct link between seeing student teachers as knowers and seeing them as capable of the possibility of creating a climate for change:

Teacher education can also help raise the questions regarding ethical and moral issues that will not necessarily arise from experience alone but which will frame how prospective teachers think about and continue to learn from their work in classrooms. I do not believe that prospective teachers are incapable of this challenge. (p. 177)

While some faculty members and sponsor teachers clearly agreed with Grossman, others felt that now was not the time to be an activist. We were told over and over again not to rock the boat and to err on the side of caution. One faculty member told us in the first week of the program that, "as a student teacher you are stepping into a culture which is already there. If you go into that culture with a set of values that does not fit, you're in big trouble. I suggest you err on the side of caution" (09/09/97). This faculty member does not in any way strike me as a conservative, status quo kind of guy, just the opposite. I believe he is truly motivated by what is best for us. I think he is concerned that we may go out with an agenda that is too aggressive, which might cause a stressful, or even unsuccessful, practicum, and he wants things to be smooth and positive for us. However, if the emphasis is on fitting in (and it is), then what hope is there for a new generation of teachers working for equitable and safe classrooms for everyone?

Of course, we have to recognize the limitations on student teachers to be activists or agents for change. Establishing rapport with students, pleasing school and faculty advisors, and passing, are all powerful curbs on one's commitment to change and justice. Furthermore, we should recognize that there are many ways of being an agent for change. One might simply ask provocative questions, or one might include new and diverse materials in the curriculum, one might go even further and push for student action in their school or community. Kelly & Minnes Brandes (2000) outline six approaches to social justice they discerned in their students, including the ones mentioned above. It is important to recognize that attention to social justice is to be found in many forms. Furthermore, student teachers might be taking a less aggressive approach than they may do when they enter the classroom as full time teachers. I still maintain a concern for dismissing student teachers from a responsibility to address social justice issues. If students are repeatedly told that now is not the time, they may incorporate that discourse in ways that threaten to become permanent.

Many students adopted such a discourse and began to talk about what they would do when they had their own classroom. One could often hear students saying that they planned to walk carefully during the practicum and not rock the boat. Others recalled stories or incidents of student teachers who did rock the boat:

I think, I think as starting off your career as a student teacher, I think you shouldn't be going in there to rock the boat ... I noticed that one of the student teachers, she had made the mistake of rocking the boat and she really suffered for it, and she suffered with a failure.  
(05/21/98)

However, if the message being sent is to reign in your desires for social justice and change until you are firmly established, and we as student teachers opt for that

approach, does it not hinder the chance that we will be agents for change later in our careers? If our induction, a time when we are developing a teaching identity, is one of fitting in and not disturbing the status quo, then doesn't this suggest a bleak outlook for teachers as agents for change? Perhaps there is so little resonance for student teachers with change agendas because, at a crucial time, they are encouraged to "fit in and not rock the boat." When one learns to teach in that manner, perhaps, it is difficult to abandon it as one enters the profession.

If we are to encourage student teachers to take up positions as agents for change, we must consider the context of the practicum. If there is a message being sent to student teachers that this is not the time OR it is not your job to address change, then the likelihood of student teachers taking on that role is diminished. Cochran-Smith (1991) is concerned with cultivating the potential of student teachers as agents for change, but she feels that programs that are not accompanied by a practicum experience that reinforces the pedagogies for change outlined in course work are doomed. Cochran-Smith suggests that if student teachers go into a practicum or job in a "regular" school setting, they are likely to experience what she calls "critical dissonance." This means that there will be an incongruity of experience between the critical approach being espoused in the course work and the less than critical stance in the school of the practicum. She recommends that practicum sites be chosen for a commitment by a group of teachers or the whole school to "teaching against the grain." If this is done, she suggests, the student teachers will experience "collaborative resonance" in which there is a level of congruity between the ideas and approaches circulating in the course work and the practicum placement.

Deirdre Kelly, Peter Seixas, Carl Leggo, and Gabriella Minnes Brandes implemented a program similar to the type Cochran-Smith suggests at UBC the

year after this study. This is a cohort-type program that involves one group of 36, self-selected students, who work with instructors and faculty advisors, who all share a focus on issues of social justice. The school advisors were not chosen for their commitment to social justice, but attempts were made to find appropriate advisors. This program has been a great success and continues to attract more interested students than it can serve. However, the program has not been without difficulties. Students continue to embody discourses of change and neutrality simultaneously much as Jackson was seen to do earlier in this chapter. The dominant discourse of agent of the state is powerful and continues to depict the status quo as neutral and neutrality as desirable, even for a group of students concerned with social justice and change. Discourses and discursive positions are not changed over night.

#### **Student Teacher as Agent of the State: Being Taught to be a Teacher**

I feel that I'm being told to not make any waves. I'm being prepared to be part of a system where I might be pulled in a lot of different directions and here's how to be status quo and just get by. (Ophelia, 12/19/97)

Many teachers' working environments remain oppressive, promoting and perpetuating, a conventional conception of schooling, teaching, and learning (Ervin and Fox, 1994); unfortunately, this oppressive context remains particularly acute for the beginning teacher. (Fox, 1995, p. 22)

There was a strong sense among the participants in this study, and amongst many students I spoke with in the program, that the program promoted a kind of "how to" approach to fitting in as a teacher in the school system. It seems that many faculty and faculty advisors felt that their success was in part contingent on our success, and our success was contingent on "assuming the role of a teacher." The

first section of this chapter demonstrated that a marginal discourse of Student Teacher as Agent for Change existed and was supported in small spaces and brief moments. However this section will demonstrate that a discourse of Student Teacher as Agent of the State was dominant and expressed in many ways. When I use the term agent of the state, I mean to suggest a person who supports the status quo approach to education as set out by the province. An agent of the state sees his or her role as primarily that of following the mandated curriculum and fulfilling the duties required of a teacher. This person leaves the issues of what is best for students to the state and does not attempt to change things unless change is mandated. This person is not an agent of change for no other reason than change is not their job. A discourse that positioned the student teacher in the ways described above was common and persistent. The discourse of teacher as agent of the state is closely linked to that of student teacher as technician, which was explored in chapter two. However, the link is important to recognize. The emphasis away from concerns with social justice or educational change was partly accomplished through an emphasis on the technical aspects of teaching. The implicit message was that we were to concern ourselves with preparing skill sets which would provide success on the practicum and in the future, and leave those loftier issues, such as change, to the bureaucracies. Several faculty members participated in a discourse that placed emphasis on technical expertise, thus de-emphasizing issues of change. "[A]lthough much prevailing university rhetoric rails against the conservatism of the school milieu, teacher educators are perhaps unwittingly doing much to perpetuate rather than change the status quo" (Weber & Mitchell, 1995, p. 65). While there is a great amount of truth in this statement, I would suggest that what is done is often not done so "unwittingly." Many of the instructors I was taught by clearly stated that change and social issues were not our



domain. Their words reminded us of our limitations and expressed concern that we not overstep our bounds.

In one course in particular, I witnessed a virtually continuous discourse of Student Teacher as Agent of the State. This instructor, Carol, was vigilant about not engaging in controversial or "political" issues, with the explicit reason that these were issues that we could not affect, therefore we were wasting our time. This assertion reinforced a notion of teachers as passive recipients of state-mandated curriculum, but more importantly as people who could not effect social change, simply because that happened somewhere else. If she felt that the conversation was moving towards controversial issues, she would simply stop the conversation:

Last class Carol stopped a discussion which seemed to be straying to educational philosophy and insisted that we deal with the reality. She told us a story in order to illustrate how we must operate within reality. She worked at a school and they had a policy handed down. She didn't agree with the policy. "But it was done, it was official." So, "I had to sell this program. I didn't believe in it or agree with it but I had to introduce it and sell it." I am not sure that I would be willing to do that. It depends, but there was no talk about the possibility of refusing or fighting for something better. (10/09/97)

This above example is only one of many where she monitored the conversations and moved them away from controversy. On another occasion she responded to someone speaking of volunteering with special needs students. She explained that this was wrong and only a trained person should be working with that student. She had taken a clear political position on an issue. I responded that when volunteers want to help out in schools, we should not discourage them. They might be successful where we have not, and, furthermore, it is a way of bringing the community into the school. She felt an untrained person could harm the child. Before our debate got going, she stopped and explained that we were getting into

an area of personal opinions and that we should stick to the facts. What is extraordinary was that she originally saw volunteers working with special needs students being wrong as a fact. It was a neutral fact because that was the generally accepted position within the education system.<sup>64</sup> When I suggested it might be a positive change towards increased volunteerism, the topic suddenly became political or about "personal opinions." I happen to think that some of the best learning arises out of controversy and debate. More importantly, if we avoid all controversial issues such as those related to social justice, then we avoid probing our own educational ideologies--our teaching identities. Furthermore, an avoidance of controversy,<sup>65</sup> I believe, produces an environment that is less intellectually rigorous.

Ophelia made the same connection between controversy and intellectual rigor after being "shut down" when she suggested the possibility of unconscious racism in an article her class was discussing.

The reaction that she had to my comment, which was what she did to me all the time in class I felt anyway, was just to shut me down and pass on to something else. "Oh yes, hmm, well isn't that interesting", and then just move right along. She did not take up a challenge and I feel like a lot of my professors this year have not been willing to take up a challenge. It's not a very challenging intellectual environment in a lot of these courses. If you raise a contentious issue, if you throw a wrench into their plans, they often just shut down. (08/04/98)

The topic of English as a Second Language students received very little direct attention in the program yet was brought up for discussion by students

---

<sup>64</sup> That does not mean that it doesn't happen---a friend of mine had been doing just that for over a year in Vancouver.

<sup>65</sup> I prefer the word "controversy" because "political" suggests the status quo is apolitical, while controversy suggests the status quo is uncontroversial. There is an important difference.

repeatedly.<sup>66</sup> I think many students felt as I did: unprepared to help these students, and unfamiliar with a topic that was often controversial. The same instructor who refused to explore unqualified people working with special needs students was even more adamant about avoiding this topic, as my journal entry demonstrates:

Today two students raised the issue of resources and ESL students. Their clear position was that we spend too many dollars on ESL students. Their political position was clear. Carol said, "It's a political hot potato and I don't want to get involved in it." She went on to say, "This is about political ideology--it's not our reality as teachers. Let's stick with the challenges to us as teachers." I was very frustrated because I wanted to respond to these students, and she did not want the discussion to go on. I wanted to scream out 'teaching is political, education is political'. Those students had taken a political position about resources and ESL in the province. It was out there. If I was teaching that class, I would see it as a political responsibility to intervene. Those students will be going out and teaching and they may be viewing their ESL students as a burden on the system and on the classroom. So I kind of forced my voice into the debate. Carol let me speak, although she made it very clear that she did not want to address the issue or spend more time on it. In fact after class she told me she hates the discussion and always avoids it. She told me that she doesn't see the point of spending time on something that we cannot affect. (10/09/97)

To say the least I was astounded, and remain so. Let me repeat one line the instructor said so it can sink in: "This is about political ideology--it's not our reality as teachers. Let's stick with the challenges to us as teachers." I wonder if this instructor really believes that teachers cannot effect change,<sup>67</sup> and that contentious

<sup>66</sup> Like all students and faculty I participate in contradictory discourses all the time. An idea I mentioned earlier in this thesis, and will address later as well, is the idea that content is overemphasized in the program; that we cannot try to address every issue of importance to everyone. However, here I can be seen to be demanding more content in the form of ESL instruction. There will always be debates over what content is necessary and what is not, and I believe some content areas should take precedence over others. The point I hope I make is that, overall, we need to lessen the emphasis on content and realize that all content is not sacred.

<sup>67</sup> When I speak of change or agent for change, here or elsewhere, I do so in a broad manner. As my discussion of agency early in this thesis suggests, I recognize limitations on teachers and student teachers. Change may be indirect and accretive. Change does not have to refer to a fundamental re-working of the system, nor should that expectation exist.

educational issues are not our reality as teachers. If she doesn't think issues such as ESL funding is something teachers should care about or concern themselves with, then who should? That is like telling doctors to stay out of discussions about the future of universal health care! More important than her belief about teachers' *right* to effect change is the image of teachers as being *unable* to effect change. The discourse she introduced is as important as the one she avoided. She has presented us, in the thick of developing a teaching identity, with the image of student teachers and teachers as being disconnected from social issues and educational change. She avoided any representation of teachers as agents for change or moral agents or agents--period.

One danger with Carol's approach is that if she does not see it as her job to address issues of social justice, or to work for equitable representations of ESL students, than such injustices can occur in her own classroom and she can be, in effect, oblivious to them. If instances of subtle racism or stereotyping occur in a classroom, is it not her responsibility to address them as a faculty instructor in a teacher education program? This very situation occurred in her class. The following is my reaction to her lack of response to what I saw as an extremely inappropriate representation of ESL students:

[F]our students did a presentation on ESL students. This presentation, in my opinion, crossed a very fine line and was solidly in the realm of extreme stereotyping or even racism. However, I am sure that the students presenting did not see it this way. In fact, as often is the case, I am sure they felt they were highly sympathetic to ESL students and their needs. Perhaps Carol saw it this way as well. But again I saw it as a political moment in education which should have been addressed and not avoided. Two of the presenters referred repeatedly to ESL students as 'they', as if they were one large homogeneous group and made the following comments.

-their societies are patriarchal

- there is emotional and physical intimidation at home
- they come from violent cultures
- they are used to the rule of the gun
- we have to teach them to leave aspects of their culture behind. Not everything but they have to leave things behind and adapt to Canadian ways. Leave the bad behind like guns and adapt to the good things here.

This stereotyping was way overboard in my opinion--especially with this "us" and "they" stuff and the cultural stereotypes. "They, they, they ... come from violent cultures, they have violence in the home", etc. Carol should have addressed this--she has a responsibility to intervene. Unfortunately, if anything, she validated their cultural essentialisms by telling them what a great job they had done and what great points they had made. I see my job as a teacher to fight stereotyping and racism. She is using "neutrality" as an out. (10/09/97)

The salient point which I hope becomes clear through these examples is two fold. First, a "non-political," status quo position in teacher education (or elsewhere) is often presented as neutral, either knowingly or otherwise. Second, and more importantly, this stance allows social injustices to go unnoticed or unaffected. In teacher education, as students, we are often confronted with a discourse that maintains the status quo by ascribing change as either not our jurisdiction or as being "political" when we should remain neutral.

Perhaps the most aggressive defense of the status quo came in relation to the provincial subject guidelines. These guidelines were once known (and still are to most people) as the provincial curriculum. However, they are now officially known as the Integrated Resource Packages or IRP's. This name change represents, in part, a discursive repositioning of the role of the teacher. The move to IRP's in British Columbia involved an introduction of new terms such as "learning outcomes" and "prescribed reading lists". These terms were designed to encourage a common curriculum for students across British Columbia. A possible

sought after side effect could be to lessen teacher control and choice. The learning outcomes allowed the province to clearly define (most of the time) what the students "should be able to do" as a result of the lesson. The key intention was to make the outcomes more measurable. In fact, at UBC, we were taught, when planning lessons, to always use the phrase "the students will be able to," shortened to TSWBAT. In another course, we had a guest speaker from the Ministry of Education. He explained to us that he was the person who developed the IRP's because there were no clear expectations or mandated learning outcomes in the previous curriculum guides. He explained that the learning goals in the old curriculum were few and far between. He described them as "warm and fuzzy" like "you will live by the side of the road and be nice to animals" (01/23/98).<sup>68</sup> Perhaps at this point you can tell that there is an ideological position somewhat to the right in this person's agenda and in the IRP's themselves. The concern was that the old system did not mandate and measure enough. He explained to us that the IRP's now have mandated outcomes and are consistent across the province due to the "Western Protocol Frameworks," and eventually with the "Canadian Agenda" we will be standardized across the whole country so that students will be able to do the same things on the same day anywhere in the province and the country.

The move to IRP's and the accompanying discourses of prescription and standardization signaled a different role for teachers and therefore student teachers. This role is directly linked to the deskilling and intensification Michael Apple has highlighted. Now teachers need not concern themselves with what students will read or study--it is prescribed. Nor will teachers need to decide what skill their class might need to work towards at any given point or time--this also is

---

<sup>68</sup> A further reaction to his mockery from my journal of the same day: "I am not sure what the hell kind of learning goal that is, but I guess maybe he felt it represented left wing alternative lifestyles and outdated ideas like caring for living things!"

prescribed. Teachers will be kept ever busier planning to implement exactly (at least in theory) what is laid out for them in the IRP's. Of course, the truth is that although the IRP's contain more jargon of control, they are still relatively vague and teachers continued to exercise almost as much choice as under the previous guidelines.<sup>69</sup> Under the IRP's, teachers were sent another signal not to concern themselves with educational change or social justice (unless such concern was indicated in the IRP's); these areas are the concern of the bureaucrats and the politicians. Teachers are to simply dispense and measure--dispense and measure.

In one of our English methods courses, we referred repeatedly to the IRP's, and we were instructed as to our role in relation to these documents in no uncertain terms. On the fifth day of the program, we were told that the IRP's are "the law of the land," and they will be our "bible." The instructor went on to explain that "if you believe in democracy as I do, you will teach what the government law requires" (09/07/97). My internal response was as follows:

I am a person who believes in challenging the system when it seems inadequate or simply wrong. I believe that people fighting for change or willing to bend or break the law are also necessary elements of a democracy. I felt like I was being told to fit into the system and if there are things I do not like that I should not worry about them--that they would be dealt with and debated and changed by other people. I think as teachers we should be frontline workers for educational change and reform. We see first hand the needs, injustices, and boredom of our students and we should act on their behalf and our own behalf, because we suffer from injustices and boredom too. (09/07/97)

The discourse of Teacher as Agent of the State, in British Columbia, received support from a zealous parent two years before I entered the teacher

---

<sup>69</sup> The fact that, in many schools, the IRP's remain sealed or unread exists as proof of their ineffectiveness in the area of standardization and control.

education program. A teacher at my practicum school was sued by a parent for not teaching the mandated curriculum which included the Industrial Revolution. The parent sued because he felt the teacher had not spent enough time on the topic. This specific law-suit about a specific issue got boiled down, in our program, to “a teacher being sued for not teaching the IRP.” This phrase was bandied about repeatedly (yet rarely in context) as part of the teacher as agent of the state discourse. Three separate instructors used the decontextualized example as evidence that we had better teach the IRP as it is our legal obligation. Nowhere in these discussions was there a clear understanding of the context or an acknowledgment that the parent lost the suit! Furthermore, these discussions never recognized that the majority of teachers deviate from the curriculum because they know it is best for their students at that point in time. For example, perhaps a teacher realizes that the students need to go back and review something that was in the IRP for the previous grade, or their class might not absorb any of the remaining material. Or perhaps a teacher is witnessing a great deal of homophobic remarks and has a suicidal gay teen in his/her class, so they decide to make the next short story one they found about a gay youth and their struggles. Whatever the cause, every day of the school year a teacher somewhere in British Columbia is deviating from the IRP because they recognize that *they*, not the *state*, at that given moment, know what is best for their students. However, as student teachers we are rarely given representations of teachers making these kinds of decisions, and we rarely hear the discourse of teacher as agent for change.

### **Conclusion: When Push Comes to Shove**

If education is a moral and political enterprise, a question needs to be asked: What do you do when you have two political positions openly opposing



each other? What if that status quo position does not disguise itself as neutral and comes right out and says, "Here I am and this is what I think"? What do you do when push comes to shove?

The Teacher as Agent for the State discourse has for a long time positioned educators as neutral dispensers of neutral facts. It is thought that we should not be in the business of influencing students' morals. This is one of the ways the status quo remained so, because the result of not interfering is leaving everything as it is. However, as more and more people insisted that education is a moral enterprise, and they fought for change, the educational landscape began to shift. Whereas once we only fought to be heard, now we fight, to put it simply, for who is right. One example of this change can be seen in the highly contested area of sexuality.

While I was in the teacher education program, British Columbia, like many other locales, was in the midst of a discursive battle about homosexuality in the curriculum, whether as part of sex education or as part of representation in literature and history. This battle was, in part, a result of the shifting landscape I spoke of above. In the past, for anyone concerned with the rights and safety of homosexuals (students or teachers) in schools, the battle was simply to be heard. The status quo did not need to speak; it simply needed to silence the other. As the fight for change progressed and the margin was heard, the center felt the need to speak and to fight for what it felt was right. In other words both sides stood openly and clearly as a moral position. Now that schools and governments were beginning to recognize homosexual rights, the status quo was not the status quo anymore; it was ambiguous. The far right and the fundamentalist religions began to assert their moral position in an attempt to regain the position of status quo. In Surrey, British Columbia, they had managed to ban all materials pertaining to homosexuals, something a mere decade earlier did not need banning because it

simply was not an option.

It was within this context that I stepped into my EDST 314 course, which had the mandate of addressing homosexuality and education. When this issue had its turn in the classroom, the professor took a clear moral position, something I had long argued we must do, but to my surprise, he took a position that I could not accept! It appeared that this instructor was comfortable shedding his cloak of neutrality and ready to step into the ring. Now someone was talking back: push had come to shove.

In this case, the instructor of EDST 314 began the section on homosexuality and education by saying that he wanted to discuss morality. So there it was. However, he then lectured for the remainder of the class on philosophical approaches to morality and closed the class (without discussion) saying that he felt there was an even higher level of morality that we had to consider and that perhaps next class we could do so (10/09/97). A higher level? Higher than what? He was careful to do two things: (1) allow no time for student input on a very controversial issue and (2) insert his own position in subtle ways. He suggested his position by distributing handouts:

The truly amazing part was that he began class by distributing two handouts. One was from the BCTF [British Columbia Teachers Federation] which was a mild position about homophobia. It is called "Issues in education: Stopping homophobia." It is addressed as a human rights issue. It basically says that all students should be educated in a safe and comfortable environment. The other handout, which he described "as another position on the issue," is called "Homosexuality: A Christian Perspective: A Christ Like Approach to this Issue." This piece never refers to education or schooling. It basically is saying that as Christians we should be nice to homosexuals while we are trying "to lead them out of sin." (10/09/97)

I left this class upset by the fact that he had handed out a position paper which

basically referred to homosexuals as sinners and said nothing about it and left time for no one else to say anything about it. I was told by a student in his other section that he came right out and said that he felt homosexuality was morally wrong. The following week our class met again, and this was my response:

After wasting half an hour or more (a routine) on administrative type stuff he told us that he had two videos on issues around homosexuality that would lead into discussion. One video was called "I have two moms" or something to that effect. He was careful to point out that this video was made by a gay and lesbian organization even though it was clearly written on the video screen. The second was a town hall kinda debate. Everyone on the panel and in the audience had a firm position on one side of the fence or the other. It was heated and emotional but a lot of good points came out. I think I would actually use the video myself. The videos ended [with] about 4 minutes left in the class. He had managed to spend two classes on this topic and no discussion had occurred. I was furious again, I had not had a chance to put forward my position or ask him what the hell that Christian perspective piece was all about. He ended the class by saying that people in the town hall meeting on both sides had used techniques to shut the discussion down. The Christian people had said that the bible says so and that's that--a kind of appeal to authority. He said on the other hand, saying that you are who you are, and it's not a matter of choice, shuts the discussion down also. He said, "We may have certain feelings, but we do have a choice about how we act on those feelings." LAST WORDS OF THE CLASS. What the hell was he trying to say? Was he saying that it is a matter of choice when you boil it down? And so what if it is a choice? What's wrong with that choice? Do heterosexuals choose to be heterosexual and if so who cares--it should be your choice. (10/16/97).

I have argued again and again that education is a moral enterprise and that we should make our position clear. Now an instructor had done so, and I didn't like his position. But hadn't I argued for the right to do what he had just done: stake out a moral positions and fight for it? I have said that I feel that schools are physically and mentally unsafe for gay and lesbian students and that I would address this in classrooms and try to convince people to create safe and inclusive environments

for all students. This instructor obviously felt that Christian perspectives were being ignored and that he would fight to have them recognized in his classrooms. So why was I so upset?

The reason I was so upset was two fold. First, I think that all of us get enough exposure to positions against the rights of homosexuals outside of the program; simply put, the status quo gets enough coverage. More importantly, I was upset because I thought he showed reckless disregard for the well being of students--in this case gay and lesbian students. By suggesting homosexuality is a matter of choice and that gay and lesbian people have made an immoral one, he has opened already persecuted students to further persecution, or at least to indifference. When educators recognized female students were not having an equitable experience in schools, it was addressed. When we were faced with the reality of minority students' experiences of racism and prejudice, efforts were made to correct it.<sup>70</sup> Now we are well aware that gay and lesbian students are experiencing prejudice, hatred and violence. We, as educators, must work to improve this deplorable reality. We cannot put our politics or even our religion in front of their safety. In fact, if a prospective teacher's politics or religion stands in the way of their ability to protect the rights of all students then they are, perhaps, going in to the wrong profession (Petrovic, 1998). That is how I feel and I will fight to make our schools safer and more inclusive for all students, particularly gay and lesbian students given their current situation.

However, I must realize that this instructor either would or did say that Christian students are now persecuted in schools and afraid to speak up. He might even say that he has the gay and lesbian students' interest at heart because what could be worse then encouraging them to live a life of sin and sending them to hell.

---

<sup>70</sup> Not to suggest that we are done doing something about it or should be, the point is we addressed the inequity, the injustice.

He fought for his morals and his beliefs. I think we must recognize that if education is seen as a moral enterprise, as many have suggested it should, then we must realize that there will be moral battles, and people on numerous sides will fight for what they think is right and for a system that reflects their beliefs. But isn't that the way it has always been? Just as the status quo must be seen for what it is--an ideological position--educational debate must be seen for what it is--a moral and ideological battle with different sides trying to present the most convincing arguments for what they believe is right. If student teachers and teachers are going to act as agents for change, we must all recognize this fact: whether disguised or in the open, in education as in politics, we are always fighting for what each of us thinks is right. Surely, it's a fairer fight if it's out in the open, where everyone thinks about the various positions and takes one if they choose to.

## **Chapter Six: Future Directions and Concluding Thoughts**

Before I began my year in teacher education at UBC, many people asked me if I really understood what I was getting myself into. Of course, I didn't. Conducting the necessary research for this study while attending to the numerous demands of the teacher education program proved to be overwhelming. I feel it was worth it, although I might not have said as much when the year was ending. I gained invaluable personal insights into teacher education, the act of teaching and the act of learning. These insights, I hope, will pay off for years to come.

For many, autoethnography sounds like a soft science or self-indulgence. It is neither. It is a valuable tool that requires commitment and perseverance. I believe that I could not have discovered what I did, nor presented it as I did using any other approach. I could have interviewed students and heard their stories of frustration and stress. I could have gone on to explain their experiences and, perhaps, their emotions, but I believe that depiction would have been two dimensional. By interacting daily throughout the program and the practicum, by experiencing the frustration first hand as a student teacher myself, I was able to create a bridge between data and experience. I was able to present findings and a story. This is not to say that other methodological approaches are without merit. It is to say that for a study of this nature, a study that attempts to present findings as well as a portrait of an experience, autoethnography and ethnography proved invaluable.

### **Teacher Education or Teacher Training: What Lies Ahead?**

I have been asked many times since I completed this study what I

discovered and what I thought teacher education should look like in the future. The best way I could summarize numerous details and ideas was to suggest that we have to stress "teacher education" over "teacher training." If UBC and other universities can use this idea as a framework for change, the numerous details of fundamental change may follow. And make no mistake about it, fundamental change is necessary. The teacher education program that I experienced, and I have been told it is a typical program, was viewed by the majority of students as a series of trivial hoops to jump through in order to gain qualification. Few, if any, felt it was valuable learning experience. Nobody, I believe, felt it was indispensable!

Currently, at UBC a great deal of pressure is exerted, from both students and schools, to make the program more practical. I detailed the technocratic approach that accompanies "teacher training" in chapter three. As student teachers, we were trained to write learning outcomes and lesson plans. We were given endless small assignments which were intended to demonstrate that we knew how to access media resources or use an overhead projector. The technocratic approach encourages student teachers to *practice being teachers*. The program itself is designed, and sometimes defended, as being preparation for teaching: doing many, many menial tasks simultaneously. As we saw in chapter five this discouraged indepth analysis or attention to structural issues of justice and change. Currently, many schools of education are allowing the teacher training model to dominate. Certainly a great number of faculty resist this notion in their minds but accept its inevitability in their classes. If the technocratic approach continues to dominate, we should expect little to change. Teacher education students will remain largely unsatisfied with their "training," and as teachers they will simply blend with the existing professional culture. For those of us who believe that our schools must change to become more equitable and more exciting, we must ask

that our prospective teachers be educated and not trained!

How should teacher education look as opposed to teacher training? Teacher education should primarily be an intellectual pursuit. It should be a time when individuals can come together and think deeply about education and educational issues. It should start from the beginning by asking questions in a meaningful way, such as; What is education? What is learning ? What is teaching? Or as one professor once said to me, "The question we should always be asking is, why do I teach, what I teach, the way I teach it?"

Teacher education should be a time to explore areas of interest. Students should be able to specialize in areas such as alternative education, educational philosophy, or working with autistic children. In order for us to move away from a training model, we must abandon the idea that we are preparing people to be teachers. We cannot even begin to teach someone everything they need to know in order to teach, nor should we want to. Teacher education should be the beginning of a deep and evolving interest in education. If we can create deep thinkers immersed in educational issues, we can create lifelong learners constantly pursuing knowledge related to their profession.

Teacher education should be recognized for what it actually is: a graduate degree. Teacher education should not be modeled after other professional programs but instead after a Master of Arts. People wanting to teach should come together for two years and pursue an educational major of their choosing. They should write a graduating paper and graduate with an M.A. They can still participate in practica and still attend to the realities of education in British Columbia. But this can be done within a demanding intellectual environment where the learner is treated as an adult and given choice and control. If we want to raise our expectations in our schools, let's begin by raising our expectations for our



teachers. I do not mean raised expectations in the sense promoted by neo-conservatives asking for teacher testing and so on, I mean we should create a demanding and respectable program that anyone would be proud to graduate from, and which asks teachers not to be practitioners but *intellectual practitioners*.

If we are to turn teacher training into teacher education, we must view prospective teachers as adults not as students. We need to give the learner more control over what it is he or she is to learn. As it stands, everyone involved in the delivery of teacher education believes their area of interest, be it ESL or history of education, is essential knowledge for prospective teachers. If this is true, we will have to turn teacher education into a five year program or do what we do now which is to give everything superficial treatment. Teacher training, not unlike our schools, focuses far too much on content. We need to create curious, passionate learners and they will cover the content themselves through a lifetime of teaching and learning. I am not suggesting we abandon content or practice all together, I am simply saying we need to shift our framework from training to teaching. I am aware of the material realities of schools and their culture. While we must recognize this, we must stop using it as an excuse for avoiding fundamental change.

Too many teacher education students expressed the notion that teacher training felt like a step backward from their B.A. or B.Sc. I believe it is time we made it into a step forward. Teacher education should challenge our minds, thereby preparing us to meet all future challenges with analytic and research skills; it should not merely deliver a portfolio of endless, superficial, cursory, knowledge.

### **Research Directions**

As in most projects, mine created more questions than it answered, which is,

I believe, a good sign. I had entertained the thought part way through the research process to try and interview a series of people who had dropped out of the teacher education program. However, my research agenda was already too ambitious, and I had to resist spreading myself too thin. However, I remain curious as to the experiences of those who weeded themselves out of the teacher education program. Why did they quit? Was it the stress? Was it the program? the practica? life pressures? Of course, there would be many different stories from these people, but I think much could be learned about teacher education and the process of becoming a teacher from these people.

A closer examination of the success and failure of student teachers in relation to the "match" between student teacher and sponsor teacher would also prove interesting and valuable. I remain disturbed by the unacceptable experience some student teachers had as a result of the sponsor teacher they were given. There appeared to be far too much luck (or lack thereof) in the matching process with some people being propelled into great jobs and careers with others literally abandoning the profession as a result of these mismatches.

I have always been a believer in the value of studying success. I would like to see more ethnographies of successful classes, cohorts, and programs, not just for what we can learn from them but for the proof that change can work and does work.<sup>71</sup> What does effective teacher education look like? What do students respond to and why? What made change possible?

Finally, I would like to see more research in an area which some might find surprising coming from an ethnographer.<sup>72</sup> I would like to see some large-scale entrance and exit surveys of teacher education students. I would also like to see

---

<sup>71</sup> Another question: Are special programs forerunners of change, or do they appease those most committed to the need for fundamental change?

<sup>72</sup> Of course I am not only an ethnographer. I have conducted research using much more traditional social science research methods in the past. This study seemed best suited to ethnography.

surveys of sponsor teachers, faculty advisors, and faculty. While reviewing the literature I found nothing of this nature. I feel we could discover a great deal through such surveys. While ethnography offers depth of insight, I would have appreciated a little breadth as I prepared for this study. A good survey could offer us insight into the degree to which change is desired. It could also inform us as to the expectations of all stakeholders going into the process and if those expectations are met. We could begin to sense the levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with various aspects of teacher education. The questions I would ask would surely outnumber the space on a reasonable survey. Suffice to say that such surveys, while somewhat out of style, could offer some valuable information.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

For me like so many others, learning to teach began the day I walked into kindergarten. It continued the first time I was asked to help a friend in the desk beside me with a math problem, and when as a teenager I worked at a summer camp in my home town. However, learning to teach became a formal activity the first day of the teacher education program when I sat in a large auditorium with hundreds of other students and we were told how the next eleven months would unfold. As I listened to the details, I had no idea what was really in store for me. Never, not even for my master's or Ph.D. was I asked to do so much in such little time. Never was I put under so much stress, and never was I intellectually challenged so little. It wasn't all negative. I made many good friends, in the way one does at war or during a storm at sea; quick and firm. I also felt the joy of teaching, such as the surge of enthusiasm a group of excited teenagers can create. If I didn't already feel like a teacher, by the end of this intense year I certainly did. I am a teacher, and I always will be. Whether or not I formally teach ever again in my

life, a part of my identity will always be a teacher.

Brent, Hannah, Ophelia, Jackson, and myself, and hundreds of others became teachers that year. We became as many different teachers as there were individuals. The teacher we became depended on an endless array of things such as how we grew up, what we were taught and by whom, and our numerous other selves which we had to integrate with our new teaching self. But we also left things behind; parts of ourselves. "[L]earning to teach means engaging in acts of forgetting, discarding, silencing, and ignoring" (Sumara & Luce-Kapler, 1996: 78). Some people changed the way they dressed a little, others stopped smoking marijuana. Jackson became less affectionate with his girlfriend. One of my friends in the program, after a particularly bad day on practicum, explained that he had been told by his sponsor teacher "to check himself at the door." Later he was told that he didn't have to check all of himself, just parts. The following quotation is from my journal right after a discussion on this very topic in one of our education classes:

A young woman began the discussion by explaining that while on practicum she had been approached in a public place by a student. She was smoking and the student asked her for a light. The discussion leader asked us what we would do. She explained that in other words she wanted to know what we felt our responsibilities were as role models outside of the classroom. There were several interesting aspects to this discussion. First of all, the discussion quickly became one about what role we are expected to play outside of the classroom. There were several attempts to clarify what we are allowed or not allowed to do. One student said, with conviction, "you are under scrutiny according to the code of ethics". Another student asked with concern and obvious curiosity about personal implications, "are you allowed to gamble?" One student who has several visible tattoos and a tongue piercing explained how a couple of students approached her for advice on a good place to get tattoos and piercings. She explained her response: "I was under the gun--I didn't know what to say--I told them to be sure that the location was a certified place--that's all I said." This student and others obviously

feel legal and institutional pressure to interact with students in certain ways both in and out of the classroom. In fact most of the students in the room felt that they had certain obligations to behave in a certain way outside of the classroom. Furthermore they felt it necessary to present themselves in partial ways to the students inside the school as well, so as to fit a certain role--that of teacher. Referring to what kinds of things we can let students know about ourselves one student said "you have to be a hypocrite." Another argued that you didn't have to be a hypocrite you just had to refuse to answer certain questions. To which another suggested that not answering those questions was either revealing the truth or being hypocritical. (05/22/1998)

Some of the students felt they had been asked to check too much of themselves at the door, and they self-selected out of teaching, either by quitting the program or by not pursuing teaching afterwards, as Ophelia did. My friend who was asked to check himself at the door explained that "I was trying to balance my needs and goals with theirs. It is hard being who you are in a system that won't let you be who you are" (11/4/97). He finished the program but decided to teach in a private, ESL school for adults. The self-selection does not stop there. According to Nias (1984), "[a]fter two to five years ... some teachers decided that they could not preserve their substantial selves as teachers and moved to other occupations...." (p. 274).

In chapters three through five I explored three discourses and numerous sub- discourses. These discourses, like the one above on being a role model, helped to delineate the range of teaching identities that could exist within the public school system. The evolution and interaction of discourses is phenomenally complex and truly beyond our comprehension. We cannot entirely control discourses or trace them. That does not mean we should not attempt to do so. The teacher education program at UBC does play a role in the construction of discourses and identity, and this must be recognized.

The teacher education program at UBC and teacher education programs all over Canada and the United States have to recognize their active role in teacher identity formation. Faculties of Education should encourage students of teacher education to explore various educational discourses and teaching identities, including a rigorous exploration of their own teaching identity:

If we accept in teacher education the theory that language is the conduit through which experience is translated and selves are fabricated, then what we ought to be doing in the classroom becomes clearer. Encourage students to engage in as much discourse as possible: a rich array of competing and conflicting discourses are best. (Danielewicz, 1998, p. 44)

Instead of the current trend towards homogenization of teacher education curriculum and theory, we should expose prospective teachers to various theories, discourses, and ideologies. However, it is not enough to simply expose them to a "rich array" of discourses; we must make them consciously aware of the discourses and their ideological underpinnings as well as their influence on education and teaching identities. Let's bring the political nature of education and teacher education out into the light of day and admit to the competing interests which occupy the educational landscape.

Each individual faculty member and each individual student can consciously act to influence the nature of discourses. We can all influence things from classroom discussions to course content to program structure. We can help to create a teacher education experience that positions student teachers and teachers as knowers, agents for change, and creative intellectuals. No one person should feel responsible for these changes, but everyone bears some responsibility. I may be accused of ignoring material reality and overemphasizing individual agency, and I accept that possibility. But, I would rather err on the side of creating

false hope than on the side of despair. I truly believe that discourse is a powerful tool which each of us has at our disposal. Any one of us can choose to challenge a dominant discourse if we feel it is necessary. Our discursive interactions may have little to no effect on their own, but all discourse is changed one voice at a time. Unquestionably some voices carry more weight than others, but all have an effect.

If we see society as being constantly created through discursive practices then it is possible to see the power of those practices, not only to create and sustain the social world but also to see how we can change that world through a refusal of certain discourses and the generation of new ones. (Davies, 1989)

I hope that my exploration of a few of the key discourses that circulate through teacher education will help everyone to understand more clearly these and other discourses. With an understanding of discourses and how they influence identity, we can have greater control over the teacher we want to be and perhaps expand the possibilities of teacher identities for others. The teaching profession loses many great teachers and prospective teachers every year because student teachers cannot find ways to bring their current identities and emerging teaching identities together. Simply put, they could not find a space for themselves in the teaching profession. Perhaps with some attention to discourse and identity we can stem the losses and allow everyone to check a little less of themselves at the door.

## References

- Acker, Sandra (1996). Gender and teachers' work. *Review of Research in Education*, 21, 99-162.
- Alcoff, Linda (1991). The problem of speaking for others. *Cultural Critique*, winter 1991-92, 5-32.
- Apple, Michael (1989). *Teachers and texts: A political economy of class and gender relations in education*. New York: Routledge.
- Apple, Michael (1990). *Ideology and curriculum* (second edition). New York: Routledge.
- Atkinson, Paul & Delamont Sara. (1985). Socialisation into teaching: The research which lost its way. *British Journal of Sociology in Education*, 6(3), 307-321.
- Ayers, William (1980). *The good pre-school teacher: Six teachers reflect on their lives*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Bartolome, Lilia (1994). Beyond the methods fetish: Toward a humanizing pedagogy. *Harvard Educational Review*, 64(2), 173-194.
- Berliner, D. (1988). Implications of studies on expertise in pedagogy for teacher education and evaluation. In new directions for teacher assessment (Proceedings of the 1988 ETS Invitational Conference, pp. 39-68). Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.
- Berman, David M. (1994). 'Becoming a teacher': The teaching internship as a rite of passage. *Teaching Education* 65(1), 41-56.
- Beyer, Landon (1996). Introduction: The meanings of critical teacher preparation. In his own *Creating democratic classrooms: The struggle to integrate theory & practice* (pp. 1- 26). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Britzman, D., Dipbo, D., Searle, D., & Pitt, A.(1995). *Report of the academic framework committee*. Toronto: York University, Faculty of Education.
- Britzman, Deborah (1991). *Practice makes practice: A critical study of learning to teach*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Britzman, Deborah, P. ( 1995). "The question of belief": Writing poststructural ethnography. *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 8(3), 229-238.



- Burdell, Patricia & Swadener, Beth Blue (1999). Critical Personal Narrative and Autoethnography in Education: Reflections on a Genre. *Educational Researcher*, Aug. - Sept. 99, 21-26.
- Carter, Kathy (1993). The place of story in the study of teaching and teacher education. *Educational Researcher*, 22(1), 5-12.
- Casey, Kathleen (1996). The new narrative research in education. *Review of Research in Education*, 21, 211-253.
- Clandinin, Jean D. (1993). Teacher education as narrative inquiry. In her own *Learning to teach, teaching to learn: Stories of collaboration in teacher education* (1-18). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Clark, Christopher (1988). Asking the right questions about teacher preparation: contributions of research on teacher thinking. *Educational Researcher*, 17(2), 5-12.
- Clifford, James. (1986). On ethnographic allegory. In J.Clifford & G.Marcus (Eds.), *Writing Culture* (pp. 98-121). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Cochran-Smith, Marilyn (1991). Learning to teach against the grain. *Harvard Educational Review*, 6(3), 279-310.
- Code, Lorraine (1991). *What can she know? Feminist theory and the construction of knowledge*. Ithica: Cornell University Press.
- Cole, Adra (1990). Helping teachers become "real": Opportunities in teacher induction. *Journal of Staff Development*, 11(4), 6-10.
- Cole, Adra (1996). *Teaching as autobiography: Connecting the personal and the professional in the academy*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York, NY.
- Cruikshank, Julie (1990). *Life lived like A story*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Danielewicz, Jane (1998). Inventing themselves as teachers: Prospective teachers talk about theory in practice. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, Summer, 29-46.

- Davies, Bronwyn (1989). *Frogs and snails and feminist tales: Preschool children and gender*. St Leonards: Allen & Unwin.
- Davies, Bronwyn (1991). The concept of agency: A poststructuralist analysis. *Social Analysis*, 30, 42-53.
- Davies, Bronwyn (1993). Beyond dualism and towards multiple subjectivities. In Linda K. Christian-Smith (Ed.), *Texts of desire* (pp. 145-173). London: Falmer Press.
- Diamond, Patrick, C. T. (1993) Writing to reclaim self: The use of narrative in teacher education. *Teaching & Teacher Education*, 9(5/6), 511-517.
- Dooley, Cindy (1998). Teaching as a two-way street: Discontinuities among metaphors, images and classroom realities. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 49(2), 97-107.
- Ellsworth, Elizabeth (1994). Why doesn't this feel empowering?: Working through the repressive myths of critical pedagogy. In L.Stone (ed.), *The education feminism reader* (pp. 300-327). New York: Routledge.
- Fine, Michelle (1987). Silencing in the public schools. *Language Arts*, 64(2), 157-174.
- Fine, Michelle (1994). Working the hyphens: Reinventing self and other in qualitative research. In N.Denzin & Y.Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Fiske, John (1989a). *Understanding popular culture*. New York: Routledge.
- Fiske, John. (1989b). *Reading the popular*. New York: Routledge.
- Fox, Dana, L. (1995). From English major to English teacher: Two case studies. *English Journal*, 84, 17-25.
- Freedman, Sara (1990). Weeding woman out of "woman's true profession": The effects of the reforms on teaching and teachers. In J. Antler and S.K. Biklen (eds.), *Changing education* (239-256). New York: State University of New York Press.
- Freire, Paulo (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: The Continium Publishing Corporation.

- Giroux, Henry & McLaren, Peter (1986). Teacher education and the politics of engagement: The case for democratic schooling. *Harvard Educational Review*, 56(3), 213-238.
- Goetz, J.P. & Lecompte, M. (1984). *Ethnography and qualitative design in educational research*. San Diego: Academic Press.
- Gore, Jennifer (1992). What can we do for you! What can "we" do for "you"?: Stuggling over empowerment in critical and feminist pedegogy. In C. Luke & J. Gore (eds.) *Feminism and critical pedegogy* (pp. 54-73). New York: Routledge.
- Grimmett, Peter (1988). The nature of reflection and Schon's conception in perspective. In P. Grimmett & G. Erickson (eds.), *Reflection in teacher education* (pp. 5-15). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Grossman, Pamela (1992). Why models matter: An alternate view on professional growth in teaching. *Review of Educational Research*, 62(2), 171-179.
- Grundy, Shirley & Hatton, Elizabeth (1995). Teacher educators' ideological discourses. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 21(1), 7-24.
- Halliday, John (1998). Technicism, reflective practice and authenticity in teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 14(6), 597-605.
- Harding, Sandra (1993). Rethinking standpoint epistemology: What is "strong objectivity"? In L. Alcoff & E. Potter (eds.), *Feminist epistemologies* (pp. 49-82). New York: Routledge.
- Hicks, Deborah (1996). Discourse, learning, and teaching. *Review of Research in Education*, 21, pp.49-95.
- Hollingsworth, Sandra (1992). Learning to teach through collaborative conversation: A feminist approach. *American Educational Research Journal*, 29(2), 373-404.
- hooks, bell (1988). Feminist theory: A radical agenda. In bell hooks (ed.), *Talking back: Thinking feminist, thinking Black*. Toronto: Between the Lines.
- hooks, bell (1994). *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom*. New York: Routledge.

- Hoy, Wayne, K. & Woolfolk, Anita, E. (1990). Socialization of Student Teachers. *American Educational Research Journal*, 27(2), 279-300.
- Huberman, Michael (1989). The professional life cycle of teachers. *Teachers College Record*, 91(1), 31-38.
- Jackson, Philip (1990). The functions of educational research. *Educational Researcher*, 19(7), 3-9.
- Kagan, Donna (1992). Professional growth among preservice and beginning teachers. *Review of Educational Research*, 62(2), 129-169.
- Kelly, Deirdre (1993). Secondary power sources: High school students as participatory researchers. *The American Sociologist*, Spring, pp. 9-27.
- Kelly, Deirdre (2000). *Pregnant with meaning: Teen mothers and the politics of inclusive schooling*. New York: Peter Lang
- Kelly, Deirdre & Gaskell, Jane (1996). *Debating dropouts: Critical policy and research perspectives on school leaving*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Kelly, Deirdre & Minnes Brandes, Gabriella (2000). *Placing social justice at the heart of teacher education: Reflections on a project in process*. Manuscript submitted for publication.
- Kelly, Thomas E. (1994). Democratic empowerment and secondary teacher education. In John M. Novak (ed.), *Democratic teacher education: Programs, processes, problems, and prospects* (pp. 63-88). New York: State University of New York Press.
- Kennard, Barbara (1993). Restorying the expert-novice relationship. In Clandinin, Jean (ed.), *Learning to teach, teaching to learn: Stories of collaboration in teacher education* (pp. 162-173). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Kenway, Jane & Modra, Helen (1992). Feminist pedagogy and emancipatory possibilities. In C. Luke & J. Gore (eds.), *Feminisms and critical pedagogy* (pp.138-166). New York:Routledge.
- Lather, Patti (1986). Research as praxis. *Harvard Educational Review*, 56(3), 257-277.

- Lather, Patti (1991). *Getting smart: Feminist research and pedagogy with/in the postmodern*. New York: Routledge, Chapman & Hall.
- Lather, Patti (1992). Post-Critical pedagogies: A feminist reading. In C. Luke & J. Gore (eds.), *Feminisms and critical pedagogy* (pp.120-137). New York: Routledge.
- Lather, Patti (1994). The absent presence: Patriarchy, capitalism and the nature of teacher work. In L. Stone (ed.), *The education feminism reader* (pp. 242-251). New York: Routledge.
- Lortie, Dan (1975). *Schoolteacher*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Luke, Allan (1996). Text and discourse in education: An introduction to critical discourse analysis. *Review of Research in Education*, 21, 211-253.
- Manicom, Ann (1992). Feminist pedagogy: Transformations, standpoints, and politics. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 17(3), 365-389.
- Manos, Mary Ann & Kasambira, Paul (1998). Teacher preparation programs and nontraditional students. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 49(3), pp 206-211.
- Marcus, George (1998). *Ethnography through thick and thin*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Maxwell, Rhoda & Meiser, Mary (1997). *Teaching English in middle and secondary schools*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- McNeil, Linda (1988). *Contradictions of control: School structure and school knowledge*. New York: Routledge.
- Mohabir, Helen (1993). Autobiography as a way of knowing. In Clandinin, Jean (ed.), *Learning to teach, teaching to learn: Stories of collaboration in teacher education* (pp. 19-27). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Nias, Jennifer (1984). The definition and maintenance of self in primary teaching. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 5(3), 267-280.
- Noddings, Nel (1990). Feminist critiques in the professions. *Review of Research in Education*, 16, 393-424.

- Novak, John (1994). Introduction: The talk and the walk of democratic teacher education. In his own, *Democratic teacher education: Programs, processes, problems, and prospects* (pp.1-6). New York: State University of New York Press.
- Orner, Mimi (1992). Interrupting the calls for student voice in "liberatory" education: A feminist poststructuralist perspective. In C. Luke & J.Gore (eds.), *Feminisms and critical pedagogy* (pp.74-89). New York: Routledge.
- Peshkin, Alan (1991). *The color of strangers, the color of friends*. Chicago: Universtiy of Chicago Press.
- Peterat, Linda (1993). Re-storying the practicum experience: Toward a collaborative resonance approach. *Perspectives in Education*, fall, 61-64
- Petrovic, John (1998). The democratic sieve in teacher education. *Educational Foundations*, 12(1), 43-55.
- Phelan, Anne (1994). Unmasking metaphors of management: A pedagogy of collaborative deconstruction. *Teaching Education*, 6(1),101-111.
- Preskill (1998). Narratives of teaching and the quest for the second self. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 49(5), 344-357.
- Reed-Danahay, Deborah (1997). *Auto/Ethnography: Rewriting the self and the social*. New York: Berg.
- Sachs, Judyth & Smith, Richard (1988). Constructing teacher culture. *British Journal of Sociology of Eduction*, 9(4), 423-436.
- Sanjek, Roger (1990). On ethnographic validity. In his own *Fieldnotes: The makings of anthropology* (pp. 385-418). Ithica: Cornell University Press.
- Schon, Donald (1988). Coaching reflective teaching. In P.Grimmett & G.Erickson (eds.), *Reflection in teacher education* (pp. 19-29). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Segall, Avner (1999). *Disturbing practice: Reading and writing (social studies) teacher education as text*. Unpublished doctoral disertation, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

- Shah, Ushma (1996). Creating space: Moving from the mandatory to the worthwhile. In Landon Beyer (ed.), *Creating democratic classrooms: The struggle to integrate theory & practice* (pp.41-61). New York:Teachers College Press.
- Smiley, Jane (1991). *A thousand acres*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- SooHoo, Suzanne & Wilson, Thomas (1994). Control and contradiction in democratic teacher education: Classroom and curriculum approaches. In John M. Novak (ed.), *Democratic teacher education: Programs, processes, problems, and prospects*, (pp.63-88). New York: State University of New York
- Sumara, Dennis & Luce-Kapler, Rebecca (1996). (Un)Becoming a teacher: Negotiating identities while learning to teach. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 21(1), 65-83.
- Tatto, Maria Teresa (1998). The influence of teacher education on teachers' beliefs about purposes of education, roles, and practice. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 49(1), 66-77.
- Taylor, John (1995a). Non-Native teachers teaching In Native communities. In Battiste & Barman (eds.), *First Nations education in Canada: The circle unfolds*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.
- Taylor, John (1995b) *Non-Aboriginal teachers working in Aboriginal communities: The need for training*. An unpublished Masters of Arts thesis. Frost Centre for Canadian Heritage and Development Studies, Trent University: Peterborough.
- Taylor, Kathe (1995). Letting go Of the bike. *Teaching Education* 6(2), 71-80.
- The Coffe Report (1969) . Vancouver, British Columbia: Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia.
- Tobin, Joseph and Davidson, Dana (1990). The ethics of polyvocal ethnography: Empowering vs. textualizing children. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 6(3), 233-239.
- Toohy, Kellen (1995). Qualitative research and teacher education: From the ethnography of communication to critical ethnography in ESL teacher education. *TESOL Quarterly*.

- Tyler, Steven (1986). Post modern ethnography: From document of the occult to occult document. In J. Clifford & G. Marcus (eds.), *Writing culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Unks, Gerald (1995). Thinking about the gay teen. In Gerald Unks (ed.), *The gay teen: Educational practice and theory for lesbian, gay, and bisexual adolescents*. New York: Routledge.
- Weber, Sandra & Mitchell, Claudia (1995). 'That's funny, you don't look like a teacher'. London, England: The Falmer Press.
- Wolcott, Harry (1985). On ethnographic intent. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 21(3), 187-203.
- Zeichner, Kenneth & Hoeft, Karen (1995). Teacher socialization for cultural diversity. In *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education* (pp. 525-547).
- Zeichner, Kenneth, M. (1993). *Reflections of a teacher educator working for social change*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Atlanta, Georgia.



## Appendix A

### 12-Month Secondary Teacher Education Option

#### September-December

**EDUC 311:** *The Principles of Teaching* (4 credits)

Introductions to principles and instructional procedures related to classroom management, instructional planning, and the assessment of learning as applicable across grade levels and subject matter fields.

**EDUC 315:** *Pre-practicum Experience* (0 credits)

Observation and instruction in educational settings.

**EDUC 316:** *Communication Skills in Teaching* (3 credits)

Study and practice of communication skills in educational settings. Candidates will be required to demonstrate satisfactory oral communication abilities.

**EDUC 319:** *Orientation School Experience -- Secondary* (0 Credits)

A two-week sequence of observations and instructional assignments in a selected secondary school.

**EPSE 306:** *Education during the Adolescent Years* (2 credits)

Developmental characteristics of persons from pre-school age through adulthood. Physical, social, cognitive, moral and emotional growth of both normal and exceptional children in grades 8 - 12. The teacher's role in assisting such students to deal with major developmental issues and problems.

**EPSE 317:** *Development and Exceptionality in the Regular Classroom* (3 credits)

The teacher's role in dealing with major developmental and special educational issues and problems within the regular classroom program, including working with supportive services, parents, and communities. Designated sections will focus on early childhood, middle childhood, or adolescence.

**EDST 314:** *Analysis of Education* (3 Credits)

Concepts, abilities, and procedures for assessing educational claims, policies, and practices.

**Curriculum and Instruction Studies** (Candidates preparing to teach only one subject will instead enroll in 2-4 credits of additional courses related to that subject):

Course(s) related to first subject (4 credits)

Course(s) related to second subject (2-4 credits)

#### January - April

**EDUC 329:** *Extended Practicum - Secondary* (18 Credits)

A developmental program of teaching practice, normally in one B.C. secondary school. Candidates will teach the subjects for which they have been academically and pedagogically prepared. This assignment covers the full school term. Prerequisite: All requirements set for Term 1.

**EDUC 420:** *School Organization In Its Social Context* (2 credits)  
The organization and administration of schools, including issues in governance, finance and community and professional control and influence.

### **May - August**

**EPSE 423:** *Learning Measurement Teaching* (3 credits)  
Theories of learning and instruction; principles and practices in the assessment of classroom learning; special attention is given to research on motivation, retention, transfer, problem solving, and concept development.

**LANE 426:** *Language Across the Curriculum: Secondary* (4 credits)  
Understanding the demands of the language diversity of the classroom and of the subject areas within the secondary school curriculum. Analysis of oral and written language from various curriculum areas; implications for learning and instruction.

### **One of the following:**

**EDST 425:** *Education of Anthropology* (3 credits)  
Selected concepts from educational anthropology for teachers. Comparative study of school and classroom culture, school teaching, and multicultural education.

**EDST 426:** *History of Education* (3 credits)  
An examination of selected topics in the history of European, Canadian and American education and of the relationship between historical development and present educational policy.

**EDST 427:** *Philosophy of Education* (3 credits)  
An introductory course in which consideration is given to the philosophical foundations of education and to the practical bearing of theory upon curriculum content and classroom practice in our schools.

**EDST 428:** *Social Foundations of Education* (3 credits)  
An application of the social sciences to the study of education.

**EDST 429:** *Educational Sociology* (3 credits)  
Selected theories of society and schooling applied to Canadian education.

***Elective or prescribed courses related to major or concentrations selected in consultation with an advisor. (9 credits)***

**Total Program Requirements: 60 - 62 credits**

## Appendix B



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
Teacher Education Office

Student Teacher	<u>John Taylor</u>	School	_____
Grade and Subject	<u>English 10</u>	Focus of observation	<u>Simulation Game</u>

- Clarification of chapter synopsis.

- Good explanations

- Students enjoyed the game (10-15 min)

Questions afterward      Debrief

- Good illustrations regarding commonalities & differences in cultures.

\* Good observations about how various student groups stayed together.

- No pros & cons relating to separation? <sup>but (did later - fine) (on board)</sup>

p. 118-120 Read out ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> talking when you are.

- Stop - don't allow it. Try not to talk over them.

- on and not paying attention.

- pro score -

10 min - Write. - Good you told them not to speak while you are talking

Good instructions - Emphasize this - (long pauses help)

Recommended Follow-up

Your game was great! The students really did seem to understand why cultural differences exist and how they are both good and bad for society.

... out - embarrassing?

Completed by _____	Position <u>S.A.</u>
(signature)	(e.g. school advisor, faculty advisor)
Print Name _____	Date <u>Feb. 10/98</u>

TEO/Forms1/Evaluate/10-97/25M Distribution: White - Student Canary - UBC Pink - School Advisor Gold - Faculty Advisor



## Appendix C

### UBC EDUC 319 TWO-WEEK SCHOOL ORIENTATION (SECONDARY PROGRAM)

Student Teacher's Name: John Taylor Date: Oct 30/97

School: \_\_\_\_\_ District: \_\_\_\_\_

School Advisor(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Faculty Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of lessons/observations undertaken by student: \_\_\_\_\_

John taught three lessons - Expository Essay

Use the space below to comment briefly on the student's two-week experience:

Lesson preparation: Good

Lesson presentation: Well Done

Initiative and willingness to accept direction: Good

Communication with staff and students: Good - Excellent

Enthusiasm for teaching tasks and interest in students: Good

Will this student teacher be able to get 80% teaching load in this school during the extended practicum?  
☒ Yes ☐ No  
☐ Am Not Sure

Other Comments: John's lessons were well planned, creative and interesting for the students

In your opinion should this student proceed to the next phase of the school experiences? Yes

I am confident John will do very well in his extended practicum

Completed by: \_\_\_\_\_ Position: School

Distribution: White - Student    Canary - Program Coordinator (Secondary Practicum)    Pink - School Advisor    Gold - Faculty Advisors