

# Education Letter

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## Teacher Education

How long should it take to become a teacher? ..... 4

Complexities and Challenges in Preservice Teacher Education ..... 6

Practice Teaching ..... 7

Status and Stature in the Teaching Profession ..... 8

Book Review – John Dewey and the Art of Teaching: Toward Reflective and Imaginative Practice ..... 10

## TEACHER EDUCATION

# Intellectual Habits of Mind

NEL NODDINGS, *Stanford University*

In the United States today, the zeal to produce higher test scores may be undermining the educational aim to develop intellectual habits of mind. As a result of the test-prep craze, students are able to subtract when they are told explicitly to subtract and to solve linear equations when they are instructed to “solve the following linear equations,” but many are unable to figure out when to use these procedures in solving problems. They are not acquiring intellectual habits of mind.

In *How We Think*, John Dewey warned us that, in childhood and student years, habits are inevitably formed:

*... if not habits of careful looking into things, then habits of hasty, heedless, impatient glancing over the surface; if not habits of consecutively following up the suggestions that occur, then habits of haphazard, grasshopper-like guessing; if not habits of suspending judgment till inferences have been tested by the examination of evidence, then habits of credulity alternating with flippant incredulity, belief or unbelief being based, in either case, upon whim, emotion, or accidental circumstances. (1933, p. 89)*

Paradoxically, by generously telling our students exactly what they must know in order to pass tests, we are ensuring that much of what they “learn” will be promptly forgotten when the test is over. The trivial, unconnected bits learned “grasshopper-like” are not fitted into a mental framework that might give them meaning.

It is the building of such frameworks that constitutes one powerful habit of mind. Orderliness is required: reviewing and constructing summaries, interpreting, evaluating (deciding what is important), connecting facts to the framework under construction, testing hypotheses, generalizing. To engage in these activities requires time, and the requisite skills cannot be taught in isolation, as specific objectives in themselves.

Teachers can and should model these activities for students, but they should not supply students with the final products as, for example, study guides. In the long run, in the development of intellectual habits of mind, it is not the facts that contribute so much to these habits as the work of constructing the frameworks. This means, of course, that teachers too must acquire and exercise these habits of mind.

I do not mean to suggest that there is no place for the use of narrowly defined, specific learning objectives. As a former math teacher, I know that much of a teacher’s work can be profitably guided by such objectives. When I gave a quiz on the simplification of radicals, for example, I expected virtually all of my students to score at 80% or better. If they did not, I discarded the quizzes and re-taught the lesson. There is a type or portion of academic work that most students can achieve. However, unless this material is put to use on matters of more significance, it is quickly lost. And although much of teachers’ work is directed by such objectives, the most important part of our work is not. Specific skills and information should be applied to significant problems, and such application requires the development and exercise of intellectual habits. ... continues on page 3

*... by generously telling our students exactly what they must know in order to pass tests, we are ensuring that much of what they “learn” will be promptly forgotten when the test is over.*



## Message from the Editors

**W**e have invited distinguished scholars and practitioners to provide us with a challenging read and the beginning of a fruitful conversation on teacher education. Not surprisingly, as Russell and Martin discuss in their article, the complex relationship between theory and practice and the perceived lack of clarity in our understanding of the links between schools and the faculty of education classroom are seen as central issues in teacher education.

This issue of the Letter opens with an article by philosopher of education Nel Noddings, who argues that developing intellectual habits of mind should be a fundamental educational aim. Teacher candidates need to be ready to set the stage for intellectual development. Furthermore, Noddings places her argument in the current American context, especially the zeal to produce higher test scores. It leads us to think of the negative implications of undue emphasis on causal practice linking research/evidence and practice translated into rules for action to be followed by practitioners. LeRoy Whitehead, Associate Dean of the Faculty, addresses with authority issues pertaining to the length of the program and the hard reality of funding, accreditation, and the peculiar relation that a teacher education program has with the state. In the next article, Tom Russell and Andrea Martin bring their scholarly expertise on issues related to teacher education. They think that teacher candidates could and should remember preservice teacher education as the lighting of a fire. This is a very important piece. Joan Jardin voices her experience as an associate teacher and goes into the intricacies of the relationship between the teacher candidate and the associate teacher and the relevance of practice in teacher preparation. In turn, John Olson reflects on the nature of the teachers' craft, the virtues of practice and education as a moral process. The Letter closes with an exquisite book review by Scott Johnston that takes us to reflective practice, fundamental yet often an elusive goal in teacher education. This time the artistic expressions come from school children and aim at conveying the relevance of the aesthetic experience of life itself in any educational process.

Rosa Bruno-Jofré, *Professor and Dean*  
*Faculty of Education*  
*Queen's University*

Romulo Magsino, *Dean Emeritus*  
*Faculty of Education*  
*University of Manitoba*

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Many students, even some teachers, fail to develop these habits.

One reason for this failure is that, for centuries, we have supposed that intellectual competence is achieved through the study of particular subjects such as mathematics and physics. But there is no inherent intellectual superiority in these subjects. One can develop intellectual habits through the study of cooking, mathematics, gardening, or literature. When we force people to study subjects they hate, they are even more unlikely to develop intellectual habits.

*In some cases, their best work may have little to do with math as a subject-in-itself, but it will increase their capacity for further intellectual work — reflection, orderliness, critical thinking.*

Does this mean that most young people should be excused from mathematics classes? No. And neither does it mean that all students should be brought to love the subject. It is unrealistic and even unfair to insist that all students must like the subjects their teachers love. Teachers must find out how their subjects connect to the topics that do interest their students. The next challenging task is to differentiate the curriculum to allow students to pursue their topics of interest in some depth. In mathematics, for example, students can tackle projects on math and music, math and art, math and history, math and biography, and a host of other possibilities. Encouraging these projects may increase the willingness of students to work on the narrow skills that are part of every standard curriculum. More important, in such work, students may develop and exhibit valuable intellectual habits. In some cases, their best work may have little to do with math as a subject-in-itself, but it will increase their capacity for further intellectual work — reflection, orderliness, critical thinking.

To set the stage for intellectual development, teachers must offer opportunities that may induce wonder, curiosity, inspiration. Not every lesson must culminate in the attainment of a specific learning objective. Some lessons are designed to provide exposure or awareness. A few students—perhaps only one—may come alive through such a lesson and begin to construct their own learning objectives within the new topic. This task — constructing one's own learning objectives — is one of the intellectual habits of mind we should want to cultivate. Therefore, in addition to producing the sort of learning required by objectives to be tested, teachers must take responsibility for what they offer—for the free intellectual gifts they offer to students who may exercise their own intellects in accepting them.

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*Nel Noddings, Stanford University, will present*

## Critical Lessons for Critical Thinking

October 12, 2007

Presented at the 2007 Faculty of Education Homecoming Dinner  
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613-533-6000 ext. 75408

# How long should it take to become a teacher?

LEROY WHITEHEAD, *Queen's University*

## Resources of Interest

The purpose of the Ontario College of Teachers is to protect the public by accrediting pre-service teacher education programs and certain institutionalized continuing teacher education courses in Ontario. It also deals with the cases of teachers who may be unfit to practice as well as cases of alleged professional misconduct. The College web page [www.oct.ca](http://www.oct.ca) has a section on becoming a teacher in Ontario, a listing of institutions that provide pre-service and continuing teacher education under its jurisdiction, as well as sections on professional standards, fitness to practice, professional misconduct, and information about the purpose and governance of the College. The web page is available in both English and French.

The Ontario Teachers' Federation [www.otf.on.ca](http://www.otf.on.ca) is an umbrella organization that brings together four affiliated teacher federations: l'Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens [www.aefo.on.ca](http://www.aefo.on.ca), the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario [www.etfo.on.ca](http://www.etfo.on.ca), the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Associations [www.oecta.on.ca](http://www.oecta.on.ca), and the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation [www.ostf.on.ca](http://www.ostf.on.ca). The role of these federations is to protect the interests of teachers. The four affiliates act as bargaining agents for their teacher members.

**A**t the present time becoming a teacher in Ontario requires a minimum of four or five years of university education after high school. The 'consecutive' or 'after degree' route is the most common: a prospective teacher first completes a three- or four-year Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, or other acceptable degree, then comes to the Faculty of Education for a 'one-year' Bachelor of Education degree. I put 'one-year' in quotes because a standard university 'year' is really only eight months long: from September to April.

Out of that total of four or five 'years' of university education, a teacher candidate at Queen's gets only about four months of on-campus instruction at the Faculty of Education, about three months of practice teaching in associate schools, and three weeks of 'alternate practicum'. (The proportions will vary from faculty to faculty, but this is typical.)

So, out of say, five years of university preparation to become a teacher, how much formal instruction (on-campus class time as opposed to practicum time) does a teacher candidate preparing to teach in the primary and junior divisions (junior kindergarten through grade six) actually get in, say, how to teach reading and writing? In the case of Queen's the answer is 36

hours, or the equivalent of about one week of employment. Put another way, about 4.5 hours per grade level, on average, not quite a full working day. These numbers are not typos. What about mathematics, JK-6? Thirty-six hours. Science? Thirty-six hours. The arts? Thirty-six hours. Social studies? Eighteen hours. Physical and health education? Eighteen hours.

A teacher candidate preparing to teach in the intermediate-senior divisions (grades seven through 12) gets 72 hours of formal instruction in how to teach each of his/her two teaching specialty subjects.

How long should it take? Some argue it should take longer given the complexity of the work of teaching. My view is that we don't really know how long in part because there is no firm agreement on what knowledge and skills beginning teachers need, or to what level they need them, and also in part because the required inventory keeps changing as ministries, boards, federations and faculties jump on and off bandwagons.

Tenure-stream faculty members in Faculties of Education tend to spend their time researching best methods for teaching particular subjects such as science, mathematics or literacy in the schools; best methods for promoting or preventing current issues-du-jour (bullying, anti-racism, creation science, safe

*Some argue it should take longer given the complexity of the work of teaching. My view is that we don't really know how long in part because there is no firm agreement on what knowledge and skills beginning teachers need, or to what level they need them...*

schools, character education, etc.); or best policy options. These areas are all important and useful, but the upshot is that only a few spend their time researching how to prepare teacher candidates for the profession. Most of our practice in pre-service teacher education is based on tradition and what the government of the day will allow us, rather than on a solid base of research instead of opinion of which we have lots.

There is, however, increasingly more to do during the time teachers candidates are on campus. We are required to give instruction in other areas as well, such as child and adolescent development, philosophy of education, evaluation and assessment,

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... continued from page 4 special education, school law and policy, and classroom management, and we need to prepare teacher candidates for the practicum experience.

Though we may not know for sure how long it should take to become a teacher, we do know from experience that eight months in the Faculty of Education is not long enough to accomplish all that the Ministry of Education, the Ontario College of Teachers, the school boards, the teacher federations and the teacher candidates want us to complete.

The Ontario Association of Deans of Education (OADE) has been lobbying the Ontario Ministry of Education for at least a decade for a two-year consecutive Bachelor of Education program, but to no avail. The Ministry has responded by retaining the one-year program, but introducing a New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP), along with some funding to support it. The intent is to provide support for new teachers in their first year of teaching.

NTIP is a good idea. Ontario's faculties of education, school boards and teacher federations have been requesting such a plan for a long time. But it doesn't eliminate the need for a second year of initial teacher education. Both are needed. A significant problem with NTIP, as we understand it now, is that the funding for it applies only to new teachers with 'regular' teaching positions, but not to new teachers starting out with jobs as supply teachers. Unfortunately, given the demographics of teacher supply in Ontario, we expect that over the next few years, many, if not most new teachers will have to start their careers on the supply list before moving into 'regular' teaching positions, so they won't have the benefit of NTIP while working as supply teachers. When they do get 'regular' positions after a year or two, they won't be classified as new teachers anymore, and so will not benefit from NTIP then, either. We hope the Ministry will adjust this aspect of NTIP.

Our graduates are keen and committed beginning teachers, but just haven't had long enough to learn all they want to know.

## Resources of Interest

More details of Queen's pre-service teacher education program may be found on our web page at [www.educ.queensu.ca](http://www.educ.queensu.ca). Other faculties of education also describe their programs on their own web pages.

Information about the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) can be found on the Ontario Ministry of Education web page at [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teacher/induction.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teacher/induction.html)



Rachel McLatchie GR. 6, WELBORNE

# Complexities and Challenges in Preservice Teacher Education

[Teacher] education is not the filling of a pail but the lighting of a fire.  
(with thanks to W. B. Yeats)

ANDREA K. MARTIN AND TOM RUSSELL, *Queen's University*

Preservice teacher education is rarely remembered as the lighting of a fire, but we believe it could and should be. Calls for teacher education reform, like calls for improvement of teaching in elementary and secondary schools, have been with us for decades. Curriculum changes come and go, assessment and evaluation practices are heralded and then modified, and yet the “lighting of a fire” seems to remain elusive. Many challenges arise simply because the two levels of reform are not seen as complementary pieces of the same large intellectual and practical puzzle. Feiman-Nemser (2001) has outlined a continuum of teacher education from preservice preparation through induction and initial professional development to continuing professional development. In one sense, the principles and insights captured in her review and analysis should be enough to initiate and sustain teacher education reform throughout the English-speaking world; we “know” so very much about what preservice teacher education is trying to achieve and we certainly know what its familiar shortcomings are.

One of the most stable conclusions of teacher education research is that the practicum is the most valued element of a preservice program. The high value placed on first-hand teaching experience contributes to the perception of a huge gap between theory and practice. If those learning to teach then fail to perceive coherence across the many elements of a preservice program, and if links between school and education classrooms are not clearly established, then we should hardly be surprised when prospective teachers find their programs lacking (Russell, McPherson, & Martin, 2001).

Feiman-Nemser explains that these shortcomings are not limited to pre-service programs:

*If we want to understand how and why teachers learn what they do from a given learning opportunity, we have to investigate both what the experience was like and what sense teachers made of it.*  
(Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1996, pp. 79-80)

*The problems of preservice preparation, induction, and professional development have been documented. The charge of fragmentation and conceptual impoverishment applies across the board. There is no connective tissue holding things together within or across the different phases of learning to teach.*

*The typical preservice program is a collection of unrelated courses and fied experiences. Most induction programs have no curriculum, and mentoring is a highly individualistic process. Professional development consists of discrete and disconnected events. Nor do we have anything that resembles a coordinated system. Universities regard preservice preparation as their purview. Schools take responsibility for new teacher induction. Professional development is everybody's and nobody's responsibility.*  
(Feiman-Nemser, 2001, p. 1049)

As we explore these issues in our own teacher education classrooms, we have found helpful Sarason's attention to the importance of creating contexts of productive learning, for which he suggests three criteria: ... continues on page 7

## Resources of Interest

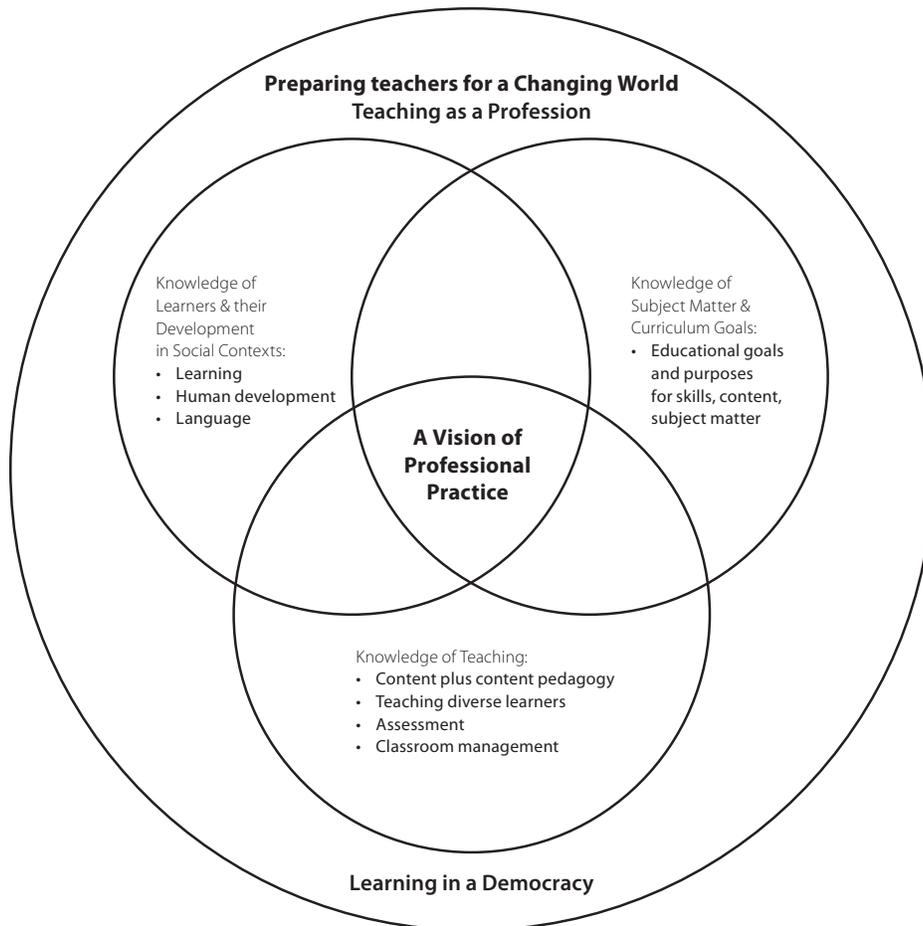
### The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching is an independent policy and research centre whose primary mission is “to do and perform all things necessary to encourage, uphold, and dignify the profession of the teacher and the cause of higher education” (2006, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching).

The Gallery of Teaching & Learning is an interactive opportunity to view Collections, works created by the Foundation's programs and their participants and partners, including multimedia records of teaching practice.

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1. Recognizing and respecting the individuality of the learner.
2. The teacher knows the subject matter well enough to know when or where the learner may have difficulty.
3. The teacher is always seeking ways to stimulate and reinforce the learner's wanting to learn and do more. (Sarason, 1999, p. 143)



**Figure 1:** A framework for understanding teaching and learning.

Source: Darling-Hammond, L. & Bransford, J. (2005). *Preparing Teachers for a Chancing World. What teachers should learn and be able to do.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. P. 11, figure 1.1.

For many and complex reasons, these insights into productive learning seem to remain hidden from view by longstanding habits and expectations. The following statement helps us understand why.

*Conventional teacher education reflects a view of learning to teach as a two-step process of knowledge acquisition and application or transfer. Lay theories assume that learning to teach occurs through trial and error over time. Neither view captures the prevailing position that learning occurs through an interaction between the learner and the learning opportunity. If we want to understand how and why teachers learn what they do from a given learning opportunity, we have to investigate both what the experience was like and what sense teachers made of it.*

(Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1996, pp. 79-80)

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## Resources of Interest

### Edutopia, The George Lucas Educational Foundation

The George Lucas Educational Foundation is committed to providing information and inspiration for innovative teaching in K-12 schools. There is considerable focus on ongoing professional development, including articles, research, video clips, and resources. "What's Working for K-12 Schools" provides particular examples of notable learning communities and environments. The site also has an extensive collection of video documentaries on a wide range of current topics.

[www.edutopia.org](http://www.edutopia.org)

### Eworkshop, Ontario's Online Teaching Resource

This site has been a joint enterprise by the Ontario Ministry of Education and TVO, intended as an online resource for elementary teachers. Of note are the videoclips of teachers "in action" that provide opportunities to see notable classrooms and the teachers who create them.

[www.eworkshop.on.ca](http://www.eworkshop.on.ca)

... continued from page 7 Darling-Hammond (2006) has described three fundamental problems associated with learning to teach and these problems present challenges to familiar assumptions and perspectives.

1. The problem of the “Apprenticeship of Observation”: “Learning to teach requires new teachers to understand teaching in ways quite different from their own experience as students.” (p. 35)
2. The problem of “Enactment”: “Learning to teach requires that new teachers not only learn to ‘think like a teacher’ but also to ‘act like a teacher.’” (p. 35)
3. The problem of “Complexity”: “Learning to teach requires new teachers to understand and respond to the dense and multifaceted nature of the classroom.” (p. 35)

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The first problem, concerning the apprenticeship of observation, is not only intriguing but also rarely addressed explicitly in planning and enacting a preservice program. “A significant challenge teachers face is that they enter teaching having already had years of experience in schools.” (p. 35) Darling-Hammond quotes from Lortie’s seminal sociological analysis of teaching:

*They are not privy to the teacher’s private intentions and personal reflections on classroom events. Students rarely participate in selecting goals, making preparations or postmortem analysis. Thus they are not pressed to place the teacher’s actions in a pedagogically oriented framework (Lortie, 1975, p. 62).*

One may add that, even when pressed, many teacher candidates find it challenging to articulate how and why they went about selecting goals, making preparations, and conducting postmortem analyses of their own teaching. As a case in point, candidates may seem to understand what we refer to as “reflection” but they still seem to be challenged when attempting to critically and meaningfully re-think what they are doing in a practicum classroom.

*As a case in point, candidates may seem to understand what we refer to as “reflection” but they still seem to be challenged when attempting to critically and meaningfully re-think what they are doing in a practicum classroom.*

Many of the innovative teaching approaches that we urge our students to consider and that we believe could improve what happens in schools have emerged from and are supported by the extensive research over the last 40 years on how people learn. Research tells us that people learn best when they are active, challenged and engaged. Research reminds us that all students come to us with prior knowledge in the subject area. The largely invisible Apprenticeship of Observation generates the prior knowledge and beliefs that our candidates bring with them, but teacher educators are not necessarily adept at exposing it, responding to it and building it into our teaching.

If prospective teachers consider themselves to be “blank slates” or if they are treated as such, they are unlikely to see teaching in new ways that help them understand and cope with the first years of teaching and go on to become the teachers that they and their teacher educators hope they will become. The problem of the Apprenticeship of Observation spills over into the problem of Enactment. “Learning how to think and act in ways that achieve one’s intentions is difficult, particularly if knowledge is embedded in the practice itself.” Much information “best emerges in the actual work of teaching—and guides the planning and instruction that follows” (p. 37).

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... continued from page 8 “Novices bring their own frames of reference to the ideas they encounter in teacher education; these may be incompatible with the approaches they are learning about in their coursework and clinical work” (p. 38). To illustrate the problem of Complexity, Darling-Hammond cites the work of Lampert (2001) and extracts these four elements:

1. **Teaching is never routine.**
2. **Teaching has multiple goals that must be addressed simultaneously.**
3. **Teaching is done in relationship to diverse groups of students.**
4. **Teaching requires multiple kinds of knowledge to be integrated.**

(Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 39, emphasis in original)

We comprehend the meaning of these four propositions about the complexity of teaching, but what are their practical consequences for learning to teach? How do teacher education courses help candidates to appreciate the problem of Complexity as their teacher educators work to help them prepare for their practicum experiences and for their first year of teaching? Teacher candidates often expect that they will wear the teaching mantle with ease. Preservice programs may unwittingly suggest that putting on the teaching mantle is relatively straightforward. Until candidates acknowledge and confront their educational histories as well as the diversity of learners in every classroom and the challenges of creating contexts of productive learning, teacher education will continue to be the poor cousin of university disciplines.



A.J. Graham GR. 6, WELBORNE



Shauna Hogan GR. 8, ECOLE CATHEDRALE

# Practice Teaching

JOAN JARDIN, *Teacher, Bayridge Secondary School*

**T**eachers are proud of their profession. Teaching is both a science and an art. The processes, preparation, and knowledge gained from research and education form the basis for “the science aspect”. The ability to reach students, adapt to their personalities, and formulate a working rapport with them encompasses “the art side” of the profession. In order to instill and develop abilities in teacher-candidates, teacher education, which includes teaching practice putting science and art together, is needed. During the practicum, this valuable practice takes place.

While the practicum is valuable and vital, there are issues that can impact upon it. The different personalities involved, stresses, and differences in goals affect its success.

Students do not come in one kind. They are all individuals. While there is research into cognitive and emotional development that describes a norm, as with any population, there are differences. Teachers, too, are individuals. It is fortunate that there are many personalities of teachers to accommodate the many personalities of students. There is not any one teacher mold; however, there are standards of practice to adhere to and prescribed curriculum which must be covered. How these are fulfilled informs the profession of teaching.

Teacher-candidates are an interesting mix of student and teacher. The high academic standards needed to enter the Faculties of Education mean that teacher-candidates are accustomed to academic success. Most are keen to learn and understand that the associate teacher is in an evaluative position to them. This dichotomy makes for a complicated relationship. Academics must be solidly grounded, but practice and planning are crucial to success in order to adapt to the everyday classroom.

The teacher-candidate requires context, examples, and guidance. In turn, the teacher-candidate provides a fresh outlook and new ideas. Associate teachers and teacher-candidates must find common ground, one conducive to growth for both parties.

There is no equivalent for a teacher having his or her own class. To be responsible from the first day of school (through conveying clear expectations, designing assignments, tests and cumulative activities, and finally providing a mark) brings a sense of ownership and pride. The practicum cannot substitute for that experience, but it can provide a snapshot of the experience. In this way, the practicum is an artificial but a vital venue for developing teaching practices. To a greater or lesser extent, the practicum is like playing a role for an extended period of time. It is up to the associate teacher to determine how authentic this role will be and how useful the experience will be for the teacher-candidate by allowing the teacher-candidate to explore his or her teaching style.

Teachers feel an obligation to serve their students to the best of their ability. A teacher’s professional judgement about their students is of great personal importance. In addition, class marks are becoming increasingly competitive, as more students strive to go on to post-secondary education.

The pressure related to student performance influences the relationship between the associate teacher and the teacher-candidate, and could cause the associate teacher to be more territorial and protective.

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*There is no equivalent for a teacher having his or her own class.*

*The practicum cannot substitute for that experience, but it can provide a snapshot of the experience.*

... continued from page 10 As one embraces teaching over time, it is possible to believe that there are limited ways to present material or provide classroom management. When working with teacher-candidates, this attitude can sometimes get in the way of the development of the teacher-candidate's teaching style. For some teacher-candidates, this would mean following closely the style of their associate teacher - whether or not this style fits with them or not - as the only chance of surviving the summative evaluation.

Associate teachers and teacher-candidates may have different goals for the practicum. Communication is of great importance. For example, classroom management may be a priority for one, while use of technology may be wanted by the other. The associate teacher and teacher candidate need to identify and agree to outcomes then work at a suitable pace. After that identification, the work and fun can start. A successful session takes time but can be rewarding for both.

The variety of students in schools is often a surprise. Due to most teacher candidates' success in school, they may have been isolated from the students who had difficulties. The greatest challenge for new teachers usually comes with struggling with the many real needs of the students who rank school low on their list of priorities.

Professional obligations need to be followed. Remaining after school for meetings, preparation and committee work is an often overlooked aspect of the profession. Another important aspect is the ability to explain their rationale for each lesson and activity.

The practicum allows the teacher-candidate to apply the knowledge learned in the Faculty of Education. He or she is able to begin the profession by building on the science and developing the art of teaching. It is a lesson teachers will be practicing for their whole career.



Grace Clouston GR. 6, ST. MARTHA

# Status and Stature in the Teaching Profession

JOHN OLSON, *Professor Emeritus*

## Expertise and the status of the teacher

Teachers are increasingly presented with detailed prescriptions for how they do their work and the outcomes that are expected to flow from this work. Teachers are expected to manage the resources they are given according to the requirements of curriculum and test specifications.

Often however teachers are thought to be more of a problem than a solution in implementing this change process. I want to take issue with this negative view of teachers. Teachers have been said to over estimate their influence because they lacked capacity to make a measurable difference. Instead they are said to form a sentimental attachment to their students as a way of finding satisfaction in their work. Such views, I believe, miscast teachers by miscasting their profession and its purposes.

I will argue that what teachers tell researchers about their work life reveals not sentimentality and a lack of effectiveness but a strong attachment to the traditions of classrooms whose routines are sustained by the practical virtues of honesty, courage and justice. These virtues enable teachers to engage with their students in a formative process quite unlike the technical rational ideal often espoused by researchers and education systems. A current example of this technical rational approach is the No Child Left Behind legislation in the United States, which is based on an application of supposedly reliable methods taken from research on increasing test scores.

Many critics and researchers argue that teachers lack technical expertise and are thus unable to effect change. Many wonder how teachers, failing such technical capacity, can believe they really make a difference. Teachers are said to seek out magical moments of progress and ignore reality.

They overestimate their influence. They seek no data about efficacy. If they suspect that classroom events are beyond comprehension, inquiry is futile. Hence a research base is not developed which would enable a better understanding of cause and effect (Lortie, 1975). No wonder teachers are often said to lack the status accorded to other professions. This would be a sad state of affairs was it true. But what if teachers are doing something

quite other than trying to live up to such a metric? What if the stature of teachers derives from professional qualities quite other than that of the expert manager (Olson, 1997)?

## The stature of teachers and the nature of their craft

The characterizations of what teachers do and ought to do, I suggest, do not confront the real nature of the profession. Take the matter of technical rationality, for example. This is the norm teachers are often judged by and the basis on which negative estimations of their craft pride are made. The expert teacher – like the expert manager, or indeed the expert doctor – is expected to have the power of science at hand to control events.

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*These virtues enable teachers to engage with their students in a formative process quite unlike the technical rational ideal often espoused by researchers and education systems.*

## Resources of Interest

The International Study Association on Teachers and Teaching (ISATT), Totems and Taboos: Risk and Relevance in Research on Teachers and Teaching

Brock University, July 4-5, 2007

[www.ed.brocku.ca/isatt2007/contact.html](http://www.ed.brocku.ca/isatt2007/contact.html)

Journal of Curriculum Studies, Canadian Op-Ed papers and reactions:

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... continued from page 12 There is a well-developed skeptical literature, which leads us to believe that this faith in technical expertise as the basis for practices like teaching, or nursing for that matter, is misplaced because it misunderstands what such professionals are trying to do. (MacIntyre, 1984; Taylor, 2002). What if what teachers do is based on a foundation quite other than technical rationality?

What teachers say to researchers is not a poor kind of science of cause and effect, as some have said (Lortie, 1975), but anecdotes selected to reveal what matters and doesn't matter in the life of the classroom—the moral structure of the practice. What counts here are virtues of a practice as MacIntyre (1984) reminds us: virtues to do with courage to risk, honesty in the face of failure, justice in the allocation of rewards (p. 191). What teachers say to researchers about their work reflect a moral universe which can be recovered if the outsider listens well (MacIntyre, 1984). These stories celebrate the virtues of practice in pursuit of what MacIntyre calls goods internal to that practice: the exercise and development of the virtues needed to be an educated person—to be a better person. Respect for the moral groundedness of these stories grows, just as faith in technical rationality wanes. If we want to understand what works in the classroom we need to look to the virtues required for teachers and students to prosper in such a place.

These stories, which many take as subjective expressions of mere sentiment, are clues to the moral universe in which teachers work and are guides to the kind of life they live there. The technical universe that underlies reforms like the No Child Left Behind crusade in the

*What counts here are virtues of a practice as MacIntyre (1984) reminds us: virtues to do with courage to risk, honesty in the face of failure, justice in the allocation of rewards (p. 191)*

United States or summaries of research with titles, such as *What Works?*, aren't part of the moral discourse of teachers—it isn't what teachers care about. There are no sure-fire results. Such language belongs in a different universe. Teachers are not concerned about treatments and effects in the same way as are technical rationalists.

If we look at the many accounts of teacher craft pride in the literature on teacher thinking we see what concerns teachers. Asked deliberately to brag about their work teachers reveal the challenges of teaching life. It is not difficult to construct a list of challenges. Teachers work in a zone of conflicted expectations and limited resources. The practice of teaching is institutionalized but exists in its own right, separate in an uneasy relation with bureaucracy (Olson, 2002). Power and status, which may concern critics, are not the only forces at work here. There is the stature of the teacher to consider.

From whence does that flow? MacIntyre's (1984) analysis of practice as a process in which goods internal to the practice and the virtues which sustain the pursuit of those goods help us understand teachers as other than managers imbued with technical expertise.

From a research point of view we need to collect more stories from teachers about their work in classrooms in order to understand its moral foundation and the virtues that enable those who are there to prosper or not. Rather than criticize teachers for not being technical rationalists, we need to look critically at their conceptions of work from a moral perspective. We need to understand the moral challenges that give their work meaning—challenges which are key to becoming a person, as Charles Taylor (1991) reminds us. Ultimately we have to enter into a dialogue with teachers about the value of schoolwork within a moral framework which evolves through being tested in the reality of schools and through dialogue with outsiders, and which cannot be collapsed into issues of power and status, nor grounded in technical rationality.

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## BOOK REVIEW

# John Dewey and the Art of Teaching: Toward Reflective and Imaginative Practice

JAMES SCOTT JOHNSTON, *Queen's University*

**D**ouglas B. Simpson, Michael B. Jackson and Judy C. Aycock are concerned about reflective practice and the development of reflective practitioners. This is their avowed reason for writing *John Dewey and the Art of Teaching*. Unhappy with the current state of affairs in teacher education, and certain of the need for thoughtful assistance to teachers and teacher candidates, the authors have written an engaging and easily readable primer on reflective practice with John Dewey's educational thought front and centre.

This book is timely given that it is common to hear that teachers no longer have access to the tools and resources necessary to conduct reflective practices. Despite the prevalence of theory in faculties of education and teachers' colleges, there is a vast literature suggesting that teachers lack (or at least, have a lack of access to) reflective practice. Educational theory, on its own definition, is that branch of education organized to provide students with the tools for reflective practice and we may wonder whether educational theory is 'doing its job' if reflective practitioners are not developing.

With the cultivation of reflective practice in mind, Simpson and his colleagues have used Dewey's writings, including his *Democracy and Education*, *The Sources of a Science of Education*, and *Experience and Education*, as a basis for identifying his images of the teacher. These images comprise metaphors such as: the teacher as artist, lover, wise mother, navigator, gardener, educational pioneer, servant, social engineer, composer, wise physician, builder, leader, and finally (to bring it all back) classroom teacher. Each of these metaphors is found in one or another of Dewey's writings; the authors work through these statements of Dewey's, and form from them a picture of the reflective teacher.

The metaphor of teacher as artist, however, informs the rest. There has been a spate of Dewey scholarship suggesting that the best metaphor to understand teaching practice is that of the artist, and the best metaphor to understand Deweyan thought is through the lenses of art and aesthetic experience. Phillip Jackson and Jim Garrison are notable exemplars of this line of thinking. On this model, teachers are artists that construct their practice in and through, better and more satisfying, experiences. An experience is a basic element of what it is to be human- indeed, alive. We have experiences and through these, we adjust, adapt, and learn to control our environments such that we can develop further and better experiences. We 'undergo,' and we 'do,' as Dewey famously says, and between doing and undergoing, we grow.

Education is the means to this growth, to having and undergoing better and better experiences. The artistry comes in both at the level of having an experience (aesthetic experiences are said to be the 'highest' or to use Dewey's preferred terminology, 'consummatory') and the tools, resources, indeed, reflection that we use to order our experiences. A reflective practitioner is thoughtfully engaged in altering her practice to achieve the deepest and fullest experiences for herself and her students. Reflection in this case is subservient to the experience, but vital to the task.

The authors develop the metaphor of artistry through the other metaphors. Some of these metaphors may be self-evident (the teacher as Leader; the teacher as Navigator). Others may not (the teacher as Wise Mother; the teacher as Social Engineer). It is worth spending a bit of time on these two admittedly odd metaphors to see what the authors have in mind. The metaphor of teacher as Wise Mother suggests that the teacher emulates as best as possible the home learning environment of the child. As the authors say,

... continues on page 15

Douglas J. Simpson,  
Michael P. Jackson,  
and Judy C. Aycock

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... continued from page 14 *If only we could, we might occasionally wish to clone these caregivers [parents] and homes if it wouldn't destroy individuality and freedom and artistry. So would Dewey, and he would like to begin by transporting from these desirable homes characteristics and qualities that are relevant to teaching and learning in schools. Of course, Dewey recognizes that there are degrees of providing healthy home environments. No home is completely devoid of positive qualities; neither is any home a totally positive environment (44).*

Dewey "values it [the image of the home] as a model of learning, engagement, and development and encourages us to make our schools similar" (46). Indeed, Dewey does say that the rich home life of the child is to be the point of departure for the activities of the classroom. One of the challenges of (especially primary) education is to connect the activities of the school with those at home and in so doing, give rise to the child's natural curiosity and interest.

Another odd metaphor is that of the Social Engineer. What do the authors have in mind? Here, the focus is on the social constructor. The authors look to Dewey's statements on science, and specifically, Dewey's statements in *The Sources of A Science of Education*. In this text, the emphasis is on the systematic methods, intelligently used, to bring forth better teaching practices. The key here is intelligent use; this is central to the idea of a reflective practitioner. As the authors say,

*When future and current teachers are viewed as "channels of reception and transmission" (LW 5: 24), we can't expect even the best scientific research and philosophical reflection to be valued by them or influence learning and schooling positively. Educators, whether university professors or district personnel, who attempt to pour ideas, data, theories, philosophies, values, plans, and strategies into teachers are not only doing an injustice to research and reflective thought but are also ensuring that what we teach will more likely be "badly deflected and distorted" (LW 5: 24).*

The metaphor of the teacher as social engineer is the metaphor of the constructor. This is the idea that teaching and learning are not a passive affair, but an active construction occurring between teacher and student. However, the metaphor of the teacher as social engineer has, as the authors point out in a footnote, worrisome implications. The image of the bureaucrat, planning the construction of society without democratic or public input, is a challenge put to Dewey by social critics such as Christopher Lasch, *... continues on page 16*

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... continued from page 15 and sceptics of educational history such as Clarence Karier and Paul Hogan. Certainly, the authors do not wish to invoke the sense of the social engineer. A better term could perhaps have been found to get the idea across.

Throughout the text are several pedagogical tools designed to stimulate the reader to think. Questions are fairly distributed throughout each of the chapters, designed to have the reader focus on her practice. A summative exercise is included at the end of each chapter, to bring the thoughts of the reader together. Dewey's quotes are developed in detail in sections of each chapter, and helpful figures are provided to represent complex claims and ideas. The book is relatively short (218 pages) and the chapters seldom pass beyond 15 pages. This obviates a tedious read.

There are only two caveats that come with this book. One has to do with content: the other style or form. In terms of content, the authors do an able job of presenting Dewey's thoughts and understandings of what it is to be a teacher. I notice, however, that a central element of Dewey's thinking- perhaps as or even more central than the metaphor of teacher as artist- is the metaphor of teacher as inquirer. This is not to say that the authors ignore this. In fact, they devote the better part of a chapter to problem solving (in the Teacher as Builder). Nevertheless, inquiry is often downplayed throughout the text and this misrepresents Dewey; Dewey spent far more time and ink talking about the 'science' of education than the art. And while this should not compel us to rank the metaphor of teacher as artist below that of teacher as inquirer, we should pause before assigning the former pre-eminent status.

The second caveat concerns the audience for this book: While this book draws heavily on Dewey and uses statements of Dewey's liberally, it is not (nor is it intended to be) Dewey scholarship. The book's purpose is to spur the development of reflective teacher practice, not to debate what Dewey really said. The audience for this book is teachers and teacher candidates looking for guidance in forming their practices, rather than students of Dewey scholarship. If this audience is kept in mind, this book will be very valuable, indeed. For it takes what I believe are among the best ideas of educational theory and places them in the context of reflective practice. For this alone, the book is well worth using. I recommend this book to faculties of education attempting to develop reflective practice amongst teacher candidates and practicing teachers looking for inspired understandings of what it means to teach.

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