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Roots of Attrition: Reflections of Teacher Candidates in Title I Schools

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Introduction

As teacher educators, we know that, statistically, one-third of our current practicum students will leave the teaching field within their first five years of teaching (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Ingersoll, 2002). The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF, 2003) offers more staggering numbers such as a 33% attrition rate within the first three years of teaching jumping to 46% attrition within five years of teaching. Some researchers feel these numbers may be skewed and argue the higher percentages of attrition rates may be due to questionable data or data derived from preliminary sources. These researchers believe attrition rates are closer to 14% to 17% per year as a national average and 20% to 21% per year for urban schools (Boe, Cook, and Sunderland, 2008; National Center for Education Statistics, 2008; Marvel, Lyter, Peltola, Strizek, & Morton, 2007). The fact remains that, regardless of which data are used, the numbers of qualified teachers leaving the profession are having a negative impact on the education of P-12 students. For instance, there is evidence to support that teacher knowledge and instructional actions make a critical difference in student success, and research shows teacher effectiveness increases after the first few years of teaching (Kain & Singleton, 1996; Reutzel & Cooter, 2008); however, as reported above, we are losing a substantial number of our new teachers after 3 to 5 years of teaching, just as they are reaching this increased level of effectiveness.

Factors cited for this high attrition rate of teachers may vary somewhat in their description and categorization, but they are very similar across researchers. For instance, Darling-Hammond (2003) lists broad categories of salaries, working conditions, teacher preparation, and mentoring support in the early years as reasons teachers cite for leaving the profession. In contrast, Anhorn (2008), in her study of first year teachers, cites orientation, time, isolation, classroom management, pay and benefits, preparation for teaching, the principal, fellow teachers, and parents as key reasons for departure. Using teacher interviews as a data source, Kopowski (2008) found No Child Left Behind, lack of support, student discipline, salaries, and lack of respect as issues that influence teacher satisfaction. In the 2004-2005 MetLife "Survey of the American Teacher," new teachers included the following issues as reasons for leaving the profession: administrative duties, classroom management, assessment responsibilities, and lack of parental relationships (Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, 2006).

This body of research has direct implications for teacher preparation. Indeed, both Darling-Hammond and Anhorn found inadequate teacher preparation as a factor in teacher attrition: "A growing body of evidence indicates that teachers who lack adequate initial preparation are more likely to leave the profession" (Darling-Hammond, 2003, p. 9). This sentiment is mirrored in the report of the NCTAF (2003) in which the teacher shortage problem is more specifically identified as a teacher retention problem exacerbated by makeshift solutions that place teachers into classrooms without adequate training or support. In fact, the National Center for Education

Statistics (2005) reports a 5-year attrition rate of 29% for teachers who did not have a student teaching experience as compared to 15% for those who had completed student teaching as part of a teacher education program. First year teachers often place premium value on student teaching and field experiences as an opportunity to bring university instruction and practical applications together (Anhorn, 2008). Some researchers suggest graduates from 5-year teaching programs are better prepared and thus inclined to stay in the teaching field longer than those from 4-year programs in part due to the longer student teaching experience (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Burstein, Kretschmer, Smith, & Gudoski, 1999; Andrew & Schwab, 1995). The study reported here is from a standard four-year baccalaureate program with a semester long student teaching experience.

Purpose of the Study

After several years of teaching a practicum course associated with a language arts methods course, it became obvious that students began their field experiences with enthusiasm and excitement only to end the semester holding negative impressions and doubting their ability to make an impact on students. We began to wonder if perhaps our teacher education program was not adequately preparing our teacher candidates to teach in today's classrooms. We wondered if they were being sent into practicum situations ill prepared and thus it was affecting their sense of efficacy and causing them to doubt their ability to be successful teachers in the future. We decided to look at the classroom through the eyes of practicum students and, through their reflections, evaluate whether there is more we can do to prepare them for this field experience in our universities' teacher education programs. The purpose of this study was to identify threads in teacher candidate journals and written reflections that are consistent or reflective of the reasons novice teachers report for leaving the profession. In other words, are roots of attrition found in our teacher education programs?

Description of Participants

The participants in this study were 12 teacher candidates in their junior year attending a midwestern university with a main campus population of 17, 703. These teacher candidates were enrolled in a practicum course requiring 20 hours of field experience in Title I schools. Primary placements consisted of one participant in kindergarten, three in first grade, two in second grade, and one in third grade. Intermediate grade placements included two participants in 4^{th} grade, two in 5^{th} grade, and one in 6^{th} grade. The practicum course was a co-requisite for a required reading methods course taken during their second semester as teacher education candidates. It was one of the first practicum experiences in which the participants were required to engage in teaching lessons to the public school students. In other words, the only prior field experience course required of participants was an observational type practicum, no teaching was expected nor had they taken any classroom management courses. All participants were white females and were comprised of eleven elementary education majors and one special education major.

Description of Schools

Two elementary schools, pseudonyms Bennett and Randle, hosted the teacher candidates. Bennett Elementary had an enrollment of 292 comprised of .7% Asian, 15.4% Black, .7% His-

panic, 1% Indian, and 82.2% white. Over 85% of students received free/reduced lunch. Bennett had a student to staff ratio of 19 students per teacher. Teachers had an average of 11.8 years experience and 55% of teachers held a Master's Degree or higher. Randle Elementary had an enrollment of 245 comprised of 5.7% Asian, 13.1% Black, 3.3% Hispanic, .8% Indian, and 77.1% White. Over 67% of students received free/reduced lunch. Randle had a student to staff ratio of 20 students per teacher. Teachers had an average of 8.9 years experience and 76% of teachers held a Master's Degree or higher. Table A below shows a comparison between the host schools and their home state.

Table A
Comparison Between Host Schools and Home State

Comparison Data	Bennett	Randle	State
Asian	.7%	5.7%	1.7%
Black	15.4%	13.1%	18.1%
Hispanic	.7%	3.3%	3.4%
Indian	1%	.8%	.4%
White	82.2%	77.1%	76.4%
Free/Reduced Lunch	85.8%	67.3%	41.8%
Student/Teacher Ratio	19	20	18
Years of Teacher Experience	11.8	8.9	12.6
Teacher Pay	$39,163	$39,596	$43,524
Teachers with a Master Degree or Higher	55.3%	76.4%	50.6%

Methodology

A qualitative research design was used to determine how the teacher candidates reacted to and made sense of their practicum experiences because qualitative methods lean toward exploration, discovery, and inductive logic. The use of grounded theory allows categories to emerge from the data based on participant reflections, interactions, and observations. This method allowed an analysis of teacher candidates' thoughts, feelings, and conveyance of their practicum experience with specific observations building toward general patterns (Patton, 1990).

Data Collection

Participants took part in a 20-hour practicum experience spaced over a period of ten weeks in a school identified as having a diverse population and Title I status. Participants, with the approval of their mentor teacher, could attend the practicum twice a week for one hour or attend in a two hour block each week for a period of ten weeks. All 12 participants voluntarily completed additional hours beyond the required 20 hours with an average attendance rate of 28 hours over the duration of the ten weeks. Requiring students to remain in the practicum for 10 weeks regardless of the number of hours accrued gave participants the opportunity to become participant observers in the classroom context. Examples of tasks performed by participants while in the public school classroom included large and small group reading instruction, guided reading groups, writing workshop, literature circles, author studies, etc. From these types of ac-

tivities, participants were required to submit two formal lesson plans for evaluation. In addition, they kept journals of their daily experiences and, upon course completion, wrote a reflection of their overall experience. No prompts or leading questions were provided. The participants were simply asked to record their daily reflections of their experiences. These reflections and journals were marked as submitted/unsubmitted and not graded. To help ensure journal entries and reflections were not biased, participants were not aware of this study until after the close of the semester when they were contacted for possible participation. At the close of the study, each participant was invited to participate in the study by allowing their journal entries and reflections papers to be used as data. They were informed that participation in the study was voluntary and 12 of 15 practicum students agreed to participate resulting in an 80% participation rate.

Data Analysis

NVivo™, a qualitative computer software package, was used in the analysis of the data. The teacher candidates' reflections were searched for common terms and patterns through the use of text, string, and Boolean searches. The coding of data and the use of programmed searches allowed for the accurate and efficient location of significant data in context. The retrieval of this data led to an understanding of the relationships contained within the reflections.

Open Codes: The participants' written reflections were thoroughly read to ascertain the content of the documents and to get a better understanding of what the research data meant. Following that reading, the written reflections were open-coded. Open coding helped organize the data while also keeping the analysis grounded in the data. Patterns of recurring words and phrases gave rise to axial codes.

Axial Codes: As a result of the open-coding process, categories began to emerge from the data. These categories were organized into lower-level axial codes. The constant comparative method was instrumental in the analysis and refinement of the open codes into axial codes and, eventually, into higher-level axial codes. Nine higher-level axial codes that emerged from the data were student dispositions/behaviors, teacher dispositions/behaviors, classroom management, instruction, attendance, expectations, parents, feelings of doubt by mentor teachers, and feelings of doubt about future teaching ability.

Selective Codes: Upon careful examination and reflection on the axial codes that had emerged from the open codes, six main relationships between concepts became apparent. Student Dispositions/Behaviors emerged as a selective code because these behaviors were a major theme in the journals and reflections. Another category, Academic Performance, is related to student behaviors but contains specific information pertaining to academic achievement. Comments regarding Teacher Dispositions/Behaviors Related to Classroom Management were also a prevalent theme in the journals and reflections. In addition, the topic of parental support was a part of participant comments. The code of Teacher Comments Regarding Parental Support reflects the viewpoints of classroom teachers. The concerns of mentor teachers and participants gave rise to the last two selective codes. Self-Efficacy of Mentor Teachers and Self-Efficacy of Teacher candidates explores the doubts both groups felt about classroom experiences. These six selective codes, Student Dispositions and Behaviors, Academic Performance, Teacher Dispositions Regarding Classroom Management, Teacher Comments Regarding Parental Support, Self-Efficacy of Mentor Teachers, and Self-Efficacy of Teacher candidates, contributed to the results reported in this study about teacher candidates' reflections on their classroom experiences.

Limitations

One limitation of this study is that all journal entries and reflections were those of white, female students. There were no males or minorities enrolled in the practicum course for the particular semester data was gathered. Data collection over one semester is also a limitation since a study duration of an entire year or longer may have revealed additional findings and would have included a larger set of participants due to new course attendees each semester. A larger sample size would have decreased variability and increased the ability to generalize in the study. In addition, this data was gathered from two schools within the same school district and with the same operational policies in use.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to identify threads in teacher candidate journal entries and written reflections that are consistent or reflective of the reasons novice teachers report for leaving the profession. Specifically relevant to teacher preparation programs, the question to be investigated was whether the roots of attrition begin in the very teacher preparation programs intended to instill the confidence and competence in teacher candidates that will result in successful teaching careers. To gain insight into this question, researchers analyzed teacher candidate journal entries and written reflections. Several categories of responses from teacher candidate's written reflections were identified including Student Dispositions/Behaviors, Academic Performance, Teacher Dispositions/Behaviors Regarding Classroom Management, Teacher Comments Regarding Parental Support, Self-Efficacy of Mentor Teachers, and Self-Efficacy of Teacher Candidates.

Student Dispositions/Behaviors: An analysis of written reflections indicated that all participants identified student behavior as a source of concern at least once in their written reflections. All 12 participants commented on the behavior of students and perceived that lower socioeconomic status (SES) students acted out more frequently. Classroom teachers had shared information on who received free and reduced lunches with teacher candidates since they often took role and accounted for lunch, snack, and milk money. Student behaviors reported included talking when the teacher was talking, throwing chairs and objects, and cursing at the teacher and classmates. Ten of the twelve participants across grade levels referred to defiant behavior, which they defined as talking back to the teacher when asked to do something and refusing to stay in their seat or do assignments. All ten expressed concerns about handling these behaviors in their future classrooms. In addition, the five participants placed in a primary grade setting reported, at least once in their written reflections, that primary age students in their classrooms had hit or threatened violence toward their classmates.

Participants also remarked on the number of absences and tardiness in elementary age students. Nine teacher candidates commented as a concern, in at least one written reflection, that prior to this practicum experience, their belief was that student absences and tardiness was primarily a high school problem. These nine participants' written observations discussed conversations with their mentor teachers regarding the occurrences of student absences for periods of 3 to 10 days at a time without parents contacting the school or without any explanation given. Three of the teacher candidates remarked on students being absent for extended periods and then finding out through their mentor teachers the students had enrolled at other schools in the district.

These three teacher candidates remarked that they had never thought of this occurrence or that it would happen on a common basis.

Absenteeism and tardiness were expressed as areas of frustration by the teacher candidates who had to plan early morning lessons for their practicum experience. This was the first time they had encountered students who were not only tardy but had to begin lessons late because they needed to go to the cafeteria for breakfast upon arrival at school. The participants expressed sympathy for the students needing breakfast but also expressed worry about the wasted instructional time and how they could adjust their lesson schedules to meet the needs of the tardy students while keeping the students who were present on task. Participants' written reflections seemed to reveal a new realization for this element of classroom life.

Academic Performance: Participants also commented, in their journal entries and written reflections, on the academic behavior of students including reading levels, diversity of student achievement levels, and student participation in homework. On this aspect of classroom experience, most of the participants (8 of 12) made connections to their own experiences as high school and elementary aged students. They reported the academic behaviors they observed were not very different from when they were in school, except they did not remember some of these behaviors being so prevalent in their elementary school. For example, participants reported on the low reading ability of the intermediate grade students and wondered how teachers dealt with such a range of achievement levels in one classroom. Journal entries from all 12 participants contained comments reflecting that homework was rarely completed by all the students. Three participants labeled this problem as pervasive in their classrooms. The majority of teacher candidates, 8 out of 12 across all grades except one 5th grade class and one 6th grade class, commented on student behavior during computer time. Their written reflections indicated surprise to observe students hiding behind computer monitors and not engaging in the instructional activities. The participants wrote in their journals they had originally thought the students would be excited and on task during computer time since it is interactive and entertaining. In fact, lack of learner engagement was a topic reported in all 12 participants' journals. They also wrote about the problems they had as they attempted to use manipulatives in math indicating students abused, ate or stole them. While this was a reading practicum, all 12 teacher candidates reported being asked to teach additional lessons, such as math, to small groups of struggling students. This was viewed by all as extra practice since they hoped to be future elementary or special education teachers.

Teacher Dispositions/Behaviors Regarding Classroom Management: The teacher candidates wrote about their observations of their mentor teachers', and other teacher and administrator, behaviors. In every case, these observations dealt entirely with matters of classroom management. Ten of 12 participants reported that mentor teachers immediately sent students to the principal if they acted out without first attempting to deal with the behavior in the classroom. Two participants in primary placements described incidents of teachers breaking down and crying in front of their students when dealing with particularly intense behavioral interactions such as students throwing chairs and cursing at the teacher. Three out of 12 participants had journal entries describing comments from mentor teachers cautioning them against disciplining minority children in case they were accused of being racist. These participants reported feeling anxious about this sentiment and unsure what they should do in the future.

The teacher candidates also remarked on their perceptions of their mentor teachers' expectations for their students' academic achievement. The teacher candidates reported feeling as if mentor teachers spent most of their instructional focus on those students who were well behaved and completed their work. Eleven of 12 participants wrote that mentor teachers blamed low SES

as the factor behind poor academic performance of students. Four of the 12 went on to state they did not feel their mentor teacher attempted to academically engage students who were behavior problems. Behavior, to some degree, was also an influence on the type and quality of instruction in the classroom. All 12 participants observed basals in use the majority of time they were in the classroom, and 8 of 12 reported mentors stating they did not use manipulatives or activities to reinforce lessons because the students could not handle them. Ten of 12 participants relayed that teachers said behavior was so bad some days; they simply went through the basal and tried to keep everyone on task. This is not to imply the use of basals equates to unengaging instructional methods, but the teacher candidates perceived this was the case in their assigned classrooms.

Along with the above comments, there were many positive statements made about the classroom environments established by the mentor teachers. Four out of 12 participants expressed admiration for their mentors for the control they showed in the classroom even under adverse circumstances. Additionally, 10 of 12 participants said they never noticed their teachers making any difference between students based on race, gender, or ethnicity. Behavior appeared to be a main deciding factor in teacher-student relationships. In fact, 10 of 12 participants reported their mentor teacher made various statements conveying their belief that lower SES students could be more successful in the classroom if their behavior didn't hinder their learning. All participant accounts reported that teachers tried to talk to students about appropriate school behaviors.

Teacher Comments Regarding Parental Support: All participants reported in their written reflections, at least once, that mentor teachers had made statements to the effect that their students' parents did not care about education. Participant journals included observations regarding the abundance of unfinished or no homework returned, unsigned forms, no response to calls or other attempts at contact, low to no attendance at parent/teacher conferences, and no response to offers of tutoring or extra help for their child.

Self-Efficacy of Mentor Teachers*:* As stated earlier, participants discussed two incidents of teachers breaking down and crying in reaction to student behaviors and 10 of 12 participants gave reports of teachers sending students to the office immediately without attempting classroom interventions. All participants reported their mentor teachers making the statement, at least once, that the parents of their students did not care about education, and 10 of the 12 participants reported their mentors said, on some days, student behavior was so bad they simply went through the basal and tried to keep everyone on task. They did not use manipulatives or develop additional activities due to student behavior. Finally, six of the participants wrote about conversations with mentor teachers in which the teachers made comments about being "fed up with their classes". One of these entries was dated as early as September. One participant wrote in her journal about a conversation she had with her mentor. The mentor told her that every year she returned to school determined to make a difference in her students' lives, but it was only November, and she now had no hope for this group of students.

Self-Efficacy of Teacher Candidates: Upon completion of the practicum course, participants wrote a reflective paper about their classroom experiences that was coded along with their journal entries. The reflective papers revealed beliefs and/or insights made by teacher candidates that may ultimately impact their decisions to remain in the teaching profession. At the end of the semester, all 12 participants expressed doubts they could control a classroom. In fact, 11 expressed doubts they could be effective teachers in a public school. Examples of their comments convey the doubts they were experiencing:

> I don't see how a classroom teacher can even make it through the day. I'm scared. My teacher is probably just in her 20s but she looks so worn down. I don't want that to happen to me so maybe I can teach in one of the Catholic schools.
>
> I wanted to be a teacher so I could teach, not deal with this. Do you know what else I could use my education classes for?
>
> After seeing what goes on in a classroom first hand, I don't know if I will be able to do it. I've always wanted to be a teacher but school wasn't like this when I grew up.
>
> I don't think I can handle these kids, even the little ones. They're terrible.
>
> I don't want to teach anymore but my parents will kill me if I change majors. Why do these teachers stay? I'm not sure I'll be able to put up with.

Research shows that student discipline and classroom management are often cited by practicing teachers as areas of stress and dissatisfaction (Anhorn, 2008; Kopowski, 2008; Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, 2006; Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005). These two findings have a direct bearing on this study. When the assignment was made to journal and reflect about the reading practicum experience, the assumption was the journal entries would primarily contain information on reading instruction and, perhaps, behaviors of students and teachers during reading instruction. However, every journal entry, and the majority of the content of the reflection papers, was about classroom management. This was obviously an essential element in the experience of this group of 12 teacher candidates that they did not have the knowledge base or experience to act on in a successful manner.

Darling-Hammond (2003) suggests some teacher education programs place candidates into classrooms with insufficient support and inadequate training in managing today's classrooms composed of diverse populations and large class sizes while maintaining accountability to educational standards. As mentioned earlier, the participants in this study had no classroom management courses prior to this practicum experience. In fact, elementary education majors at this university do not have a dedicated classroom management course in their program at all. Rather, classroom management is, theoretically, embedded into each course in the elementary education program. Classroom management is frequently included in methods courses as it relates to the particular discipline area. This was the case in this study. The participants in the teacher preparation program described in this study had classroom management integrated into methods courses. Therefore, typically, reading methods courses and practicum experiences such as the one in this study includes classroom management instruction as it relates to managing reading groups, organizing for student groupings, orchestrating literature circles, setting up classroom library norms, rotating students through literacy centers, etc. What appears to be lacking at this institution and, perhaps others as well, is an opportunity for teacher candidates to gain an overall view of how to manage students outside the engagement of instructional time.

All 12 of the participants in this study voiced doubts they would be able to manage a public school classroom and many expressed dread, and even fear, when contemplating the possible behaviors of their future students based on this practicum experience. Perhaps this doubt of their own self-efficacy was shaped by the behaviors and classroom management styles of the mentor

teachers who served as role models during their practicum experiences. Self-efficacy can be created and strengthened through experiences provided by social models (Bandura, 1994), therefore, it is reasonable to assume it can be destroyed or weakened by social models. This emphasizes how vital it is for teacher education programs to carefully select and train mentor teachers since vicarious experiences obtained from these role models can either create and strengthen self-belief in efficacy or can foster self-doubts of being effective (Bandura). However, the difficulty of mentor teacher selection becomes compounded when teacher education programs have large numbers of teacher candidates to place and a limited number of placements.

Future Implications

The selective codes of Student Dispositions and Behaviors, Academic Performance, Teacher Dispositions Regarding Classroom Management, Teacher Comments Regarding Parental Support, Self-Efficacy of Mentor Teachers, and Self-Efficacy of Teacher Candidates reflect the perceptions the study participants formed during their first active practicum experience. Classroom management was the main topic of discussion in the participants' journal entries and reflection papers with all 12 participants expressing doubts they will be able to manage their future classrooms. These teacher candidates entered the practicum without a prior classroom management course and, at this stage in their educational program, very little experience with the embedded model of classroom management in place at their university. The National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality (2007) suggests changes in teacher preparation programs in order to improve instruction in classroom management. Their recommendations include 1) providing teacher candidates with instructional approaches for classroom management through coursework and guided practice with feedback, and 2) addressing the challenges facing teacher candidates and new teachers in creating a positive classroom context. Instruction and feedback through coursework on how to handle disruptive behaviors and effectively manage a classroom prior to participation in a hands-on practicum may have given the participants confidence to deal with inappropriate behaviors or, at the minimum, given them a knowledge base to put in perspective the behaviors they were seeing. In addition to improving coursework and addressing the authentic challenges found in classrooms, research needs to be undertaken to aid teacher education programs in determining the most advantageous sequencing of classroom management instruction. The above ideas would not only benefit teachers while at the preservice stage of their training but would also increase their ability to manage a classroom once they became practicing teachers. This may act to alleviate some of the frustration practicing teachers feel with regard to student behavior and classroom management that are such prevalent factors in teacher dissatisfaction and attrition.

Conclusion

The self-efficacy of the 12 teacher candidates in this study was negatively impacted by student discipline and classroom management as evidenced by their concern they will not be able to manage a public school classroom. Pre-practicum conversations and planning sessions showed enthusiasm and excitement at the opportunity to teach lessons and become actively engaged in the public schools but this was replaced by self-doubt and anxiety about classroom management as the semester progressed. Even though this was a reading course practicum, journal entries and reflections focused on classroom management, which emphasizes the impact these experiences

in the classroom and these interactions with students had on this group of teacher candidates. Research has shown that student discipline and classroom management are cited as attrition factors in practicing teachers and some researchers suggest teacher education programs are not preparing teacher candidates to manage classrooms in today's educational climate (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Metropolitan Life Insurance Co., 2006; Kopowski, 2008; Anhorn, 2008). As seen in this study, it appears the roots of attrition may be planted as early as the first interactions in public school classrooms when teacher candidates enter the experience with little or no training and without sufficient background knowledge to effectively evaluate and process what they are observing.

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ZEAL: An Aesthetic Revolution for Education

Barbara A. Clark & James Joss French, Central Connecticut State University

Let us love what we love, let us be ourselves.
Vincent van Gogh, *The Letters,* 23 November, 1881

Introduction

Aristotle maintained that there is nothing in the intellect which was not first in the senses; it is equally and more obviously true of the imagination (Standing, 1962, p. 339). Why have public education mandates in America denied and rejected the sacred imaginative realm within all children, thereby segregating or categorizing the arts as frivolous or unnecessary? The arts in America as proposed by Goodman (1976) are typically kept segregated and marginalized by common educational practices. Goodman chose to name the annual Harvard educational conference *Project Zero*, because America understands "zero" about the arts.

Goodman's research presented the psychology of art and the critical levels of thinking provoked by art and aesthetic education. Like Goodman, Greene (1978) proposed that art and aesthetics reveal our "perceptual reality that underlies our cognitive structures of a primordial landscape in which we present ourselves" (p. 213). Eisner (2002) also warns of a culture devoid of the arts. If we continue along this path of alienation from the arts and our very nature, we invariably are at risk as a society:

> Imagination, that form of thinking that engenders images of the possible, also has a critically important cognitive function to perform aside from the creation of possible worlds. Imagination also enables us to try things out-again in the mind's eye-without the consequences we might encounter if we had to act upon them empirically. A culture populated by a people whose imagination is impoverished has a static future. In such a culture there will be little change because there will be little sense of possibility (p. 5).

The following research presents a new paradigm and culture of thinking for teacher preparation such that teachers are artists, where they embrace the fragile, innocent, imaginative world of children that must be protected and nurtured. The non-compassionate teacher is at risk to control a child's imagination—a child's core—or even worse damage a child's becoming. The compassionate teacher practices the art of subtle possibilities and presents aesthetic experiences to make the invisible imaginative core of a child visible.

Hence, to nurture the sacred realm of a child's imagination represents the possibility of growth, renewal, and change. Educators are hesitant to venture into the unknown landscape within a child's heart and mind because they have throughout their education experienced the same non-compassionate teachers. This research proposes an awakening, making a wave for a new revolution of compassionate teachers that institutes aesthetic methodology to address relevant issues in children's lives and in their communities. This paper will answer the question: How

will our elementary education majors as future teachers attain aesthetic methodology, resiliency, and transformative skills to address complex issues that come into the classroom—with an open mind, "a mind without fear?"

Awakening "*ZEAL*" in Pre-Service Teachers: Embracing Social and Eco Justice Topics through Aesthetic Education

Research for this study began in an undergraduate elementary methods class for teacher certification with an excerpt from Albert Cullum's (1971) famous and controversial publication, *The Geranium on the Window Sill Just Died But Teacher You Went Right On.* At the end of the story our pre-service teachers shared recent experiences in their field classroom in relationship to Cullum's child advocacy perspective. Their thoughts and questions included: "How could teachers treat children in a dehumanizing way? I will never be a teacher like that, and I think Cullum is exaggerating."

We continued to introduce research by Cullum (1967) such as *Push Back the Desks* and a more recent PBS documentary, *A Touch of Greatness* (2004). Our pre-service elementary education teacher candidates revealed that the majority of their field classroom teachers had stopped using the arts and aesthetic methods. The classroom teachers lamented that their hands were tied and strict outlines had to be followed for teaching and curriculum to raise test scores. There were no easels to paint on, no plays to be in, no poetry recitals for parents, no valentine cards for the elderly or soldiers, no celebrations, and in fact, in many schools, no recess. As one of our students shared:

> In *A Touch of Greatness* Albert Cullum said that within his classroom all students are in the wagon of success; stronger students may be toward the front pulling the wagon, but every students succeeds. This is another important part of the relationships between students I yearn for. For students to work together in such a manner that they support each other, when learning is difficult or easy. I desire that each student have a true concern for each other.

To counter-act the trends of *No Child Left Behind* and *Race To The Top* mandates that have reduced creative, passionate teachers to curriculum puppets, as educators we felt an urgent need to design a revolutionary curriculum for teacher preparation that embraced social and eco justice issues through aesthetic education methodologies. Implementing aesthetic education methodology into urban school communities revealed the potential to become a compassionate and creative community such that all ideas, perspectives, cultures, hopes, and fears are realized. As Eisner (2002) dignifies,

> What is clear is that culture depends upon these communications because communication patterns provide opportunities for members of the culture to grow. We develop, in part, by responding to the contributions of others, and in turn provide others with material to which they respond. The relationship, at its best is symbiotic. Thus the social contribution of the educational process is to make it possible for individuals to create symbiotic relationships with others through the development of their distinctive and complementary abilities and in so doing to enrich one another's lives (p. 7).

One aesthetic class activity presented to our pre-service teacher candidates portrayed the contrast of light and dark in the educational arena. Two characters entered the room, *Miss Honey*, full of light, hope, imagination, and compassion; and, *Mr. Rat*, a vessel of darkness, despair, hatred, and scorn for children's imaginations. The aesthetic performance was an effective symbolic message designed to promote pre-service teacher's reflective and social intelligence regarding current political educational laws and events. One teacher candidate expressed,

> "Chaining" us down with the chains of NCLB was powerful. The high-stakes testing weighs down learning and the students, as it did to us for that period of time. Miss Honey, the angel of inspiration, saved us. We, as pre-service teachers, are angels of inspiration. Miss Honey spread her inspiration by lifting off the chains and allowing us to be creative and free. We learned through play, by creating puppets and parading them through the hallways of Barnard. Our spirits and our minds were lifted.

As teacher educators, we didn't tell, we showed. Our students loved coming to class to find their teachers portraying a rat full of darkness and Miss Honey, a symbol of imagination. Through aesthetic role-play, *Mr. Rat* and *Miss Honey* became archetypes that effortlessly exposed the cancer of mediocrity in Teacher Education, and then broke the chains of *Race to the Top* public education mandates. Contrasting metaphors of despair and hope inspired our pre-service teacher candidates to compose their compassionate beliefs on teaching and learning, which then in turn influenced their own teaching practice. Through the aesthetic, we transferred our energy to our pre-service teacher candidates, who believed they could do the same and then applied aesthetic methods in their field experience classrooms. Pre-service teacher candidates reflected,

> When *Miss Honey* and *Mr. Rat* came into our classroom, my eyes sparkled. I felt like I was in a make-believe world in which I was a storybook character. It did not occur to me that throughout the performance, I would walk away with valuable knowledge that I learned from this role-play.

> From the experience with *Miss Honey* and *Mr. Rat* it was obvious what style of teaching creates a positive environment. A caring and encouraging teacher makes her students feel more comfortable and accepted in the class. Even though we knew *Mr. Rat*…brought a completely different tone into the room. We are all adults, yet we were anxious and actually scared of him. *Mr. Rat* was focused on testing and limiting our imagination. The mood of the entire room changed, though, when *Miss Honey* stepped into the picture. She accepted all of our thoughts and we as students were excited by her enthusiasm. She allowed us to use our imagination and creativity without judgment or criticism. I have been able to bring this knowledge into my fieldwork classroom.

According to Greene (1998), social imagination leads to social action and involves looking at the world in new ways. She believes that developing social intelligence leads to imaginative creative action therefore increasing our collective potential to envision fairer learning and living conditions by aesthetic means of artistic investigation. Aesthetic education theory com-

bines with the creation of a compassionate community celebrating unique perspectives and diversity (p. 157).

The whole of this revolutionary aesthetic curriculum, of which *Mr. Rat* and *Miss. Honey* are a part, introduced our pre-service teachers to local, national, and international social and eco justice issues. Topics included ending homelessness within our university's surrounding community of New Britain, CT, and the dolphin slaughter for profit in Taiji, Japan. Our pre-service teacher candidates were given an opportunity to design for elementary school children aesthetic symbolic messages within a community performance, promoting imaginative social action.

Educational curriculum and teacher preparation has never been able to envision children's education for what Earth and sustainable cultures need to thrive, and critically in 2010, survive. As a society, we tend to be sleepwalkers, anesthetized visually and emotionally, as crime, homelessness, and ecological devastation continue to grow at rapid rates. So, what is education for and how should teachers be prepared to impact children's and teachers' future lives? Eisner (2002) implores, "Transforming the private into the public is a primary process of work in both art and science. Helping the young to learn how to make that transformation is another of education's most important aims" (p. 3).

Utilizing place-based creative commons inquiry, our students investigated authentic issues facing their surrounding local and global community. They explored their cultural biases and stereotypes, values, beliefs, identities, and sense of self as a teacher with invited community artists and activists leading a myriad of arts experiences. The artistic community forums contributed to a developing sense of the power of aesthetic education manifested in the creation and design of symbolic messages using masks, puppets, poetry, dance, music, and theater to address ending homelessness, and breaking down stereotypes of poverty. The symbolic ideas carried a compassionate message to build awareness, which was then integrated and shared within the community to empower transformative learning and societal contribution.

Ultimately, through the arts and aesthetic creative commons (Bowers, 2006b) experiences, we found that our pre-service teachers realized ZEAL for children and teaching, challenging pre-service teachers to develop intra and interpersonal reflective dispositions, and a growing sense that they wanted to be urban teachers and leaders of change in education. Through a series of aesthetic commons educational pedagogical practice course experiences, pre-service teachers' beliefs were "unlocked" leading to the revitalization of creative teaching skill sets supported by values and beliefs regarding teaching and learning that was transformative for both teacher and children. As one pre-service teacher wrote: "our ideas and imagination were the driving force of the class." Another pre-service teacher stated,

> I have learned so much about myself this semester, not only about teaching, but also about myself as a person. I learned that I could be a performer on a stage, or even in a classroom, with an audience full of my students. I've learned that I have the potential to become a great storyteller with puppets as my props. I've also learned that I am capable of much more than I thought, and with this knowledge I would like to make myself a promise: I promise to become a transformative teacher, to create a welcoming, caring, and compassionate community, where students feel empowered and safe, and strive to become life long learners. I promise.

As will be shown, the underlying aesthetic structure of course activities and assignments, when enacted within a creative community commons, unlocked pre-service teachers' precon-

ceived perceptions of educational practices toward more transformative views and beliefs that drove instructional decisions and curricular social and eco justice initiatives. Aesthetic education provided the portal to empowerment, for not only our pre-service teachers' learning, but also for their fieldwork classroom students'. Shor's (1992) description of "Empowering Education" found authentic manifestation within our aesthetic embrace:

> Empowering Education…is a critical-democratic pedagogy for self and social change. It is a student-centered program for multicultural democracy in school and society. It approaches individual growth as an active, cooperative, and social process, because the self and society create each other. Human beings do not invent themselves in a vacuum, and society cannot be made unless people create it together. The goals of this pedagogy are to relate personal growth to public life, by developing strong skills, academic knowledge, habits of inquiry, and critical curiosity about society, power, inequality, and change (p. 15).

Aesthetic Education and Social Imagination: Releasing Pre-service Teachers' Imagination through Performance

Where do pre-service teachers get their ideas? This is a question our students ask when we invite our graduates back to share their aesthetic lesson plans. Why does involvement with aesthetic education methodology, when enacted authentically about relevant issues, increase pre-service teachers social intelligence and creative capacity to apply action to social and eco justice issues? Additionally, why does involvement in aesthetic and authentic performance tasks enacted with children cause a sense of ZEAL, and passionate social action toward becoming teachers for change in education?

Uniting the "social imagination" (Greene, 1998) of aesthetic education and the "creative commons" of eco justice education (Bowers, 2006) into a new paradigm, presented a variety of symbolic expressions for the study of the emergence of pre-service teachers' beliefs. Utilizing an underlying aesthetic structure for course activities and assignments, an authentic creative community commons was established for students to investigate ecologically and socially sustainable teaching practices. Research-based aesthetic education, eco and social justice pedagogies (Bowers, 2001; Shor, 1992; Greene, 1998) were theoretical threads that supported transformative pre-service teacher strategies used in the study.

Supported by these theories and context, this action research studied pre-service teachers' beliefs and identity in order to 'unmask' their imaginations to address collective community social and ecological issues they would face in their field experiences and future teaching. One ecological issue was addressed in the performance *Make a Wave-Be the Change*. One thousand urban children from the surrounding public school community came to our college campus and learned about the dolphin slaughter for profit through puppets, dance, and poetry. Pre-service teachers danced the dance of the dolphin, portraying their own desire for freedom as teachers and artists.

Innovative methods of aesthetic and eco justice education encompassing social and eco justice issues were selected to address pre-service teachers' ideas and beliefs of transformative learning, sense of imaginative societal contribution, core values, and coping with institutional conflicts. Aesthetic education encompassed critical theory and questioned status quo waste, consumption and human behavior. Students were introduced in community efforts that embraced a

sense of possibility, social imagination and a sense of empowerment making the possibility to change behavior evident. One pre-service teacher candidate shared a growing sense of confidence and ZEAL as a teacher,

> From this whole semester as a teacher candidate, I have found my inner light and it makes me want to go out there and make a difference. Since I was a very young girl, I knew that I have always wanted to be a teacher. But now I feel even more than that. I feel like I can be a teacher and change the world. I want to show students how school can be a learning celebration rather than something they have to attend everyday because it's mandatory. I want to create a classroom that is memorable. My students will be able to count on me for anything because I will never speak negatively of a child. When learning is memorable to students they will remember what they have learned for the rest of their lives. As a future teacher, I want to be the change I wish to see in the world. Can you hear my voice?

Another pre-service teacher candidate explained her impression of the performance impact on children's learning and sense of place:

> I experienced first-hand how a performance like this can impact lives; my classmates all agreed that this was an experience of a lifetime. I witnessed how impacting a performance like this can be for students. There were a few elementary students who performed with us, but the students within the audience were also moved by the experience. By the end of their performance students were smiling, laughing and even on stage dancing with us. A special education teacher told us that she has never seen her student with autism so focused and interested in an activity like this they were when watching our performance, she told us their behavior was unbelievable. All the students went back to their classrooms after the performance and wrote about what they could do to be more compassionate to other people or their environment. The students literally wrote pages, we had to force them to stop writing because time had run out. I hope that will always be my dilemma, where students are so into their learning that I have to force them to stop because there isn't time left in the school day.

Unmasking a Revolution of Creative Compassionate Pre-Service Teachers: Enacting the Aesthetic Creative Commons in the Field

As a result of their course experience participating in an artistically imaginative and eco-critical curriculum imbedded in community action, pre-service teachers transferred and implemented aesthetic creative commons experiences into their field instruction. The following case studies will describe specific aesthetic examples as evidence of our pre-teachers transferring methods to their lesson plans for children in their field classrooms.

After experiencing aesthetic methods and mask-making in our elementary course, John decided to enact this experience in his field classroom. He could see the importance of the type of aesthetic thinking the mask-making experience could have on his struggling writers. He asked his teacher if he could design masks with the entire class. The teacher told John that he would

have to arrange it with the principal and parents. John's ZEAL led him to encounter many obstacles as a pre-service teacher with limited field experience.

After many meetings he decided that the most feasible way was to come to school very early before school began and meet with teams of children that parents volunteered to bring early. The children were so enthusiastic about this plan that within two weeks everyone had their masks completed. John was able to let the masks dry in the art room. He later found out that when the district art teachers had their meeting they were very surprised and elated discovering the masks. Even in the art teacher's world restrictions were evident and exciting lessons were unfortunately becoming less and less of a reality.

John began his writing unit and each child was able to use the mask as a symbol of what they hoped to become. The children's voices were released and remarkable vivid portrayals of their deepest thoughts, hopes, and fears were revealed. Reflecting upon the mask-making writing unit experience with his students, John observed how previously affixed "high," "middle," and "low" labels from the Connecticut Mastery Testing assessments no longer applied. Within his aesthetic approach, John discovered that "a student labeled low was suddenly no longer 'low.' They were themselves. Everyone was expressing themselves and successful."

There simply was no place within John's aesthetic experience for students to feel isolated, inferior or superior. Students were given the opportunity to love one another for who they were and write about it unabashedly. Through an aesthetic education approach, John created student community and empowerment. As Shor (1992) describes in *Empowering Education*,

> The teacher brings lesson plans, learning methods, personal experience, and academic knowledge to class but negotiates the curriculum with the students and begins with their language, themes, and understandings. To be democratic implies orienting subject matter to student culture—there interest, needs, speech and perceptions—while creating a negotiable openness in class where the students input jointly creates the learning process (p. 16).

This experience transformed John's sense of self as a teacher of change for children. "Creating a negotiable openness" through an aesthetic portal, he instantly became a child advocate and continued to pursue and not lose his ZEAL*,* a sense of creative vitality (Nouwen, 1981) for imaginative experiences, applying social critical creative thinking to the development of transformative instruction for elementary aged children.

Participating in a storytelling and mask-making workshop for pre-service teachers, Caitlin was inspired to become the character Max from the children's story, *Where the Wild Things Are.* She imagined how excited the children would be if Max actually came to the classroom and acted out the story to a group of second grade children. With tremendous ZEAL and perseverance, Caitlin transformed the classroom into a scene from *Where the Wild Things Are*. Caitlin was a wonder to the other teachers as she bravely walked down the hall with her costume and props. She was not deterred by older teachers' comments or rolling eyeballs she could feel. This was a day in school her children would never forget.

Caitlin discovered that she was correct as children entered the classroom gasping with amazement, surprise and excitement. Several children labeled ADHD and "special education" were enthralled and captivated with great attention as Caitlin led the children through a highly sensory and visual depiction of Max's adventures utilizing visual thinking strategies (Arnheim, 1969). In a powerful and critical way, Caitlin inspired the children to express individual emo-

tions relating their feelings to Max and then designed a mask to symbolize their feelings about their lives and daily adventures. Within one hour of aesthetic education methodology enacted, the classroom teacher observed new behaviors from children she was concerned about: they were no longer detached but involved; no longer angry but happy and excited; no longer struggling with learning, but excelling and achieving with great success and creative expression.

Coming from their coursework into fieldwork experience, our pre-service teacher candidates marvel why this type of aesthetic methodology is not instituted in the everyday classrooms of children and teachers? What have we lost collectively and now need to regain? Caitlin went on to student teaching, impressing her principal within an urban school that had outlawed the arts. She designed her literacy lessons with great ZEAL**,** inspiring many children identified as below reading and writing for grade proficiency. Caitlin displayed their writings after aesthetic experiences, a testimony to the effectiveness on children's cognitive and affective expression. Thus the principal was impressed and could not argue the success aesthetic methodology had on children's learning and achievement.

Another pre-service teacher designed an aesthetic lesson to study the Earth, moon and sun. Courtney began the lesson with slides of Monet's haystacks. Children viewed the haystacks with imaginative perception carefully observing Monet's application of color and brilliance of light. Afterward, the children made their own haystacks out of modeling clay and with a flashlight simulated different times of the day and change of shadows. Drawings of the shadows were documented in their science journals. Courtney then discussed the relationship of the Earth, moon and sun with living, and the importance of understanding their roles. She asked the children to symbolically represent the Earth, moon, or sun as a mask. The results were again, to the amazement of the classroom teacher, remarkable. Students labeled as "non-learners" (Kohl, 1994) were involved and achieving with success. The classroom was a compassionate community as all children shared and delighted in the diversity of the masks and ideas.

Conclusions: Heart Speaks to Heart

From the above examples and many others, we have observed our pre-service teacher candidates become, in a sense, boundary pushers and artistic change agents as they enter student teaching and their first year teaching experience. Our pre-service teacher candidates have experienced firsthand through aesthetic education application and authentic community action, how a teacher can change despair into hope for children. Unmasking our pre-service teachers' sense of their teacher identity through aesthetic education, imagination and transformational practices revealed an artistic sensibility to reflect on their extraordinary desire to enact aesthetic methods.

Gardner (1993) points to the ability of artists to reflect on experiences and in fact, form the resiliency in the individual to "find meaning—and even uplift—an apparently negative experience that fuels one to face life confidently and effectively" (Clark citing Gardner, 2005, p. 443). Nouwen (1989) speaks to the importance of ZEAL in our lives: "the heart needs to speak to the heart. How do we maintain the fire within us? How do we tend to the hope of self in the face of our lost selves" (p. 7)? We need creative teachers with high reflective and social intelligence that have unconditional love for all children.

Our pre-service teacher candidates expressed how they envision their future classrooms functioning as compassionate creative communities. Having seen their influence upon affecting children's interest to learn, our future teachers stated that they felt more likely to promote eco and social justice issues that connect to students' communities toward transformative thinking

and creative collaborative group potential. As one pre-service teacher candidate shared in their vision,

> This class has taught me so many things about transformative teaching and things outside the box that I am planning on bringing with me to my own classroom in the near future. I have learned how to actively involve and engage students in order to get them involved with higher-level thinking and learning and empower them to take charge of their education. I have also discovered the importance of imagination in the classroom and the positive effect that community engagement project can have on students, teachers and the community. These things are so important in a classroom because they really determine the climate of the classroom. Without these things, the classroom may not be a safe, welcoming environment where students are willing to take risks to learn. In a time were students are often passively entertained and engaged by videogames, reality TV and the Internet, it makes it especially important that teachers are taking the time to encourage activities and engagement so that the students can grow up to be good citizens that want the best for their community. This will also help to build a strong generation of youth that are the problem-solvers and "go getters," ones that will not let opportunities pass them by.

Significant to teacher education's role in teacher training and in-service retention, aesthetic education experiences impacted pre-service teachers' ideas, senses of identity, and eco-social imaginations as resilient teacher leaders for change. As Shor (1992) reminds us,

> To be critical in…a democratic curriculum means to examine all subjects and the learning process with systemic depth; to connect student individuality to larger historical and social issues; to encourage students to examine how their experience relates to academic knowledge to power, and to inequality in society; and to approach received wisdom and the status quo with questions (pp. 16-17).

A new revolution of teachers is on the horizon embracing aesthetic education methods as a philosophy of everyday teaching with children. By experiencing the aesthetic in teacher education, our pre-service teachers learned to know what it was to inspire. They felt it. John Dewey (1934/1980) wrote, "Art also renders men aware of our union with one another in origin and destiny" (p. 271). Our pre-service teachers were empowered and inspired by the divine within their aesthetic learning, as will be their future students. One of our pre-service "artist-teachers" concluded,

> These students could be future teacher candidates that need that one inspirational teacher to set their minds free and allow them to look at the world through whole new lenses. It only takes one person to inspire another, and I want to be that person for my students each and every day.

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Learning to Feel What We See: Critical Aesthetics and "Difficult Knowledge" in an Age of War

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In a post-traumatic century, a century that has survived unthinkable historical catastrophes, is there anything that we have learned or that we should learn about education that we did not know before?

Shoshana Felman, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*, p.1.

In both production and enjoyed perception of works of art, knowledge is transformed; it becomes something more than knowledge because it is merged with non-intellectual elements to form an experience worthwhile as an experience.

John Dewey, *Art As Experience*, p. 290.

Introduction

Educators, students, and citizens are continually bombarded with visual imagery of social injustice, from textbook lynching photos of bygone eras to the never ending replaying of falling debris from the twin towers on September 11th. Students and educators alike muddle through difficult classroom experiences with social injustices often resisting, rejecting, and neglecting the needed criticality to seek understanding (Britzman, 1991; Britzman, 2000a). Outside the classroom, today's visual culture lulls citizens to sleep with tragedy, and fosters a deep sense of powerlessness in the face of so much disorder. There is no need to repeat how anesthetizing and desensitizing today's visual culture has become. However, little has been said of the pedagogical possibilities that exist when imagery of war and terror are mediated by critical discourse in the post-9/11 world. This inquiry seeks to tease out difficult aesthetic moments and highlight the political nature of such moments and pedagogical possibilities that exist within such moments.

Given today's 24-hour news cycles, the incessant imagery of carnage, the mainstreaming of pornography, and mass desensitization to violence, educators must look anew at the impact such a cultural and media environment has on student identity and their ability to interpret and make intelligible the world around them. In the pages ahead, I investigate how the democratic sensibilities of students have been educated or mis-educated as a result of living in an environment increasingly defined by spectacles of terror and horror. Citizens of all ages bear witness to the chaos of a post-modern world that tends to offer, at times, only fragmentation and dissolution, rather than continuity and purposefulness. In this context, educators should consider the potential educative power of such a world, and construct a curriculum that meets the political and aesthetic challenges of today's visual environment.

Stumbling Around in the Dark: A Critical Classroom Experience

It was the fall of 2008, and America was on the verge of electing its first African-American president—Barack Obama. The semester was marked by a unique energy, attention, and hope in both my students and me. Armed with nothing more than an idea to visit an art gallery near campus, I set out for my evening class entitled *EPFE 201: Education as an Agent of Change*. We arrived at the gallery to view a politically charged exhibition by Chicano artist Malaquias Montoya. Montoya's (2008) exhibit is entitled *Globalization and War—The Aftermath*, and featured brutal and moving images of the abuse of detainees at Abu Ghraib and the impact globalization has on immigrants and those caught in the vortex of the "war on terror." Montoya's images utilize expressive line and color, along with written text to convey his message.

The images are emotional and engaging, begging to be the impetus for critical thought. Few left the exhibition that night without being moved by Montoya's work that called into question American actions around the world as well as our self-assigned moral superiority. Simply put, Montoya's work is that of protest. As my class entered each room, the show's curator requested that one of my students read an artist's statement. We were to stand in silence and listen as a group. The deliberate group viewing of each work made it impossible to look away or gloss over the intent of the artist, or to view Montoya's art from an isolated individual perspective. Each statement described war and globalization as a human endeavor with human consequences, rather than as mechanical acts of strategic necessity carried out without consequence.

When we returned to the classroom, students were visibly upset and disgruntled by what they had just witnessed. Many were quiet, but others vocalized their anger. I asked them what they thought of the artwork and many responded defensively: "If he doesn't like America he should go back to where he came from!" "Is he an illegal immigrant?" "Was he born in America?" Questions regarding the artists' legitimacy and integrity echoed throughout the room. Some students questioned his patriotism, and asked if he even had the legal right to impose such images on them. For many, the underlying sentiment was—"who the hell does he think he is?" I was a bit taken back at the immediate dismissal and hostility many students exhibited toward voices of dissent, what Deborah Britzman (1998) characterizes as a "passion for ignorance" (p. 89). Finally, a female student raised her hand and quietly asked, "Are those images based on real events?"

At first, I didn't grasp her question. I paused and said, "Yes, they are real. They are pictures of Abu Ghraib." She looked at me as if she had never heard of Abu Ghraib. Scanning the faces of the other students, many had little to no reaction. I asked for a show of hands: "How many of you have seen the photos of Abu Ghraib?" A few hands went up in a class of thirty undergraduates. I was shocked—and I am still shocked by this. How could they not know about the 2004 Abu Ghraib prison scandal and the continuing debate over the use of torture by the U.S. military? I told my students they could, at the time, view the hundreds of real Abu Ghraib photos available at salon.com.

One student, who was openly hostile and vocally opposed to the artwork, jumped on her iphone and found the images of American soldiers torturing detainees. I will never forget the disturbed and confused expression on her face. She quickly raised her hand and asked, "Are these bodies real?" "Why are they doing this?" "Why are they smiling?" "Why do they have their thumbs up?" "Are those people alive?" What was once a disgruntled student opposed to critical analysis of difficult social phenomenon, was now an energized, positively confused student who was thirsty to understand and to know.

Since this experience I have been curious to understand what was occurring within those students as their deeply held assumptions and presuppositions fell away and they were moved by a new desire to know. I suspect that my students had somehow encountered images of Abu Ghraib prior to the fall of 2008, whether they were conscious of these encounters is the real question. How could these notorious images escape the attention of young Americans? While students may have fleetingly seen the Abu Ghraib photos, they certainly did not *feel* in a sensuous way—they had not "experienced"—the Abu Ghraib images prior to viewing Montoya's subversive artwork. The resulting experience of contradictory emotions, followed by an intense desire to know, combined to create a much different level of engagement in the classroom.

Danto (2006) argues that artwork surrounding Abu Ghraib, "establish[es] a visceral sense of identification with the victims" (para. 4). Furthermore, Moler (2008) describes this phenomenon embodied in the artwork surrounding Abu Ghraib as, "a sense of identification that neither the photographs nor the debate on the photographs succeeded in establishing" (pp. 36-37). The momentary identification for my students clearly had a transformative power that appeared as a sudden empathy that was previously lacking. Consequently, many were now open to considering the important role Montoya was playing in the political culture of a democracy. Over the course of that evening, my students talked themselves into the realization that dissent and protest were civic duties rather than unpatriotic acts. The resulting dialogue was both political and aesthetic, but ultimately engaged my students in the moral and ethical dimensions of war and social critique. Since leaving class that evening, I have been moved to understand the educational potential that is contained within these particular moments. For me, this "space" symbolizes the possibility in education that critical aesthetic pedagogy can be a vehicle to transform students' consciousness and their democratic sensibilities.

Toward a Theoretical Analysis of Critical Aesthetic Pedagogy

This classroom experience speaks to the growing body of theory and philosophical inquiry that explores the role of critical aesthetics in democratic education. I will utilize three critical conceptual lenses to frame my analysis: first, Britzman's concept of "difficult knowledge" and its impact on teacher candidates in particular; second, Freire's concept of "conscientization" in critical pedagogy, and the role of critical theory as a transformative social project; and, third, Dewey's theory of what constitutes an educative experience and his application of this idea to the realm of aesthetics. These frameworks all share similar epistemological sensibilities, and typically seek social justice oriented ends, both individually and collectively, through transformative educational experiences.

Difficult Knowledge

Deborah Britzman puts forth a theory of knowledge that must find a more prominent place in teacher education given the contradictory (often tragic) realities of contemporary lived experiences. Her theory illuminates the powerful internal struggles that resist learning to teach, as difficult knowledge demands a shattering of self—one's lovely knowledge of the world—to make way for the construction of something not yet defined. Britzman reminds educators to consider what is not learned, what is lost, and how individuals must learn to make, and remake, meaning through resistance and fractures between the psyche and the city. Learning to teach re-

quires the abandonment of certain long held beliefs that occur at both the conscious and unconscious levels. Nothing about this endeavor is comfortable.

When faced with difficult knowledge, many respond with anxieties, defensiveness, or a silent "putting up with" only to quickly discard all disequilibrium when the experience has ceased. In the case of teacher education, in particular, how often do authentic spaces exist to sort out this myriad of emotions that occur both in the content and the process of learning to teach? Britzman (2000b) argues that teacher education has yet to "grapple with a theory of knowledge that can analyze fractures, profound social violence, decisions of disregard, and how from such devastations, psychological significance can be made" (p. 200). What happens to the teacher candidate who learns to see the world more honestly? The students in my classroom viewed images of war, torture, and social agony—they witnessed an alternative, critical, and difficult set of visuals. [1] Not only did students witness the pain of the other, but the trauma of being witness to a history they did not recognize as their own.

Difficult knowledge may not only pull one away from emotional comfort, but it pulls one away from the known and definable. Britzman (2000a) places difficult knowledge in the affective realm—a "borderline" between thought and emotion:

> Something in between the fault lines that suture thought, and yet something that also threatens thought from within. The threat has something to do with the speculation that while affect is a statement of need, its force is prior to its representation. We feel before we know, and this uncertainty allows affect its strange movement: Affect must wander aimlessly; it arrives too soon; it is too encrypted with other scenes to count upon understanding. The affect that may propel identifications is subject to this flaw in that, without knowledge, identification can only depend upon the urge to make familiar what is, after all, outside the range of understanding (p. 43).

As any teacher knows, curriculum of this kind is often met with profound silence, guilt, and defensiveness rather than understanding. Easily these educational encounters become ones of missed opportunity and futility, a sort of curricular trauma. Britzman (2000a) agrees, arguing "what makes trauma traumatic is the incapacity to respond adequately, accompanied by the feelings of profound hopelessness and loss, and a sense that no other person or group will intervene" (p. 43). Again, the individual potentially *feels* the difficult knowledge, but continues to repress such knowledge.

Britzman's analysis builds upon Adorno's (1971/1998) seminal piece, *Education after Auschwitz.* Adorno sets education against barbarism, a mode of being, and speaks to the inadequate responses exhibited by both the individual and society to such atrocities as the Holocaust. In many ways, the Holocaust, as curricular content, is already known and neatly compartmentalized in the psyche of many students due to multiple exposures to the content in both school and society. American education's embracing of Holocaust education reflects the ease with which we support the critique of others when predicated on consensus, but lack a robust self-critique of American actions in war. Of course, to compare the Holocaust to Abu Ghraib is not my intent: the magnitude of the Holocaust sets it forever apart from other human rights violations. Howev-

[1] The students in my classroom described previously consisted of pre-service teacher candidates and non-teacher candidates earning general education credit; from freshman to seniors, traditional to non-traditional aged students.

er, both acts speak to similar core issues, pathologies, and systemic failures in societies predicated on fear and terror.

My inquiry suggests that as difficult knowledge approaches the current lived experiences (time and space) of the students, the degree of felt trauma and inadequacy increases. The inadequacy appears to be part lack of information, and part confusion and mistrust of official narratives offered to provide needed information. For example, whereas students might exhibit immediate disgust at the actions taken during the Holocaust, are students willing to engage the Abu Ghraib prison scandal with the same criticality and adherence to human rights? My students were asked to read Riverbend's (2005) *Baghdad Burning* as well as attend the art gallery exhibition. The text was met with polite conversation and some intrigue, but nothing rose to the same level of engagement as the artwork and subsequent photographs. In utilizing Britzman's "difficult knowledge," I argue that education must embrace aesthetic, rather than anesthetic, educational experiences to address such epistemological challenges, and struggle against the discomforts of self-critique—especially in what appears to be a permanent state of war. Unfortunately, current educational practice at all levels is more reflective of an anesthetic, or banking, epistemology—one that numbs students into conformity and obedience.

Critical Theory, Pedagogy, and Consciousness

Critical theory and critical pedagogy as theoretical and philosophical traditions find an obvious home in my classroom experience. Critical theory and pedagogy, although wide in preoccupations, in particular seek to articulate how education, schooling, or society in general might be responsible for the creation of human tragedies. Theodor Adorno (1971/1998) argues, "the inability to relate to others was unquestionably the most important psychological condition for the fact that something like Auschwitz could have occurred" (p. 120). As applied to my classroom, critical theory helps theorize how images of war, as a public pedagogy, problematize established truths, and provoke democratic sensibilities. Arguably, my former students experienced a symbolic death of "America the beautiful" as a meaningful narrative in their engagement with Montoya's images. As a result, they began to critically engage the contradictory dimensions of American civic identity. This may represent the first step needed in the long journey to understanding others—critique as a means to *understand*, rather than as the road to overly simple moral *judgments*.

Marcuse (1969) argues in *An Essay on Liberation* that the critical analysis of society toward revolutionary ends rests upon three categories: moral, political, and aesthetic. Marcuse's (1969) analysis of the aesthetic dimension's role to this end deserves extended quotation:

> The aesthetic dimension can serve as a sort of gauge for a free society. A universe of human relationships no longer mediated by the market, no longer based on competitive exploitation or terror, demands a sensitivity freed from the repressive satisfactions of the unfree societies; a sensitivity receptive to forms and modes of reality which thus far have been projected only by the aesthetic imagination. For the aesthetic needs have their own social content; they are the claims of the human organism, mind and body, for a dimension of fulfillment which can be created only in the struggle against the institutions which, by their very functioning, deny and violate these claims (pp. 27-28).

The passage illustrates the powerful potential that lies in the aesthetic realm for shaping civic sensibilities and the struggle to overcome alienation. The "radical social content" of the aesthetic can serve to disrupt and call into question the status quo and the entrenched images of truth which sustain it. Marcuse (1969, 2007a, 2000b, 2000c) employs a dialectical approach to his description of the aesthetic, by which he describes a dynamic relationship between the individual and society within the aesthetic realm. Art, in particular, forces the viewer to see society through new compositions and juxtapositions. These new perspectives allow one to consider and reconsider what is known and what is possible.

Marcuse formulates the outlines of a new sensibility that in his view must take hold and shape the citizen in service to a world that has yet to come. The promise of liberation demands a redefining of these worn-out categories of the moral, political, and aesthetic. To redefine what has come to be assumed or a given, one must engage in the democratic dispositions of critical reflection and imagination, both of which are at the core of my project. Marcuse (1969, 2007a, 2000b, 2000c) describes the imagination as a site where sense data can be transformed, thus, the promise of freedom exists in the human faculty of imagination rather than the ability to reason.

Beyond critical theory's musing of theory, this tradition calls on education and teachers to bring this type of analysis into the classroom. Critical pedagogy stands as a radical departure from traditional methods of instruction. The theoretical foundations of critical pedagogy are found in the seminal work of Paulo Freire. Freire's (1970, 1974) work defines critical pedagogy as a critical analysis of society and is deeply indebted to constructivist theory, critical theory, and Marxist analysis. In particular, Freire's theory of "conscientization" provides what I believe to be the basis for his educational conceptions. Conscientization is defined as, "learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality" (Freire, 1970, p. 35). Freire appears to borrow from Marx's theories of class consciousness and alienation, and seeks to overcome the resulting oppressive nature of reality through critical pedagogy (Fromm, 1975/2005).

Within the confines of critical pedagogy, learning to see more accurately is fundamental to gaining a critical consciousness of others and the world. Learning to be critical of one's experience is the central aim of critical pedagogy as well as other critical schools of thought. Horkheimer (2002) describes critical theory's central task as that of, "throwing the light of consciousness" upon what is taken for granted and accepted as the status quo (p. 257). This process of potential emancipation is "aimed at transforming society," through the praxis[2] of each individual to become an actor committed to the transformation of an oppressive reality (Sherrat, 2006, pp. 198-199). Clearly, critical pedagogy becomes an expression of how critical theory can move into practice to achieve its moral, political, and aesthetic ends.

Beyond the intellectual foundation of Freire's work, his notion of critical consciousness is necessary so that an individual can move away from a naïve, or magical, consciousness exemplified by over simplified schemas to make sense of experience (Freire, 1974, p. 15). Giroux (2007) describes critical consciousness as a process where "common sense no longer speaks for itself, but becomes subjected to a critical interrogation" (p. 153). Along with the work of Giroux, West (2000) emphasizes that critical consciousness seeks social change by unmasking false consciousness, what West terms as "sleep walking" (p. 170). Furthermore, the theoretical combination of critical consciousness and critical pedagogy offers a foundation to explore the theoretical proposition that critical aesthetic moments can profoundly shape the democratic civic identity formation of students.

[2] Freire (1970) defines praxis as, "reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (p.36).

Aesthetics & Dewey's Educative Experience

Philosophers have taken up the question of art throughout history. Philosophy of art has traditionally been preoccupied with the study of beauty or the beautiful. The first philosopher to use the term "aesthetic" is Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (1714-1762). Baumgarten immediately sets aesthetics against logic in his definition, "*things known* are to be known by the superior faculty as the object of logic; *things perceived* are to known by the inferior faculty, as the object of the science of perception, or aesthetic" (Aschenbrenner & Holther, 1954, p. 78). More recently, Eisner (2002) theorizes the aesthetic in relation to its opposite, the anesthetic; thus, the aesthetic "heightens feeling" rather than creates numbness (p. 81). Simply put, aesthetics can be defined as the study of perception that is felt as a result of being engaged with an art object. However, little has been theorized concerning the possibility that aesthetics might be experienced with a non-beautiful, non-art object. For example, what is the affect of the evening news, or in the case of my students, photos, images, and abstract representations of Abu Ghraib? Further development of aesthetics defined as the study of one's perception of objects, both concrete and abstract, allows for alternative conceptions of what "the good" and "the beautiful" represent in today's pluralistic world.

The age old phrase, "art for art's sake," born out of the 17th century art tradition (and named "Aestheticism") tends to depoliticize and strip art of its social relevancy and impact. Bell (1913), philosopher of art, echoes this belief:

> To appreciate a work of art we need to bring with us nothing from life, no knowledge of its ideas and affairs, no familiarity with its emotions. Art transports us from the world of man's activities…for a moment we are shut off from human interests (p. 25).

Unfortunately, aesthetics has been devalued today because of its inferior placement below logic and reason. Beyond the characterization of aesthetics and art as detached from social concerns, the power of art throughout history has rarely been denied. From the use and abuse of aesthetics and art in Nazi Germany to the current debate over the bombardment of violent imagery in the media, it is clear that aesthetics and art can transform how we imagine the world (Giroux, 2004; Sontag, 2003).

Returning to the issue of "the beautiful," the value of de-centering the beautiful in modern, pragmatist, and postmodern aesthetic theory, weds social change to aesthetics in offering citizens new ways of perceiving. The most iconic example of this is Picasso's *Guernica* depicting the real-world events of the bombing of Guernica, Spain in 1937. *Guernica* has come to symbolize anti-war protest art. It does this by connecting one's emotional perception of social injustices to the development of a democratic civic identity empathetic to others (Eisenman, 2007, p. 24). In this sense, aesthetics can become a vehicle for resistance and protest. Rich (2006) agrees, and defines aesthetics in this vein: "We can also define the 'aesthetic'…as news of an awareness, a resistance…art reaching into us for what's still passionate, still unintimidated, still unquenched" (para. 6). This characterization of aesthetics as offering a portal into new forms of desire and imagination, resistance, protest, and transformation, speaks to the vital function that aesthetics can play in the formation of American democratic civic identity.

Aesthetic theory offers another vehicle for understanding the impact of art known as "the aesthetic experience." This concept privileges the alleged transformational affect on the viewer

who witnesses a beautiful object. Kant (1790/2007) argues the witnessing and perception of the beautiful is what constitutes an aesthetic experience, an experience that bypasses cognition and affects the viewer within their sensual faculties (pp. 45-53). Theorists have long questioned the existence of such experiences, the type of stimuli that produce them, and the benefits of such an experience (Shusterman, 1997). However, the postmodern paradigm and the dissolution of classical notions of beauty, art, and truth, necessitate a reconceptualization of what constitutes an aesthetic experience (Freedman, 2003; Slone & Simon, 2009). If aesthetic experiences are transformational, or potentially liberatory, then educators must consider the critical aesthetic moments that arise from the range of images reflected in today's visual culture. In particular, images of social injustice, while not "beautiful" in the traditional sense, can result in an emotional discomfort that can act as the impetus for critical thought and action. While not denying the importance of conventional notions of the beautiful, contemporary lived experience suggests that an aesthetic experience should not be reduced to beauty alone.

Dewey (1934) ended his long career discussing the power of aesthetics and the concept of aesthetic experience in *Art as Experience.* Dewey's theory rests on the belief that all of life should be considered for its aesthetic qualities, and not just that of high art that inhabits museums and galleries. It seems that Dewey's aesthetic theory has deep affinities with his theory of educative experience (Dewey, 1938). If we apply Dewey's insights to today's contemporary context, the question arises: how has the imagery coming out of Iraq and Afghanistan been aesthetically educative? In many ways, the imagery has been violently mis-educative (Dewey, 1934). Whereas the imagery of Vietnam saturated the evening news, the imagery of current American conflicts has been sporadic and disjointed, easily censored, or interrupted by other news stories offering more catastrophic visuals and just plain trivia (from hurricane Katrina to the Super bowl). Dewey (1934) describes the importance of aesthetics in providing intelligibility to a world that may appear out of control: "tangled scenes of life are made more intelligible in esthetic experience" (p. 302).

Dewey's (1938) conceptualization of what educative and mis-educative experiences entail sheds light on his aesthetic theory: "Any experience is mis-educative that has the effect of arresting or distorting the growth of further experience. An experience may be such as to engender callousness" (p. 25). As an educator, I am often alarmed at the callousness many of my students exhibit, and the frequency with which they express these sentiments in the classroom. Indeed, much of what passes for "educational experiences" today may in fact be mis-educative in the Deweyan sense. Dewey (1938) describes the problematic nature of educative experiences, foreshadowing what has become of all too many students today: "Experiences may be so disconnected from one another that, while each is agreeable or even exciting in itself, they are not linked cumulatively to one another…a person becomes scatter-brained" (p. 26). For Dewey, one cannot have an aesthetic experience when the world feels out of control or chaotic. A world of "mere flux" is incapable of producing aesthetic experiences that result in individuals being transformed or moved to transform the world they inhabit. Herein lays an important educational question: might citizens today be moved to transform the world as a result of viewing the tragic images of Abu Ghraib; or, do these images pass before us and result in feelings of disconnection and powerlessness?

Engaging Discomforting Visual Culture in an Age of War—A Plea

From the images of the Abu Ghraib prison scandal to the video game *Call of Duty*, from dusty sand colored uniforms crouching behind a city wall to the jarring image of an improvised explosive device going off to start the evening news, what are the affects of such imagery in a democratic society? Discomforting visual culture disrupts and yet often cements one's "lovely knowledge"[3] of American identity when left in isolated fragments (Heybach & Sheffield, 2011). I argue the transformation of "lovely knowledge" into "difficult knowledge" will unlikely happen as individual citizens experience the world from their television, computer, or ipad. An analysis of war-laden visual culture, in classrooms rather than from the couch, can force us to ask difficult epistemological questions regarding humanity. So, why are such experiences so scarce in American education?

To ground the use of discomforting "visual culture," some distinctions are needed to situate my use of the term. Stuart Hall (1997) defines culture as,

> Not so much a set of things—novels and paintings or TV programming or comics—[rather] a process, a set of practices. Primarily culture is concerned with the production and exchange of meanings—the "giving and taking of meaning"—between the members of a society or group…Thus culture depends on it participants interpreting meaningfully what is around them, and "making sense" of the world, in broadly similar ways (p. 2).

If we transfer Hall's understanding to the visual world, clearly the complexity and difficulty of understanding the visual world in these terms becomes the work of today's postmodern researcher. This new visual "culture" has become an ever-complex web of meaning negotiations that must be carefully unraveled by those committed to transforming the postmodern world into one that is less paralyzing and more empowering.

Charles Garoian and Yvonne Gaudelius (2008) explore the difficult problems faced by visual culture in the wake of Abu Ghraib and America's current armed conflicts in their book *Spectacle Pedagogy*. Garoian and Gaudelius describe the current visual culture:

> A disparate yet all-at-once-ness concerning the television images…mass mediated culture constitutes a dynamic, ever-expanding collage of historical and contemporary representations whose interstitial spaces are haunted by the specter of institutional knowledge, commodity fetishism, and government intervention, a condition of corporate capitalism (p. 8).

Today's visual climate, particularly as explained in the above description, exposes American citizens to a dizzying and disjointed amount of imagery that echoes Dewey's description of mis-educative experiences. If student resistance is any indicator, I find it safe to say that today's visual world is deeply mis-educative and potentially harmful to one's ability to critically discern the dehumanizing and corporate messages that bombard one on a daily (if not hourly or even momentary) basis (Giroux, 2004, 2006). Furthermore, the perpetual onslaught of images and narra-

[3] Alice Pitt and Deborah Britzman (2003) use the term "lovely knowledge" to describe one's knowledge that often goes unquestioned and is characterized more by belief rather than knowledge. "Difficult knowledge is what one makes from the ruins of one's lovely knowledge" (p. 766).

tion reduce America's emotional tolerance for critique at a time when critique is increasingly necessary—in times of war.

Whereas this visual culture reality may leave some feeling that censorship is the only way out of such a mess: rid the world of these manipulating and confusing images that distort reality and lull us into a terrorizing sleep. Yet, censorship is hardly the friend of democratic education; rather, might educators consider what role we can play by asking the needed questions and deciphering the signs of such a complex world, and providing educative experiences—aesthetic experiences—in a time when so much is at stake? I believe so.

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Here, There, and Anywhere: Transfer of Learning

Deanne Camp, Missouri State University

Introduction

Sam-I-Am, from the Dr. Seuss book, *Green Eggs and Ham*, tried many ways over a period of time before his friend agreed that he did, indeed, like the unique foods of green eggs and ham. In fact, he ultimately liked them *here, there, and anywhere*. A goal of literacy instruction is not only to teach students mastery of knowledge for immediate use in the classroom (*here*); but to, also, teach students to transfer the acquired learning to other subject areas and similar situations (*there*). Then, further, impress upon students to use the learned information outside of class in their everyday lives and in the future (*anywhere*). In a classic study, Desse (1958) stated "There is no more important topic in the whole psychology of learning than transfer of learning" (p. 213). He further emphasized, "Practically all educational and training programs are built upon the fundamental premise that human beings have this ability to transfer what they have learned from one situation to another" (p. 213). In a more recent study, Illeris (2010) stated the problem of transfer of learning has been an ongoing issue for more than a century. He stated the problem is "that what has been learned in one context often can be difficult to recall and apply in a different context" (p. 137).

Public education in the United States is sequenced in such a manner that a skill learned at one level is then transferred to a more complex skill at yet a higher level. In addition, the individual concepts or grade-level-expectations based on state Standards are designed this way. Bransford, Brown, and Cocking (1999) stated, "Educators hope that students will transfer learning from one problem to another within a course, from one year in school to another, between school and home, and from school to the workplace" (p. 39).

Graff (2010) emphasized most discussions of learning must eventually focus on transfer of learning. He continued with, "…our goal as teachers is not only to improve students' performance in the immediate moment of instruction but also to help them develop skills that they can take to future classes and experiences outside of school" (p. 377). Baldwin and Ford (1988) defined transfer of learning "as the extent to which the knowledge, skills, and abilities acquired…can be applied, generalized, and maintained over time" (p. 63). Transfer of learning is further defined as, "prior learning affecting new learning or performance" (Cree & Macaulay, 2000, pp. 2-3). Perkins and Salomon (1992) stated transfer of learning "occurs when learning in one context or with one set of materials impacts on performance in another context or with other related materials" (p. 2). They also emphasized, "metacognitive reflection on one's thinking processes appears to promote transfer of skills" (Perkins & Salomon, 1992, p. 5). It is imperative, then, that critical thinking and problem-solving skills be taught in a manner whereby they become automatic for students and they are able to use those skills in varying situations beginning in the early grades. Throughout this article are comments from graduate students, who are also classroom teachers, enrolled in a master's level online literacy education course during a discussion about *transfer of learning*. The comments allow us to see the practical side of the transfer of

learning research and how it affects students' literacy development. LaDonna, graduate student and second grade teacher, explained transfer of learning by stating, "Teachers have to make sure students understand and tuck the learning into their schema before moving on." In this way, transfer of learning occurs *here, there, and anywhere*.

Here – In the Classroom

The classroom where active learning occurs is a highly desirable place for students to practice new learning. Kolb (1984) stated learning is "formed and reformed through experience" (p. 28). Therefore, experiential learning occurs when the focus is on meaning-making aspects of learning from direct experiences. Many educators still believe teachers are the transmitters of learning. However, Vygotsky's theory "promotes learning contexts in which students play an active role in learning" (Social Development Theory, 2011, para. 3). Effective teachers make their classrooms a safe environment where students are not fearful of trying out new learning, making mistakes along the way, learning from those mistakes, and finally, mastering the particular objective. For many students, the *trying out* segment of learning takes the form of many mistakes. For others, of course, learning is less difficult and is without the need for several tries. But, either way, the community of learners in the classroom forms a safety net for practicing and learning. The first strings of that safety net must be woven by teachers who set the stage for even stronger ties, binding both students and teachers together within the classroom community. Only after students feel safe, valued, and affirmed will they become truly engaged in learning.

Engaged students are confident ones. They are confident in their own learning because they have a purpose for completing the reading or activity. They are also confident because their teachers provide a bridge for building on their prior knowledge for new learning to occur. Finally, students are confident because they know their teachers are there, when needed, to support and scaffold new learning.

Effective teachers know the grade level expectations (GLE) of their particular grade. However, they also acknowledge the need for reviewing both below and above GLEs in order to know what students previously learned and what they need to know once they leave their grade level. Embedded in this process are teachers' day-to-day lesson plans. Selecting a curriculum comprised of knowledge, skills, materials, dispositions, principles, and attitudes useful for students' learning in the classroom as well as beyond the classroom is the crux of highly effective and skilled teachers (Costa, 1991; Forgarty, Perkins, & Barell, 1991; Ip, 2003).

For learning to transfer to other situations, teachers employ various teaching strategies. Vockell (2004) discussed several ways to promote transfer of learning. Authentic instruction rather than rote memorization is used to make learning meaningful to students. Deliberate and explicit modeling of what the expected learning looks like is desirable. He further stressed teachers make certain students know *why* they are learning a particular strategy and *how* and *when* it might be used in another context. Of course, students must have time to practice new learning in a supportive classroom environment. Bransford, Brown, and Cocking (1999) cautioned, however, independent practice time must be spent on understanding, not simply on rote memorization of facts. Finally, Vockell (2004) emphasized students need to see teachers' positive attitudes toward the subject and learning because students are "more likely to draw upon learning about which they have positive feelings…" (para. 7). For broad and deep comprehension of new learning, teachers must continually remind students to make personal connections at all levels. In making connections, motivation tends to increase thus more time is willingly devoted to learn-

ing. Brandi, another graduate student, added this in a discussion about making connections: "Students need to see connections between concepts in order to build meaningful schema. I know I learn concepts much better when I am motivated and interested in the topic and make connections to already-learned material."

There – In Other Classrooms and Other Subject Areas

Teachers anticipate and expect students to transfer learning from one grade level to the next and from one subject area to another. This idea is crucial as students use information and material in novel, meaningful, and creative ways in other contexts. Ip (2003) stated, "The goal of all learning is to make information portable, so that learning travels with the learner to new locations" (p. 1). Teachers realize there is often a problem with this expectation. In fact, "Too often, what is practiced in one lesson fails to carry over into other lessons" (Bartel, 2005, para. 1). However, if transfer does not occur, students would need to relearn information every year and in every class.

Fortunately, teachers find creative ways of building bridges from old information to new as they tap into students' prior knowledge. Quite often, students have the knowledge needed to transfer to another context; but it is stored at a subconscious level. When this is the case, they need reminders of how to retrieve the information to apply it to a new learning situation. The use of questions is an effective way of tapping into prior knowledge. Teachers' lesson plans might make a point of referencing prior learning and how it is also relevant to new learning by noting specific questions to ask students when reviewing learned material (Bartel, 2005). In addition to specific questions, teachers should also be prepared to offer prompts to students who may need a slight nudge in responding to the questions. Since many schools use rubrics in assessment, Bartel further suggested wording on rubrics acknowledge transfer of learning such as, "Uses skills and knowledge gained in earlier assignments and other school subjects to noticeably improve the work of this assignment" (para. 8). Vygotsky believed that learning characteristics did not cease at a certain point as Piaget did (echeat, 2006). This study continued with the idea that "when one thing was learned, it was used from then on. It did not stop just because a child entered another stage of development. Everything was progressive" (echeat, 2006, para. 18). Dorn, French, and Jones (1998) stated, "The teacher designs instructional interactions that provide the learner with opportunities to transfer existing skills, strategies, and knowledge to new problem-solving activity across changing and varied situations" (p. 11).

Students must be able to perceive the connections to learned information and use the material in meaningful ways (Benander & Lightner, 2005). As in most instructional learning, modeling is another method teachers use to encourage transfer of learning. They frequently model explicitly and deliberately how new learning and old learning connects across and between disciplines. In addition to the graduate-level literacy course described earlier, I recently taught an undergraduate literacy methods course where pre-service teachers learned basic information about teaching reading, writing, and the other language arts. Students did not automatically recognize material from this course would need to transfer later to a more advanced literacy education course. Therefore, I frequently used modeling and think-alouds to make thinking visible and the information more meaningful to them. I also pointed out specific ideas, concepts, even vocabulary words they would need to take with them to a higher level methods course. My purpose for doing this, of course, was to impress upon them to truly learn and understand the information instead of memorizing it to simply pass an exam. As Bernander and Lightner (2005) pointed out,

"Decide what students really need to take with them to another course and spend the most time on that" (p. 205).

As teachers become more attentive to the importance of metacognitive skills, they should plan for students to practice the new learning in varied ways. This enables students' awareness of how they think and learn to grow making it easier to transfer the learning to new contexts (Halpern & Hakel, 2003; Perry, 2002). Graduate student Brandon, a middle school communication arts teacher, stated:

> Developing probing, challenging questions that lead to critical thinking, yet excites and interests students, is a skill in itself. By encouraging students to look beyond the surface of the printed page, they will begin thinking and questioning more on their own. With this analytical approach, I'm hoping students will carry these ideas over to personal reading and to other classes.

As students become more adept at verbalizing their thought processes, teachers must be aware of possible misconceptions and work to clear those up along the way.

Of course, initial learning takes time to comprehend so transfer to other contexts is possible. Bransford, Bown, and Cocking (1999) stated, "Providing students with time to learn also includes providing enough time for them to process information" (p. 42). They continued by pointing out, "Transfer is an active, dynamic process rather than a passive end-product" (p. 41); and it "requires learners to actively choose and evaluate strategies, consider resources, and receive feedback" (p. 54). Dewey (1938) stated, "What [the learner] has learned in the way of knowledge and skill in one situation becomes an instrument of understanding and dealing effectively with the situations which follow" (p. 44). Graduate student and preschool teacher, Sara, asked an obvious question: "How do we organize the knowledge we present to help students learn in ways they can apply their new knowledge to new situations?" Classmate Gracie replied: "Students who are actively engaged will organize ideas differently depending on their way of learning, their prior knowledge, and the various strategies that were meaningful to them in the initial learning." Olivia also commented: "Providing opportunities and time for students to become experts who organize their thoughts around big concepts and can then transfer their expertise to various other academic situations." And, further, Laura stated: "Making connections is absolutely vital in learning, retaining, and retrieving information. When students connect information between subjects, learning is much more seamless."

Anywhere – Outside of School and Into Everyday Lives

A major goal of education is to enable students to become productive, well-rounded, and self-regulated citizens who contribute to the well-being of themselves, their families, and the communities in which they live. Vockell (2004) stated, "The only reason for teaching most topics in the classroom is to enable students to use what they learn in settings beyond the school" (para. 7). Teachers recognize they are part of a huge puzzle resulting in the finished product of students' lives. Even though teachers cannot see the finished product, they do see overall concepts, which they try to teach students along the way. Graduate student and first grade teacher, Christina, offered this explanation:

> I enjoy putting puzzles together. Yet, I always look at the picture on the box before I try out the bits and pieces. Then I often refer back to the box to make cer-

> tain I'm on the right track with the picture. I tell my students this analogy, too. We may not get to the whole puzzle this year, but students leave my class with enough knowledge (and the puzzle box) to complete the picture in the future, in another class, or even as an adult as their knowledge increases.

While much teaching for transfer is shouldered by teachers, students must also carry their share of the load. Teachers may use strategies supported by the latest, evidence-based research; but it is ultimately up to individual students to learn, retain, and retrieve information when needed outside the school setting. Haskell (2001) emphasized it is students' responsibility to "apply what is learned in different contexts, and to recognize and extend that learning to completely new situations" (p. 3).

Students must be taught ways to use in-school learning in their everyday lives and, eventually, into the work place. Bransford, Brown, and Cocking (1999) stated, "Without specific guidance from teachers, students may fail to connect everyday knowledge to subjects taught in school" (p. 37). Frequent reviews of information learned from earlier settings is important. Modeling is another way to increase the likelihood of students' transfer of learning outside the classroom. Bernander and Lightener (2005) reported in a study about the concern of students not seeing how learning math skills was applicable to real life. However, as the teachers in the study began supplying real life examples, students' attitudes changed. They also began seeing the importance of math in science classes as well as in careers such as "navigation and engineering; and everyday uses such as interest rates and satellite dishes" (p. 201). Explicit and deliberate instruction made these connections possible and meaningful to students.

As stated earlier, students must have time to practice new learning before it becomes automatic for them. Guest speakers, who are experts from various fields, may speak to students about the importance of specific learning. For example, an engineer might speak to a math class; or a psychologist might speak to an English class. In fact, "Knowledge that is taught in only a single context is less likely to support flexible transfer than knowledge that is taught in multiple contexts" (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999, p. 66). Then students need time to discuss and practice what they learned from the guest speakers with emphasis on how the guest lecturer used the information in his/her position. This allows students to see how learning is transferred across and through all disciplines.

Students should be allowed and encouraged to read all types of print; not simply textbooks. This is easily done through modeling in the classroom. Students, supplied with newspapers, magazines, cell phone manuals, instructions for assembling items, appliance manuals, menus, cereal boxes, grocery ads, and of course, web-based text, are using reading situations they face in real-life. By using these materials, teachers show the roles comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency play outside the classroom.

Another area increasing transfer of learning is chunking ideas together for ease of retrieval when necessary. Students need ways of organizing information throughout their years of schooling. Teaching students how to chunk or sort ideas is a strategy teachers should begin in the early grades. Graduate student Jared stated: "Chunking information into relevant and meaningful groups contributes to how people are able to apply and understand information in different contexts." Then classmate Shauna, a high school English teacher, further explained:

> As a somewhat expert in identifying symbolism in novels, I chunk the concepts; and can easily see it in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. However, my students, as novices,

> struggle with this concept. Therefore, I must find a strategy to help them pull from previous learning in earlier grades and then teach them to chunk their learning, too.

Active, engaged students find ways to chunk big concepts and learn efficient ways of retrieval; and they see ways of inter-relating the chunks making connections even more viable (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999; Chi, Feltovich, & Glaser, 1981).

Summary – Here, There, and Anywhere

Perhaps teachers need to be more aware of non-school environments of students. Asking questions, such as the following, might help: What do I know about my students? Where do my students live? What is their background for learning a particular topic? Do I value and affirm each student? Do I see the big picture for teaching or am I only focused on my small part of their education? Are my instructions clear? How can I improve my instruction to meet students' needs? Do I frequently focus on transfer of learning from and to other grade levels? As Ip (2003) confirmed, "Teaching for transfer is, not just for a test, but for a lifetime" (para. 7). Further, Illeris (2010) stated "as long as learning psychology has existed, it has been imperative to discover what it would take for learning to obtain utility value across transitions to new situations or learning spaces" (p. 137). Graduate student, Christine, concluded: "Learning in the classroom goes far beyond academics. Students learn about people and especially about themselves. The more we learn now, the more we make connections to the real world 'stick' in our brains." Finally, Dorn and Soffos (2001) emphasized instruction is designed to provide learners with opportunities to transfer existing skills, strategies, and other knowledge to new problem-solving activities across changing and varied contexts.

Sam-I-Am was a persistent teacher who knew the delicious taste of green eggs and ham. His goal was to also teach his friend to relish the savory food. He tried *here*. He tried *there.* He tried *anywhere.* He even tried cooperative learning structures with a mouse, a fox, and a goat. He tried persuasion in various locations, such as a house, a box, a car, a tree, a train, a boat, even in the dark and in the rain. Nothing seemed to work. Finally, Sam-I-Am's passion for the food was understood as the friend also became fully absorbed with eating green eggs and ham. The persistence of Sam-I-Am is not unlike effective, passionate classroom teachers who know the value of initial learning, practicing the learning, and transferring the learning to new and innovative contexts throughout the grade levels and beyond to the workplace. Teachers know the deliciousness of learning lasts throughout a lifetime.

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Power, Resistance, and Literacy: Writing for Social Justice
By Julie Gorlewski

Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing. 225 pp., $23.00

Reviewed by Stephen Vassallo, American University
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Introduction

Education in the United States (US) is entangled in class politics and power, often in ways that remain invisible and ignored. Using critical ethnography to study a high school (given the pseudonym Pontiac) serving White working-class students, Gorlewski makes the pervasive visible by providing a thorough and detailed account of the way neoliberalism has contributed to the production of an educational climate that disconnects and disenfranchises students from the learning process, as well as contributes to class reproduction. While class-based discrimination in schools comes in many forms, Gorlewski focuses on writing. The US educational system relies heavily on the written word for teaching and learning. This focus on literacy shapes how curriculum is developed, implemented, and assessed. The importance of writing, however, extends beyond these technical implications. Gorlewski contends that writing shapes modes of thinking, identity formation, and the imaginings of place in the world. Thus, the ways writing is viewed, presented, and assessed form the foundations not only for how students are educated in this country, but also how they view themselves as students and as people.

Though Gorlewski is committed to illuminating ways that writing instruction for students at Pontiac is disempowering, alienating, and reproductive, she asserts that resistance can and does take place in ways that generate the potential to ameliorate these experiences. Throughout the book, Gorlewski discusses a number of pedagogical strategies, conditions, and orientations that can support the production of equitable learning environments. This book has broad appeal and will be beneficial not only for those researchers and practitioners who are interested in exploring critical questions in education, but also for those who are interested in conceptualizing and practicing empowering pedagogy. In this regard, the book can be especially powerful for in-service and preservice teachers across grade levels and subject domains, as Gorlewski's suggestions for critical literacy pedagogy are applicable to a variety of learning contexts.

The book is organized into two parts. The first part is titled "Power," and each chapter in this section examines theory and research involving the problems inherent in standards-driven education. The second part is titled "Resistance." In these chapters, Gorlewski uses prior research along with the narratives of students and teachers in her study setting to support the assertion that teachers and students in working class communities can and want to have positive learning experiences in schools.

Power and Opportunity

In chapter one, titled "From Neoliberalism to Dialogicality," Gorlewski situates the writing instruction of Pontiac at the intersection of neoliberal political philosophy, social class, identity, schooling, and literacy pedagogy. Perhaps, the most compelling point of this chapter is Gorlewski's contention that there is a disconnect between education for "new capitalism" and "old capitalism." The former requires critical thinking skills, problem solving abilities, and learning dispositions, such as lifelong learning and adaptability. The latter relies on an essentialistic philosophy and is associated with a Fordist assembly line mentality in which individuals must perform in accordance with a script in a prescribed structure. Gorlewski contends that current educational curricula and pedagogy are oriented toward preparing students for old capitalism by teaching "the basics" for the purposes of attaining a certain level of performance on standardized assessments. With the emphasis on standardized assessments, the curriculum narrows "to represent only the knowledge and skills that will be assessed" (p. 7). Critical thinking is deemphasized because the tests are constructed to measure lower-level cognitive skills. Therefore, these tests limit critical literacy and effective writing instruction by imposing narrow guidelines for what constitutes "good" writing.

In chapter two, Gorlewski begins by iterating her concern for neoliberalism. In particular, she mentions growing social and economic inequities, the concurrent decrease in resources for public schools, and the increase in corporatized State and privatized control over public institutions. In this neoliberal climate, Gorlewski implicates educational policy and practice in the decline of the standard of living for the working class. In the new capitalism, Gorlewksi argues that working class identity must shift away from opposition to management toward an identity that requires "an orientation towards lifelong learning and cooperation with colleagues at all levels of the organizational hierarchy" (p. 21). However, the education shaped by high-stakes testing and standardization is in direct opposition to developing this identity.

Gorlewski's study was designed to examine how a school in a working class community prepares students for new capitalism; how it reproduces or ameliorates inequalities; and if transformation is practiced or is possible in these settings. In making the connection to literacy and literacy instruction, Gorlewski looks at the connections among social class, schooling, and exclusion as mechanisms for class stratification. She contends that because writing is essential to thinking, how a person is taught to write, and the value placed on it, shapes how one thinks; how one conceptualizes can include or exclude one from levels in society. This study was designed "to unpack the multilayered meanings that underlie the daily experiences of students and teachers in this specific setting" (p. 32). Various written documents, observations, and in-depth interviews of teachers and students in classes across the curriculum provided narratives that highlight these issues.

In chapters three and four, Gorlewski elaborates on the relationship between writing, thinking, identity formation, and "imagining one's place in the world" (p. 41). Empowering the usage of language through writing can move learners beyond seeing themselves as objects defined by others to the liberation of creating their own identities. Gorlewski is concerned with the ways teachers, students, and pedagogical arrangements invite and reify representations of what it means to be an educated person, which has come to mean one who can master middle class discourse in order to perform well on standardized tests. The disconnect between the identity and discourse of poor and working class students and assessment-based schooling with its underlying middle-calls norms is reflected in the narratives of the study's participants as they speak about

the stress, anxiety, and frustration they feel about high-stakes testing and its impact on writing and writing instruction. Teachers' loss of autonomy in planning instruction restricts "their ability to set and measure expectations" (p. 69). In turn students perceive that writing is not about themselves as writers but about meeting state requirements.

In the final chapter of part I, which is titled, "Restricted Literacies," Gorlweski examines the narrowed curriculum that is imposed on teachers and students by high-stakes testing and how it has created "a structured, formulaic approach to writing which does not foster higher cognitive thinking" (p. 84). Test-preparation has become the focus of education, in all content areas, not just in English classes. Writing activities are limited to those that parallel the ones on standardized tests. Evidence from student narratives show that they understand what is being asked of them and that they "need to learn to think like 'the state' in order to succeed on examinations" (p. 101). They see no middle ground—they can comply and pass, or they can resist and fail. Either way, students and teachers have become alienated from the process of deep learning so that "students' identities are normalized in accordance with state-prescribed definitions of what counts as knowledge…[reinforcing] working-class norms consistent with old capitalism, undermining opportunities for students to succeed in the new economy" (p. 105).

Resistance and Agency

Gorlewski begins part II with a chapter title that captures an ethical and pedagogical complexity that likely resonates with many teachers: "Teaching or selling out." At Pontiac, teachers confront what they perceive as a dichotomy, to succumb to the instructional constraints that high stakes testing invites or teach in ways that promote critical engagement and higher-order thinking. Gorlewski explains how high stakes testing encourages teachers to maximize instructional time in ways that render the transmission of knowledge and its regurgitation efficient. This approach is described as underpinned by a structuralist epistemology. Such an epistemology, Gorlewski argues, establishes teacher superiority and undermines student agency. Gorlewski argues that failing to recognize and mitigate the pedagogical constraints invited by high stakes testing precludes efforts to challenge the reproduction of the status quo. Even though the teachers in Pontiac high school were committed to students' academic success, the school climate invited pedagogical commitments that actually competed with those commitments.

Gorlewski recognizes that multidimensional forces that shape pedagogical arrangements. In addition to implicating neoliberalism, Gorlewski dedicates chapter seven to exploring how teachers and students influence pedagogical arrangements. Teachers' perceptions of students, their own experiences with writing, and their ideas about writing across content domains are also implicated in the persistence of a structuralist epistemology. Gorlewski recognizes as well that students also played a role, as they were committed to pursuing, regurgitating, and operating within the boundaries of school-sanctioned knowledge and conventions. At Pontiac, writing as the assemblage of facts was the dominant practice. Writing was perceived as accessing and organizing information, which Gorlewski argues precluded students from using writing to discover, explore, recognize one's voice, form positive identities, and acknowledge the legitimacy of one's cultural experiences and knowledge. Gorlewski raises concern that writing instruction for working class students is part of a larger hegemonic structure that is focused on the transmission of terminology and conventions at the cost of developing critical thinking and positive identity development.

Writing instruction aimed at promoting empowerment, Gorlewski argues, requires that students' own thoughts and their own language norms are acknowledged and valued in school settings. That is, students must be attuned to what Gorlewski refers to as "inner speech" (p. 143). She states,

> If students are not attuned to their own inner speech, they will be unable to inform themselves and must depend on authorities to provide the information they need. Real authorship is more than organizing information; it requires tapping into inner speech, itself a process of discovery, and engaging with content deeply (p. 143).

In addition to promoting voice and culture as the starting points for writing critically, there must be a commitment to social change and critical awareness of positionality in the world. Thought about this way, Gorlewski treats writing as a means and end of empowerment, humanity, and agency.

In chapter eight, Gorlewski discusses instances in which teachers and students demonstrated awareness of and resistance to the contradictions and asymmetries of writing instruction at Pontiac. Appropriately, the title of this chapter is "Hints of Hope, Glimmers of Resistance." Though instances of awareness and resistance were rare, Gorlewski expresses a great deal of optimism. Rooted in Freire's (1970) notion of *praxis*, which indicates a cycle of reflection and action, Gorlewski argues that awareness is key to resistance. She provides examples that depict awareness, by both teachers and students, of the contradictions and asymmetries of school policy and pedagogical practice. Another significant element in this chapter is that Gorlewski makes an alignment with some of the critical constructivists ideas of Freire (1970), Kincheloe (2005), Goodman (2008), and Duncan-Andrade (2010), to name a few. She ends the chapter with the distinction between "teaching what I know" and "teaching that I know." Of course, Gorlewski advocates that teachers and students align their perceptions of the learning process with the latter. Viewing learning as active meaning-making is an essential ingredient to empowering pedagogy.

Though not titled as such, chapter nine is about agency. Citing Lois McNay (2000), Gorlewski presents agency as "ability to act in an unexpected fashion or to institute new and unanticipated modes of behavior" (p. 198). Gorlewski favors this definition because it aligns with resistance literacy, which she understands to be a way to read, harness, and shape resistance in ways that benefit students. Being able to perform, detect, understand, interpret, and use resistance will be important objectives of both students and teachers. Gorlewski asks two key questions: (1) what opportunities do students have to exercise agency; and (2) how can educators minimize the effects of resistance, while at the same time exploiting resistance to benefit students? Gorlewski argues that some manifestations of resistance can lead to engagement with learning and critical thinking. Such disengagement she argues can be disadvantageous because it can lead to limitations of students' future choices.

In exploring these questions, Gorlewski uses the term resistance literacy. There are two possible, fundamentally related, readings of this notion. The first relates to students and teachers using writing to resist dominant power structures. This reading explicitly aligns with the Gorlewski's discussion of resistance literacy. The second relates to teachers being able to read student engagement as resistance and having the wherewithal to channel that resistance without invalidating it. For this latter reading of resistance literacy, teachers must be able to situate student engagement within a variety of political, cultural, and historical contexts and make judg-

ments about the significance and impact of such resistance. In addition, teachers also must be able to implement the appropriate pedagogy to develop, nurture, and validate that resistance while ensuring students meet important learning objectives.

Conclusion

Gorlewski navigates a difficult terrain. With the persistence of economic inequality, Gorlewski remains committed to the goal of social mobility by ensuring that students develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that can enable them to compete in a new economic arrangement. As she argues, there is a current decline in the standard of living for the working class, and one way to address these conditions is by changing how writing is taught. The challenge that Gorlewski must confront is how to address inequality without reproducing the legitimacy of neoliberalism. Similar to Delpit (1995), Gorlewski advocates a position in which it is imperative to address inequality by cultivating the kinds of human capital that are necessary to operate within a particular structural arrangement. That is, Gorlewski advocates a focus on cultivating thinking skills above transmitting knowledge in order to support competition in the "new" capitalist arrangement.

While that position makes sense, there is a concern. Those who critique neoliberalism argue that a certain kind of self is needed to be cultivated in order to support the proper functioning of neoliberal social arrangements (Apple, 2006; Fitzsimons, 2011). That self has been described as adaptive, creative, and entrepreneurial—all of which are connected to an economic logic. Remaining committed to the goal of social mobility by preparing students with adaptive thinking skills that enable them to participate in a new capitalist order potentially legitimizes neoliberalism. In addition, Fendler (2001) suggests shifting the educative focus from fixed role preparation to developing adaptive dispositions; this shift provides a new kind of flexibility suitable for modern organizational structures, relying as it does on disciplinary technologies that trouble the association between flexible and adaptive dispositions and empowerment.

Pursing mobility can also have the effect of reifying class hierarchy whereby certain economic gains and social class positions are seen as more or less valuable, as life pursuits are associated with "moving out" of or into a particular socioeconomic position. Of course, maintaining the status quo or changing it through an increased discrepancy of the distribution of wealth is equally problematic. Gorlewski recognizes these complexities and contradictions. She is nuanced in her vision of what ought to happen in terms of writing instruction and its role in addressing the social order. Aside from making the familiar strange, Gorlewski provides a key text to anchor a conversation about how to educate in ways that can address broad structural inequalities, while at the same time resist the confinement of education to economic pursuits and narrow constructions of self and personhood.

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Thinking-based Learning: Promoting Quality Student Achievement in the 21st Century

By Robert J. Swartz, Arthur L. Costa, Barry K. Beyer, Rebecca Reagan, & Brian Kallick

New York: Teachers College Press, 2008. 288 pp., $29.95

Reviewed by Karla Smart-Morstad, Concordia College, MN

I confess that, though I have co-authored a book with five colleagues, I am slow to pick up a book when the list of co-authors sparks the urge to name large groups of beings, a clowder of cats, a gaggle of geese, a school of fish, a herd of buffalo. My worry is always voice. But, Swartz, Costa, Beyer, Regan, and Kallick, a group of colleagues including emeriti professors of education, a classroom teacher, and an educational consultant, come together with clear voice to make an argument. Thinking requires something that is to be thought about. When thinking skills are taught as a set of processes aside from content, learning is short-changed. There are mental habits that help, and plenty that hinder, skillful thinking. Teaching, when disciplinary content and skillful thinking are melded, can be of help to students in more powerful ways than presentation of packaged study skills or step-by-step critical thinking strategies.

Thinking-Based Learning presents the theory that skillful thinking is uniquely tied to the disciplinary content being thought about. Thus, thinking-based learning requires "specific and appropriate mental procedures for the kind of thinking engaged in by the thinker" (p. 1). Skillful thinking is a mindful engagement with content; it is an experience with content knowledge as ideas, issues, patterns, questions, rationales, perspectives, structures, functions, theories, etc. The writers define and use the term skillful thinking, not critical thinking, a concept they believe suffers abuse when oversimplified as a set of classroom strategies. Skillful thinking is a mindful engagement with the stuff of necessity for learning the particular content being thought about. The authors define terms and provide chapters with examples from K-12 classrooms, as well as a final chapter detailing the experience of a school principal leading teachers in on-going consideration of thinking, learning, and teaching.

The authors of *Thinking-Based Learning*, having written a text likely to be used in teacher education courses in curriculum and instruction or for teacher in-service or book circle reads, make a point and define supporting terms. While skillful thinking is what happens to yield learning in content areas, habits of mind are the supporting life lines. Habits of mind are teachable mental processes and organizational procedures that "driv[e] the use of [skillful thinking] in ways that manifest broad and productive task-related mental behaviors" (p.1). My favorite is persistence. From my own experience, I recognize a kind of necessary doggedness required to bring ideas to fullness, turn them around, extend them beyond the horizon, catch them up in a net with other ideas, ask them to give up their structure and functions, and then encourage them to try on new clothes. Persistence, open-mindedness, flexibility, control of impulsivity, striving for accuracy, understanding reliability of resources, decision-making, remaining open to wonder, and questioning are all habits of mind that give energy and footing to the work of skillful think-

ing. As it occurs, again from experience, a mind filled with these habits will need to contend with some sparring. The habit of mind most essential, for these authors, is metacognition. Its essentialness is such that it risks becoming confused with skillful thinking, as though synonymous. While skillful thinking requires disciplinary content on which to operate, metacognition operates on thinking itself.

A helpful aside the authors make is that some habits of mind hinder skillful thinking. I imagine we all can recognize ourselves, as well as some of our students, here. But, metacognition, and direct teaching, can work wonders in helping students recognize unhelpful mental habits such as closed-mindedness, dependence on unquestioned or insufficient resources, rushes to judgment or closure, and inability or refusal to extend an idea or turn a concept inside out.

The eight chapters in the text, each apparently co-authored, present examples of teaching and learning in K-12 classrooms where skillful thinking yields thinking-based learning. The content areas and grade levels present a fairly full curriculum. The No Child Left Behind legislation and state standards are addressed, with a close look at the language of thinking included in standards. Assessment practices, too, are considered through the lens of skillful thinking supported by habits of mind that assist learners in coming to know content. Critical to the authors' argument, and visible in examples, is the idea that teachers "should infuse instruction in skillful thinking into their content instruction" (p.29). The goal is for skillful thinkers to become "self-initiated, self-monitored, self-corrected (if necessary), and goal-directed" (p. 3). The role of teachers, the necessity of disciplinary content, the requirement for both exercising and harnessing mental habits, and the utmost necessity of thinking about one's thinking in a reflective act of self-assessment combine toward thinking-based learning. They work together toward the ends of independence, positive interdependence, and quality student achievement. The aim is a fullness of skilled thinking that the authors see as a 21st century life skill. Doubtful any readers will contest the point. A life infused with skillful thinking would appear worth living, regardless of the century.

Thinking-Based Learning opens with a quote from Senca: "As the soil, however rich it may be, cannot be productive without cultivation, so the mind without culture can never produce good fruit" (p. 1). Less artfully, perhaps, though functionally, my father, who owned and operated an office supply store, liked to say "you can't sell out of an empty box." Is it too little too late to remind 21st century teachers and students that a person can't learn with an empty brain? Where and how does technology attach itself to content, skillful thinking, habits of mind and self-assessment? The content to be learned and the skilled thinking required to engage with that content need cultivation by teachers and students. I see thinking-based learning becoming critical comprehension, and the 21st century is in need of a box full of that.

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