The Practicum: More than Practice

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In this article I have addressed the need for change from the traditional, technical skills model of the practicum in teacher-education programs, to a practicum that has a broader educative focus. Following a description of the implementation of a practicum experience with an emphasis on inquiry, I consider data from a three-year study designed to examine teacher candidates' experiences. I report on the educative elements of the practicum, outline issues that arose for those involved in the restructured practicum, and address challenges for teacher education.

Keywords: practicum, teacher candidates, inquiry, program change

Dans cet article, l'auteure traite de la nécessité d'abandonner, dans la formation à l'enseignement, le modèle traditionnel du stage axé sur les compétences techniques pour adopter plutôt celui d'un stage privilégiant davantage une conception d'ensemble de l'intervention éducative. Après une description de la mise en oeuvre d'un stage mettant l'accent sur la recherche, l'auteure analyse des données tirées d'une étude menée sur trois ans et portant sur les expériences des candidats à l'enseignement. Elle fait état des volets éducatifs du stage, présente les problèmes auxquels ont été confrontées les personnes impliquées dans la restructuration du stage et se penche sur les défis inhérents à la formation à l'enseignement.

Mots clés: réforme des stages, candidats à l'enseignement, enseignement axé sur la recherche, programme de formation à l'enseignement, pratique réflexive, professionnalisation de l'enseignement

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Although teacher candidates and collaborating teachers have consistently declared that student teaching is the most valuable aspect of a teacher-education program (Segall, 2002), others (Dewey, 1904/ 1965; Goodlad, 1990; Zeichner, 1996, 1999) have raised concerns about the underlying assumptions of this on-the-job experience, questioning the educative value of conventional apprentice-oriented approaches to the practicum.

A technical-rational approach and an apprenticeship model of learning to teach constitute the central experience of most teachers. Traditionally, the experience has been played out in practicum settings where teacher candidates are evaluated on their performance or delivery of newly learned techniques. The focus has been on technical knowledge, even

though the technical side is only a small part of a teacher's knowledge. Although teacher candidates might be most interested in opportunities to improve their craft skills and hone their classroom management techniques, the attainment of these skills, while necessary, is not sufficient preparation for the professional role of teaching.

In this article I reiterate the need for change from the practicum model,[1] which most teachers themselves have experienced, to one with a broader educative focus: a practicum experience that provides teacher candidates with opportunities for inquiry, for trying and testing new ideas within collaborative relationships, and for talking about teaching and learning in new ways. The importance of inquiry — that is, systematic, intentional, self-critical inquiry into one's work in educational settings — is well established in teacher education. More and more frequently, when faculties of education review and restructure their programs, they emphasize inquiry (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, Norlander-Case, Reagan & Case, 1999).

In this article, I outline how one program at the Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba, introduced inquiry in its practica. Drawing on data from a three-year study, I examine teacher candidates' experiences with inquiry, report on the educative elements of the restructured practica, describe issues that have arisen for those involved in program change, and address some challenges for teacher education.

A century ago, John Dewey (1904/1965) argued for teacher-education programs that went beyond building immediate classroom proficiency skills for teachers. He criticized teacher-education programs for placing too much emphasis on skill acquisition and the mechanics of classroom management. He argued that, although first-hand experience in the school is critical for the preparation of new teachers, the experience might well become miseducative if it halted the growth of further learning. It was Dewey's view that:

> Practical work should be pursued primarily with reference to its reaction upon the professional pupil in making him a thoughtful and alert student of education, rather than to help him get immediate proficiency. For immediate skill may be got at the cost of power to go on growing. Unless a teacher is . . . a student [of education] he may continue to improve in the mechanics of school management, but he cannot grow as a teacher, an inspirer and director of soul-life. (p. 151)

Zeichner (1996) has also viewed the practicum as an important opportunity for growth and learning, rather than for demonstrating things already learned. He contends that a practicum is educative if it helps teacher candidates to understand the full scope of a teacher's role, to

develop the capacity to learn from future experiences, and to accomplish the central purpose of teaching, helping all pupils to learn.

Today's schools face enormous challenges. In response to an increasingly complex society and a rapidly changing, technology-based economy, schools are asked to educate the most diverse student body in history. Certainly, as Zeichner (1996) points out, "a focus in the practicum only on instruction with children in the classroom, although important, does not prepare teachers for the full range of their responsibilities" (p. 217). He clearly suggests the need for teacher candidates to engage in inquiry during the practicum.

NEW SCHOLARSHIP IN TEACHER EDUCATION

New scholarship of teaching and teacher education emphasizes the preparation of teachers who learn from their teaching throughout their careers. This new scholarship supports reform that respects and builds on the knowledge of teacher candidates, while at the same time challenging them to adopt a critically thoughtful stance as ongoing students of education. No place exists within this framework for the notion of "teacher training," a somewhat disrespectful term rooted in the Latin *traho*, which means to draw along.

If this new scholarship has value, teacher education in the twenty-first century cannot be apprenticeship training, rooted in a model of the teacher as technician who is drawn along. Teaching is not a series of routine, habitual, technical acts to be learned, perfected, and repeated year after year. Rather, teaching is a complex and multifaceted intellectual, creative, decision-making activity. Therefore, teacher educators need to prepare teachers not as followers, drawn along, but as leaders, as professionals who are thoughtful, reflective, inquiring, self-directed, and active participants in goal setting and decision making. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) have chronicled the slow shift from teacher training to teacher education, from "prevailing concepts of teacher as technician, consumer, receiver, transmitter and implementer of other people's knowledge" (p. 16) to a conception of the teacher as knower, thinker, and researcher.

TEACHER EDUCATION FOR THE NEW SCHOLARSHIP

When teacher candidates enrol in a B.Ed. program, they have had a long apprenticeship of observation in the schools as pupils. If teacher educators want to change prevailing practices and challenge some of the lessons learned during this apprenticeship, they must provide

frameworks that encourage different ways of thinking about teaching and learning about teaching. Certainly teacher-education programs must address the technical and procedural aspects of teaching. Planning for teaching and managing a classroom, for instance, are of unarguable importance. But the question is, where does teacher education fix its attention and how does it achieve a balance between the technical aspects of teaching and the intellectual and moral demands of teaching?

To meet contemporary challenges that face schools, teachers need a liberal education, subject area knowledge, technical knowledge, and professional learning. They need knowledge about children and their learning; they need knowledge about the knowledge that the next generation will need. For future teachers to be effective they will require knowledge of education systems, of families, communities, and a range of agencies. They will have to interact with these institutions in proactive ways. And certainly they will have to know about culture. They will need to know how to use different teaching strategies, and how to employ a variety of evaluation procedures. They will have to know the changing contexts of their students' lives and become more responsive to the multicultural diversity of classrooms. Teachers will have to relate the world to the next generation through multiple lenses and pay heed to multiple voices and multiple meanings. If classroom teachers want their students to be critical thinkers and self-reliant, teachers can be no less.

TEACHER EDUCATION REFORM: UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

Mindful of the challenges for change in teacher preparation, we have restructured the field experiences in our program, paying close attention to Zeichner's (1996) criteria for an educative practicum. The B.Ed. at the University of Manitoba is a two-year, after-degree program that consists of an integrated sequence of course work and field experiences. The practicum amounts to 24 weeks of experience in the schools, spread over the two years of the program. Students entering the program choose one of three streams for their focus of study: Early Years (K–4), Middle Years (5–8), or Senior Years (9–12). We place these teacher candidates in schools in cohort groups where a team of collaborating teachers and faculty advisors supports them in each practicum experience. To guide the experiences and the learning of teacher candidates in all three streams, we have designed a curriculum for the practicum around the following interrelated principles: inquiry and reflection, collaboration, integration, diversity of experiences, caring and career-long learning.

In this article, I have explored how we focused on inquiry and reflection

in the practicum: how it can contribute, as Dewey (1904/ 1965) advocated, to the development of teacher candidates who are "thoughtful and alert students of education."

INQUIRY IN THE PRACTICUM

Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) contend that, in North America, the wave of interest in practitioner inquiry (that is, systematic, intentional, self-critical inquiry into one's work in educational settings) began in the mid-1980s. Within the professional literature on inquiry, definitions overlap and, at times, compete with one another. The diversity of definitions found in this literature parallels the diversity of definitions of our faculty members. Cochran-Smith and Lytle helpfully have outlined three different conceptual frameworks for us: social inquiry, where knowledge is constructed collaboratively by all stakeholders; stance, or a way of knowing in community, central to which is the idea that the work of inquiry is both social and political; and practical inquiry, intended to generate or enhance practical knowledge. Elements of these three conceptions of inquiry coexist among our faculty members and find their expression in different classroom teaching practices.

For teacher candidates in all three streams of our programs, we extend the focus of the practicum experience beyond the classroom to an exploration of the school as a community, and a study of the broader community. Early-years and senior-years teacher candidates conduct a school culture inquiry in the first year of the program. Through interviews and document analysis, cohort groups within each school gather information on such aspects of that school as the main beliefs and values, instructional practices, school traditions, demographics of the school and its community, student views, future goals, and current challenges. Students share their findings as oral presentations within the school, and in their university classes with peers who have carried out similar inquiries in other schools. The ensuing discussion then opens up the complexity of teaching by making the impact of setting and context on teaching and learning visible, and by exposing the weakness of coming into the classroom with only a technical tool kit.

We require middle-years teacher candidates in the first year of their program to complete a set of four guided inquiries, with each inquiry based on one of the four commonplaces of teaching (Schwab, 1969): the teacher, the students, the subject matter, and the context. Students focus on one question related to each of the commonplaces — for example: How do teachers exert control in the class? How does the school foster a sense

of community? Are subjects treated as separate subjects or integrated disciplines? Students post their guided inquiry observations on the WebCT site for the course to give all students access to the postings. Teacher candidates then choose one question from the postings that not only interests them but also the particular school in which they are completing their practicum. Using this inquiry focus, teacher candidates develop a set of questions to interview both their collaborating teacher and their faculty advisor. They also complete a brief review of the literature on their topic and then either present orally or submit a paper on their new-found understanding.

Practicum requirements for all students in the second year of the program build on the learning from the first year. We immerse early-years teacher candidates (if the school is willing) in collaborative, inquiry-driven, interdisciplinary curriculum practices. Middle-years teacher candidates develop connected curriculum units to teach in their practicum, reflect on the implementation of the unit, and conduct an inquiry into the practice of teaching across the curriculum. Both middle-years and senior-years teacher candidates undertake action research projects.

Because data gathering, interviewing school personnel, and implementing action research cycles happen in the school setting, we give teacher candidates time in their practicum timetable to conduct these inquiries. The senior-years timetable, for instance, requires teacher candidates, in the first three of their four extended practicum blocks, to spend 50 per cent of their day in the classroom observing and/or teaching in their subject area specialities and the remaining 50 per cent in what we have called "whole school experiences," where teacher candidates move, as Zeichner (1996) recommends, beyond the classroom walls to experience the full scope of a teacher's role. Teacher candidates learn about the whole school: they become familiar with its various programs, participate in co-curricular activities, interview students and school staff, and gather data for their inquiry projects.

Teacher candidates also keep reflective or speculative journals to conduct a dialogue about their classroom teaching experiences and inquiry findings with their university professors, collaborating teachers, and faculty advisors. Insights from these reflective journals become part of the two-year personal professional portfolio in which teacher candidates document their journey of becoming a teacher, inquire into their own beliefs about teaching, and reflect about their development as professionals. Informal portfolio-sharing throughout the two years with peers, faculty advisors, and course instructors culminates in a formal portfolio conference at the end of each year. During this conference, teacher

candidates present their portfolios and respond to questions from a panel that includes the faculty advisor, and school and university representatives. The portfolio conference and the contents of the portfolio give additional insight into what teacher candidates know, think, and believe about teaching. In this way our assessments can go beyond an evaluation of a teacher candidate's classroom performance. And teacher candidates come to understand that teaching calls for much more than knowing what works in a classroom.

During their school experience we want teacher candidates not only to practise being teachers but also to practise inquiry into what it means to be a learner and a teacher and into how (and for what purposes) school and classroom environments shape educational experiences. Through a focus on inquiry, school-based research assignments, and the development of portfolios that require teacher candidates to be critically thoughtful about their learning from their school experiences, teacher candidates learn, as Dewey (1904/1965) advocated, to become "thoughtful and alert students of education" (p. 151). As well, the practicum then meets the first two of Zeichner's (1996) criteria for an educative practicum: teacher candidates move beyond the classroom walls to understand the full scope of a teacher's role, and they develop the capacity to continue to learn from their experiences.

To further signal the importance of inquiry in the development of teachers who are knowers, thinkers, and researchers of their own practice, we celebrate the inquiry work of our teacher candidates through a half-day conference held at the end of the academic year. Before they begin the research for their school-based projects, all teacher candidates must have the proposals for their inquiries approved by both school and faculty members. Where necessary, they also submit the inquiry proposals to the university's Ethics Review Board as a prerequisite to public presentation. Those teacher candidates whose proposals are accepted for inclusion in the program of our annual Celebration of Inquiry conference present their work to students, faculty members, faculty advisors, teachers, administrators, and school trustees. Examples of some of the teacher candidates' work include an inquiry into student absenteeism, inquiry into children's understanding of why it gets cold in winter, an inquiry into the effectiveness of math software for middle-years students, an examination of rewards and consequences in classroom management, and an inquiry into the effectiveness of using videos to engage struggling learners in geography classes. The high profile of these year-end conferences and the rigorous process that precedes the presentations signals to teacher candidates the importance we place both on inquiry and on professionalism in teaching.

THE ROLE OF THE FACULTY ADVISOR

How faculty advisors view teaching strongly influences the way that the advisory process in the practicum is likely to occur. If they view teaching as primarily an instructional delivery system where teachers transmit knowledge and students, cast in receptive roles, receive that knowledge, then supervision will likely unfold in the same way. The language used when talking about advising further serves to lock in thinking about the process.

We no longer subscribe to a single notion of teaching as telling. Similarly, we have broadened our understandings of the process of supervision. In a program that aims to prepare teachers who are thoughtful, reflective and inquiring, the function of the supervisor shifts from being primarily an evaluator to becoming an educator, a teaching role that requires a dialogic stance.

A change in process calls for a change in language. In this case the language change is a move away from the term "supervisor." When the emphasis in the practicum shifts from primarily evaluating something to learning about and understanding something, advisors spend less time filling in performance checklists and more time engaging teacher candidates in discussions about practice (rather than only practising practice). When teacher candidates join their advisors in sharing perceptions, making sense of complex situations, arriving at deeper understanding, or alternative courses of action, then the traditional hierarchic supervisory pattern is broken. The supervisor then relinquishes the title of expert with *super vision* and becomes an advisor; one who brings additional vision and insight to the situation, working collaboratively with teachers and teacher candidates to do so.

It is difficult to loosen the grip of the technical-rational model of teacher education, and in our program the vision of faculty advisor as teacher educator working in a collaborative advisory stance is often more aspirational than operational. We have, however, provided structures within the practicum and support for faculty advisors to guide them in their new role. Ideally, to promote the integration of theory and practice, faculty advisors are faculty members who teach the university courses as well as advise teacher candidates in their practicum. The reality of our situation is that the majority of our faculty advisors are recently retired teachers. To help them understand the changes in the practicum, they are paid to attend five days of workshops each year. Just as we want faculty advisors to engage teacher candidates in discussions that go beyond the technical, our workshop topics go beyond the practical

aspects of such concerns as how many observations are required and the due dates for evaluation forms. Although the shift in role from evaluator to educator is new for many faculty advisors, most have heartily endorsed the concept. Within the workshops, faculty members have worked together with faculty advisors to set practicum guidelines, design evaluation documents, and determine appropriate content for the practicum handbooks. This involvement on various levels has given faculty advisors a better understanding of, and stronger commitment to, the principles of our practicum, and to assuming an educative role with both teacher candidates and collaborating teachers. To strengthen the school-university link, we place faculty advisors in the same school every year. Having developed closer ties with a school staff, faculty advisors work more collaboratively with the teachers: to discuss program expectations with them, to explain our emphasis on inquiry, and to engage teachers in discussions of practice that go beyond the technical. Faculty advisors still, of course, observe teacher candidates regularly and have pre- and post-lesson discussions with them. The advisory process needs to be practically useful for teacher candidates. The challenges of lesson planning, classroom teaching, and classroom management are of immediate and critical concern to teacher candidates. Understandably, these issues are central in the discussions between faculty advisors and teacher candidates. But the advisory process also needs to have a reflective component. Using Van Manen's (1977) levels of reflection, discussed in the workshops, faculty advisors can examine teaching practices and provoke thoughtfulness at various levels. At a technical level, they can ask teacher candidates what they will do to teach a particular concept, how effective they thought their teaching was, and how they might wish to do things differently next time. At an interpretive level, teacher candidates and faculty advisors can explore what certain practices mean in relation to the broader picture, and what norms or values teacher candidates might be reinforcing or challenging through their teaching. At an even deeper, critical level, the discussion questions can centre around the impact of teacher practices on society at large. Examining teaching practices in this way adds another dimension to what traditionally occurs in the practicum.

As part of their educative role, faculty advisors also conduct in-school seminars with their cohort of teacher candidates. The topics for these seminars, generated by teacher candidates, might reflect issues drawn from the school experience or questions related to the preparation of teacher candidates' portfolios. We always focus on portfolios in our workshops for faculty advisors so that they in turn can support teacher

candidates as they move through the "collect, reflect, reject, select" process of inquiry through portfolio development. Faculty advisors coordinate the in-school cohort portfolio-sharing seminars and participate in and give feedback to the teacher candidates after the final portfolio conferences.

Peer observations, also a requirement in our practicum, provide another opportunity for reflection and inquiry into teaching. Pairs of teacher candidates who arrange to observe each other identify in advance the focus of the observation. This practice shifts some of the evaluative responsibility from the faculty advisor and turns it into a shared experience where teacher candidates play the major role. During the actual lesson, both the peer observer and the faculty advisor are present. The dynamics of the post-lesson discussion are visibly different when we charge teacher candidates with careful observation of a peer's teaching. As they look more closely at the practices of their peers, they begin to see and think more critically about their own practice. In this setting, the faculty advisor's relationship to the teacher candidate as fellow observer becomes one of a professional colleague, as both faculty advisor and teacher candidate work together to help another teacher candidate learn more about his or her teaching.

In keeping with our goal of educating teachers who are critically thoughtful and self-directed, we place much emphasis on self-evaluation. Throughout the two years, teacher candidates assess their own progress in the practicum, set goals for themselves, and discuss their attainment of these goals with their collaborating teachers and faculty advisors. In preparation for the collaborative evaluation conference that takes place at the end of each practicum block, teacher candidates prepare a detailed self-evaluation that they bring to the meeting. Although the faculty advisor chairs this meeting, the teacher candidate takes the lead in talking about his or her growth, strengths, and areas for further development in teaching. The faculty advisor and collaborating teachers come to this meeting with their own written evaluations, which are then shared and compared. Through discussion, they fill gaps in the evaluations, and negotiate differences. The faculty advisor then writes the final evaluation document, which all parties read again before signing. Since implementing this collaborative process, we have noted that the evaluation documents are richer, more detailed, more reflective of teacher candidates' knowing beyond the practical. We don't dismiss the technical and procedural aspects of teaching. Rather, they are attended to and enriched when they become embedded in an extended view of the teacher as knower, thinker, and researcher.

TEACHER CANDIDATES' VIEWS ON INQUIRY

To gain a better understanding of our teacher candidates' experiences with inquiry, and to explore the question of whether a focus on inquiry contributes to the development of teacher candidates who are thoughtful and alert students of education, we conducted a three-year study of our teacher candidates' views and practices (Schulz & Mandzuk, forthcoming). Our research team consisted of one teacher educator and three teachers who had teaching experience at the early, middle, and senior years and who had been seconded from their schools to work in our teacher-education program as faculty associates. One of the three seconded teachers has since joined the academic faculty of our university, while the other two have returned to their schools. For our study, we adopted a naturalistic research approach as a way of obtaining an in-depth understanding of this new component of our program. As Patton (1987) explains:

The qualitative–naturalistic–formative approach is especially appropriate for programs that are developing, innovative, or changing, where the focus is on program improvement, facilitating more effective implementation, and exploring a variety of effects on participants. This can be particularly important early in the life of a program or at major points of transition. (pp. 18–19)

Using a random cluster sampling technique, we selected ten teacher candidates from each of the three streams. Seven early-years, six middle-years, and four senior-years teacher candidates agreed to participate in videotaped focus-group discussions at the end of the first and second year of their programs, and at the end of their first year of teaching. In the first year of the study, we asked teacher candidates to talk about how they had been engaged in inquiry, how they defined the term, what they saw as the benefits and challenges, and why they thought that inquiry had been integrated into the program. As well, we asked them to speculate whether or not they would engage in inquiry when they became classroom teachers. In the second year of the study, we asked our participants to return to the questions of the previous year, and drawing on the earlier transcripts, we also posed some new questions for discussion. In the third year of the study, our participants, speaking now from their new vantage point as classroom teachers, again talked about their engagement with inquiry, and the benefits, issues, and challenges of adopting an inquiry stance.

The primary data source for this study was the transcriptions of these taped focus-group discussions. All members of the research team participated in the process of identifying categories and coding the transcripts of the interviews. As well, we met regularly throughout the three-

year study to discuss, compare, and test our emerging interpretations by interrogating the interplay between the data, the literature, and our analysis.

The First Year

At the end of their first year in the program, teacher candidates felt that through inquiry, they could improve classroom practice, grow and develop as teachers, and make contributions to the larger educational community. Jocelyn,[2] a middle-years teacher candidate, spoke about teacher development in this way:

> I think a lot of what teaching is about, is collaborative work. The cooperation of teachers and 'learning to become' … that's one thing I read recently. Teaching is an on-going academic process … teachers need to be constantly challenging themselves and be learning and be advancing and not just sitting comfortably. (Jocelyn, middle years)

Beth's comments reflect a teacher candidates' view of how inquiry can help to improve classroom practice and inform the broader educational community.

> We [teachers] can always learn from our students and what happens in there [the classroom] and provide that to the rest of the education community for their further development . . . it's improving educational practices via educational research and knowing that you can do that as a teacher in the classroom. . . . (Beth, senior years)

Mitchell, a senior-years teacher candidate, echoed Beth, saying that through inquiry teachers become more aware of what they're doing, and how they might do it more effectively. He links inquiry to being a "true professional," and sees it as part of a teacher's professional practice, "rather than a course that was just completed."

The Second Year

At the end of the second year, when we asked teacher candidates if they would see themselves engaging in inquiry when they became classroom teachers, they paused noticeably before replying. Many had experienced a disconnection between what they had learned in university classes and what they found in schools. The concept of teachers as researchers inquiring into their own practice was not the prevailing one in the classrooms where we placed them. As one middle-years teacher candidate remarked, "I assumed that the theory we're talking about here at the university would transfer over into practice in the schools . . . things like teacher as researcher

. . . but that just isn't happening." Although they didn't question the validity of inquiry, the teacher candidates in our study worried about the disjuncture between the culture of the schools and inquiry as they had come to understand it. As well, they wondered if being inquiry based was realistic, given the demands they expected to face as new teachers. In the end, the general consensus was that they might "start small."

The first two of Zeichner's (1996) criteria for an educative practicum are that teacher candidates recognize the importance of ongoing learning and that their practical experience helps them to look beyond the classroom to see the full scope of a teacher's role. The responses of these teacher candidates suggest that their experience in the practicum had been educative because they were very aware of the importance of ongoing learning as a part of professional practice. As well, the teacher candidates in our study were looking beyond their classrooms, recognizing how the cultural differences between school and university can have an impact on their teaching, but speaking also of their responsibilities to the larger educational community.

First-Year Teaching

Although all the new teachers in our study felt that it was their professional responsibility to inquire into and be thoughtful about their practice, Sarah, interviewed at the end of her first year of teaching, very aptly described what inquiry means to a first-year teacher overwhelmed by the requirements of her classroom.

For me the inquiry process as a first year teacher is much scaled-down from the inquiry process that we looked at while we were at university learning the process about how to inquire. What I mean by that is, you know, I'm so overwhelmed by all the content material I have to gather just in terms of putting my lesson plans together that I don't have time to be doing a full-scale, formal type of inquiry. So, basically everyday, you can call it reflection if you will, and it's not even formal reflection because there's simply no time for that. Because on the weekend I mark papers for sixteen hours, I'm finding that just on an everyday basis, I'm evaluating what I'm doing and if it's a test or just a worksheet, and just jotting a couple of notes across it saying you know, this worked, this didn't work, this is how it should change for next year. So, it's much rougher looking, and then eventually that type of thing could lead to a more formal inquiry later. But right now, I'm just hanging on by the skin of my teeth. (Sarah, Senior Years)

In response to Sarah's impassioned description of her life as a first-year teacher, we asked ourselves whether we as teacher educators were doing enough to prepare teacher candidates for the realities of teachers' work. Were we doing enough to achieve the balance between attention to necessary

proficiency in the classroom and attention to the intellectual and moral demands of teaching? Cindy, listening to this description of Sarah, hanging on by the skin of her teeth, offered the hopeful comment that with more and more teacher candidates learning about inquiry at the Faculty of Education, maybe within the next ten years, a focus on inquiry would become the norm. Teacher candidates would then not experience the same disconnection between school and university, and school and university would share attention to inquiry (Cindy, senior years).

It seems evident from the insightful responses of the teacher candidates in our study that they were thoughtful and ready to engage in discussions about teaching that went beyond gaining immediate proficiency. They described teaching as an "ongoing academic process" and felt that to be a "true professional, inquiry was important" because it made teachers more aware of what they were doing. They recognized that it was important to "instill inquiry in all teachers as a part of their professional practice" and linked inquiry to "improving educational practices." After their first year in the classroom, however, some noticeable changes occurred in their responses. Only one participant reported that he had taught in a school where teachers actively collaborated and supported the school-wide emphasis on inquiry. Most others confessed that inquiry had played little, if any role in their teaching because they were too overwhelmed by the demands of their daily work. One teacher, who did try to assume an inquiry stance during her first year, told us that she knew she needed support to succeed but didn't know what kind of support she needed, or how to ask for it.

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES FOR TEACHER EDUCATION

The structure of our practicum clearly requires teacher candidates to move beyond the classroom walls to understand the full scope of a teacher's role. The requirements of the practicum also encourage them to adopt a learning, rather than primarily a performance stance in their school experience. In these ways, the practicum meets the first two of Zeichner's (1996) criteria for an educative practicum. As well, it is evident from the responses of the teacher candidates in our study that the experiences of the practicum have, as Dewey (1904/1965) advocated, made them thoughtful and alert to the importance of inquiry and ongoing learning about teaching.

Zeichner's third criterion for an educative practice is that it helps teacher candidates accomplish the central purpose of teaching: to help all pupils to learn. Although we followed our teacher candidates into their first year of teaching, the data we collected was restricted to their views on inquiry and

their experiences of adopting and maintaining an inquiry stance as new teachers. Studying pupil learning was beyond the scope of our research. To ascertain whether or not a focus on inquiry indeed helps pupils to learn, further longitudinal studies are required.

Stenhouse (Rudduck & Hopkins, 1985) maintained that making inquiry a key component of teacher education is a way of empowering teachers to become problem solvers in their own schools, and knowledge generators for the profession. He argued that systematic, self-critical inquiry "is linked to the strengthening of teacher judgement and consequently to the self-directed improvement of practice" (p. 3). Our work suggests that the teacher candidates have taken up our emphasis on inquiry. In their responses they articulated the importance of theory, research, systematic inquiry, and ongoing study of their teaching that would inform not only their own practices but also the practice of the profession at large. Although committed, in principle, to adopt an inquiry stance, our teacher candidates needed support as new teachers coping with the practicalities of implementing inquiry in their own classrooms. How can we ensure that the disposition to inquire is nurtured and sustained? How can we prevent occurrences such as those described in Moore's (2003) study? She reports that "once out of the university classroom the preservice teachers did as one mentor teacher advised: 'Forget the theory stuff you learned in your methods courses — that's not the real world — that's not real teaching'" (p. 31).

Although the teacher candidates in our study recognized the transformative possibilities of inquiry, for the most part, they tended to focus their inquiries on practical issues, and their engagement with these issues remained primarily at the technical level, both in their school-based inquiries and in their portfolios. Although these forms of inquiry are eminently worthwhile, they differ in kind from inquiry that seeks to question assumptions and values, acknowledge and celebrate differing perspectives, and develop teachers as intellectuals. Because teacher candidates recognized the transformative possibilities of inquiry, and because their own engagement with the issues they explored remained primarily at the technical skills level, we believe that beginning teachers first need to achieve a critical threshold of comfort in technical skills proficiency. This observation invites us, as teacher educators, to examine more closely the dynamic interaction of technical skills and reflective inquiry.

Grossman (1992), reporting on her analysis of research on professional growth in teaching, contends that:

There is no evidence that having developed classroom routines that work, teachers will necessarily begin to question those routines. In fact, there is evidence that suggests

otherwise: As preservice teachers master the routines of teaching, many become satisfied with their teaching and less likely to question prevailing norms of teaching and learning. (p. 174)

How can teacher educators support teacher candidates to maintain a balance between achieving classroom proficiency and focusing on the larger ethical purposes of teaching? How can we encourage and sustain reflection, as Van Manen (1977) has suggested, at the technical, the interpretive, and the critical level?

The Role of Teacher Educators

If we are truly committed to educating teachers who are knowers, thinkers, leaders, and change agents — and we must be committed to this — then we too as teacher educators must become students of education, examining our own practices and program innovations. A systematic inquiry into our own practices is a first step toward program improvement, to provide a model for our teacher candidates of the kind of inquiry we want them to engage in. Together with our students and colleagues, we need to continue to ask questions such as: What is an appropriate pedagogy for inquiry? What do different forms of teaching practice mean for forms of inquiry? How best can we go beyond teaching the techniques of inquiry to help teacher candidates think differently about what it means to teach? How best might we collaborate with schools as we shift from more traditional training models of teacher education to an emphasis on inquiry?

Cochran-Smith (1991) suggests that a promising way to learn about teaching is one that is based on inquiry within a school-university relationship that has collaborative resonance. She defines this approach: "Appropriating a term used to describe the intensity among echoing sounds, I refer to the school-university relationship as collaborative resonance or intensification based on the co-labor of learning communities" (p. 109). Partnerships that conform to the ideals of collaborative resonance create opportunities for the school and university to become actively engaged in professional renewal efforts through critical inquiry. In programs that conform to the ideals of collaborative resonance, teachers and teacher educators are committed to collaboration and reform in their own classrooms, schools, and communities. They work jointly with teacher candidates in ways that move them beyond a focus on gaining immediate proficiency in skills, toward assuming the larger role of teachers as knowers, thinkers, and researchers. At the classroom level, this might take the form of a joint inquiry, conducted by the teacher candidate and the collaborating

teacher, into a problem of practice that both find puzzling. In practice, this requires a blurring of the lines between expert and novice, a shift in role of collaborating teachers, much as faculty advisors have experienced a shift in their role. In a school climate where conversations about practice are encouraged, classroom teachers can offer teacher candidates the wisdom of their experience while teacher candidates, in turn, offer collaborating teachers new ideas and fresh insights. There are mutual advantages for both if we recognize, as Britzman, Dippo, Searle and Pitt (1997) suggest, that a great deal of the work of teacher education should be to "produce debate, multiple perspectives on events, practices, and effects, to move toward creative dialogue on practices . . ." (p. 20).

Our teacher candidates did not always encounter a tone of collaborative resonance in their schools; all experienced some form of school resistance either in their practicum settings, in job interviews, or through stories recounted by friends and colleagues. These experiences made them feel vulnerable as new teachers, as did their feelings of being overwhelmed in their first year by the complex demands of teaching. These teacher candidates decided that inquiry was a university rather than a school priority. But the point is a broader cultural one, which relates to the institutional function of schools and universities: the university is concerned with knowledge creation, while schools focus on socialization, knowledge transfer, and personal development. Universities should not be apologetic about their knowledge creation functions; universities need to challenge school resistance to genuine inquiry. The university may establish the structures for an educative practicum, and faculty advisors might work to shift their focus from evaluating to educating, but all these efforts are likely to be eroded if teacher candidates encounter administrators and collaborating teachers who continue to view the practicum as an apprenticeship, and are content to see the field experience limited to classroom practice and skill development.

Not all collaborating teachers encountered by the teacher candidates in our study dismissed the concept of inquiry. Some teachers and administrators valued and supported inquiry. As a new teacher, Nancy describes her colleagues' reactions this way:

[T]he other folks in my hallway were interested in what I wanted to do but didn't really understand it. We went out on a staff retreat where teachers from all schools came and talked about inquiry and they were speaking my language. . . . Then people were coming to me and asking questions. I wasn't experienced enough to provide somebody fifteen years my senior in the teaching profession, with what they could do. . . . (Nancy, early years)

Teachers and administrators who are both supportive and eager to learn about and engage in inquiry create instances of opportunity that schools and the university need to seize jointly (or help to create) to support the kind of inquiry that can foster change and renewal in both school and university. This is relatively new ground for teacher education, and this approach brings its own challenges. Phelan, McEwan, and Pateman (1996) describe the process as "fraught with complex requirements, difficult relational problems, uncertainties and hidden ambiguities that are revealed only when things are tried out in the classroom" (p. 351). But it is also a reconception of teacher education that is finding increasing acceptance in the educational community because it holds considerable promise for the simultaneous improvement of teacher education and the renewal of schools (Darling-Hammond, 1997; Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1996; Loughran, 1999; Rice, 2002).

Adopting our own inquiry stance, we as teacher educators need to continue to look critically at our program structures and how they do or do not support the achievement of genuine inquiry that goes beyond the technical. For their practica, we need to ensure that teacher candidates are placed with collaborating teachers who question and study their own practice, and invite teacher candidates to do the same. We need to work more actively to bridge the school/university divide. If our teacher candidates' experiences in the practicum are to be educative, we need to be in continuous conversation with schools about the central role of inquiry as a way of knowing about teaching and as a stance to be jointly adopted by school and university. Joint efforts to prepare new teachers will create learning opportunities for all that are richer than the opportunities either the school or the university can provide alone. As teacher educators we can demonstrate the relevance of our roles to teachers by working together with them over sustained periods of time in both a learning and teaching capacity, learning from them about current issues in schools, engaging in collaborative research, and implementing support for the ongoing learning of all those involved in the practicum. If we want to provide contexts which truly support Dewey's (1904/1965) emphasis on promoting the power of teachers "to go on growing" (p. 151), our presence in the schools must extend beyond the preservice program. As evidence of a commitment to ongoing learning, teacher-education programs should be actively involved in the transition from preservice to in-service teaching by providing specific, ongoing support to teacher candidates after graduation. If this were the case, new teachers like Sarah, overwhelmed by the demands of teaching, or Nancy, faced with questions about inquiry from senior teachers, would have a place and a person to turn to. The benefits of such an extended teacher-education

program would reach well beyond individual graduates. Ongoing collaborative working relationships between university faculty and the schools might well contribute to achieving the kind of cultural climate change that Cindy hoped for, where inquiry in the schools "would become the norm."

Although teacher education is moving toward a more complex notion of teaching, the political climate is moving toward a more technical stance (Apple, 2001; Cochran-Smith, 2001). Given these tendencies, it becomes all the more important that teacher candidates are thoughtful and alert students of education who understand the political and ideological restructuring that is occurring, and who have the knowledge, skills, and disposition to question and deconstruct the events around them. Inquiry-based approaches to teacher education support dispositions of critical thoughtfulness about teaching, encourage resistance to the implementation of ineffective schooling practices, and hold the promise of nurturing the intellectual development and professional growth of teacher candidates. As Cochran-Smith (1999) reminds us,

> there are no recipes, no best practices, no models of teaching that work across differences in schools, communities, cultures, subject matters, purposes and home-school relationships. . . . Instead I have emphasized that the teacher is an intellectual who generates knowledge, that teaching is a process of co-constructing knowledge and curriculum with students, and that the most promising ways of learning about teaching across the professional lifespan are based on inquiry within communities rather than training for individuals. (pp. 114–115)

Intentionally, there is no "Conclusion" section to this article. The issues raised here have been raised before. Some, like Dewey's (1904/1965) contention that, "to place the emphasis [in teacher education] upon the securing of proficiency in teaching and discipline puts the attention of the student-teacher in the wrong place, and tends to fix it in the wrong direction," (p. 147) have been with us for a century. Precisely because we have not been able to conclude or bring closure to these issues, they warrant revisiting. For, just as it is the role of teacher education to provide teacher candidates with opportunities to examine multiple perspectives on events and to debate practices, it is the role of teacher educators to ensure the continuation of the dialogue on our own practices.

NOTES

1   The word "practicum" carries with it connotations of a skills-focused, technical-rational orientation that we would like to think we have left behind. But the term persists in the literature and in program descriptions of most faculties of education. I use the term in this paper, recognizing that as we review and renew our practices in teacher education, we need new language to reflect new ways of thinking, and a new term to reflect our new practices in the practicum.

2   Throughout this paper, we have used pseudonyms for all teacher candidates.

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