

# The Hidden Curriculum of a Teacher Induction Program: Ontario Teacher Educators' Perspectives

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*We dedicate this article to the memory of R. Patrick Solomon  
À la mémoire de R. Patrick Solomon*

This article investigates the hidden curriculum of Ontario's New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP). The study involved interviews with 47 teacher educators from eight faculties of education. Responses revealed concerns about (a) who chooses the mentors, (b) the probationary status of new teachers, and (c) the evaluation of new teachers' competence. In the opinion of some teacher educators, the structure of NTIP may discourage new teachers from critiquing the system that employs them thus decreasing the likelihood of their taking a critical democratic stance in their teaching. These findings have implications for any induction or mentorship program for new teachers.

Key Words: teacher education, mentorship, social justice, critical democratic, Ontario New Teacher Induction Program

Cet article porte sur les objectifs cachés du Programme d'insertion professionnelle du nouveau personnel enseignant (PIPNE) de l'Ontario. Pour cette recherche, les auteurs ont interviewé 47 professeurs de pédagogie dans huit facultés d'éducation. Ces entrevues révèlent des inquiétudes au sujet (a) du mode de sélection des mentors, (b) du statut probatoire du nouveau personnel enseignant, (c) de l'évaluation des compétences du nouveau personnel enseignant. Selon certains des répondants, la structure du PIPNE peut dissuader certains nouveaux enseignants de critiquer le système qui les emploie, ce qui diminue les chances qu'ils prennent une orientation démocratique critique dans leur enseignement. Ces observations ont des implications pour tout programme d'insertion professionnelle ou de mentorat s'adressant au nouveau personnel enseignant.

Mots clés : formation à l'enseignement, mentorat, justice sociale, critique, démocratique, Programme d'insertion professionnelle du nouveau personnel enseignant de l'Ontario.

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Teacher education does not end when teacher candidates complete their bachelor of education degrees. Setting aside professional development, which will occur throughout a teacher's career, we note that initial teacher education continues, often implicitly, through the first few years of teaching. Many jurisdictions have chosen to formalize this phase through mentorship and/or induction programs. Our objective, as researchers, is to extend current research in the area of mentorship and teacher induction by critically examining the hidden curriculum of Ontario's New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP). This particular program and the research we have undertaken can be used as an example of how one can consider the systemic consequences of the hidden curriculum conveyed through both the structure and assessment practices of any teacher induction or mentorship program. To do so, we examined the discursive origins of competence and quality in the field of education, and the way these meanings informed how good teaching is encoded in the taken-for-granted assumptions of NTIP.

We define the hidden curriculum as "instructional norms and values not openly acknowledged by teachers or school officials" (Vang, 2006, p. 20). Although a great deal of research on the impact of the hidden curriculum on students exists (e.g., Booher-Jennings, 2008) and even new teachers' conceptions of that impact (e.g., Lea & Griggs, 2005), very little

research examines the hidden curriculum of teacher education programs themselves. Viewing teacher induction programs as extensions of teacher education programs, we have chosen to study teacher educators' responses to our research questions because, although they are outsiders to NTIP, they occupy a unique position from which to understand the often problematic transition of new teachers from teacher candidate to classroom teacher. Because teacher candidates will encounter NTIP as teachers, teacher educators have a stake in the process. Asking for the opinion of teacher educators about the impact of NTIP on the experiences of teacher candidates, new teachers, and K-12 students, we have gained important insights into what is both explicit and implicit in NTIP.

#### CONTEXT

Ontario's New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) replaced the Ontario Teacher Qualifying Test (OTQT), a pencil and paper certification test designed to ensure the quality of newly-qualified teachers. When it was introduced in 2004, the OTQT was criticized as an invalid way to evaluate the preparedness of teacher candidates for certification because it could not measure the complexities of teaching (Portelli, Solomon, Barrett, & Mujawamariya, 2005). The Ontario Ministry of Education introduced NTIP in the fall of 2006 to allay such concerns. The Ministry claims that it is a conduit for high academic student performance, and a way to offer new teachers assistance in their first year of teaching. NTIP is a mandatory program provided for all new teachers who are offered permanent positions in publicly funded schools. It is comprised of three components: (a) orientation to the new school and school board, (b) mentoring by experienced teachers, and (c) professional development and training. These components provide the meta-structure of NTIP's stated aims which are to (a) help new teachers foster positive interactions with students, (b) increase their knowledge of the Ontario curriculum, (c) assist with classroom management strategies, and (d) provide the necessary skills to assess student progress (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2006, p. 7). We have considered the outcomes the structure of the program promotes beyond the stated aims because it is often the case that policies developed at the government level have unexpected consequences within schools (Apple, 2001).

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

We grounded this study in critical-democratic teacher education (Darling-Hammond, 1998), a perspective that values (a) divergent and dialogical inquiry, (b) open-mindedness, (c) critical thinking, (d) issues of equity, and (e) taking alternative pedagogical possibilities seriously (Portelli & Solomon, 2001). Central to our theoretical framework is an understanding of education as an irreducibly political and philosophical pursuit within which there is no such thing as a neutral pedagogy (Freire, 1998).

Arguably, critical-democratic teacher education would be desirable in any context but it is especially important in the context of Ontario, which continues to be one of the destinations of choice for the majority of new Canadian immigrants. In fact, Ontario and British Columbia are the only provinces with a larger proportion of recent immigrants than Canadian-born citizens. Indeed, 60 per cent of recent immigrants live in either Toronto or Vancouver (Citizenship & Immigration Canada, 2005). Moreover, Ontario is home to more than half of all people of colour in Canada (Office of Economic Policy [Ontario], 2008). Thus, with ever increasing numbers of immigrants settling in southern Ontario, where most of the province's population resides, the student population has become increasingly diverse – ethnically, linguistically, and philosophically.

We believe that a critical democratic stance on the part of teachers could set the stage for the education system to adapt to the student population in a positive way (Santoro, 2009). Consequently, we decided to explore whether or not NTIP would help or would undermine new teachers' efforts in this direction. We do not doubt that the Ontario Ministry of Education and most educators wish to equip new teachers with the skills and knowledge to deal with the changing demographics of Ontario schools effectively. However, the question is this: What conception of *effective* does NTIP implicitly convey and what additional unstated and/or hidden outcomes does the very structure of NTIP encourage?

We have explored the following questions in this article:

- (a) In the opinion of teacher educators, what does the structure of NTIP imply about the hidden curriculum of the program? and

- (b) In the opinion of teacher educators, to what extent does this hidden curriculum promote a critical democratic stance among new teachers?

Hence, we examine the “taken-for-granted” (Simon, 1992, p. 46) in education, that is, the cultural, political, and institutional forces that underpin the seemingly natural or common-sense methods, pedagogical choices, and responses of teachers in their classrooms. We have undertaken this perspective to raise questions about the social and political implications of the often-unexamined, daily practices (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1998) of teachers and teaching. In asking these questions, we recognize that many educators have advocated for induction programs to convey important knowledge to new teachers in different grade levels, schools, and school systems (Cho & Kwon, 2004; Kennedy & Burstein, 2004). However, we suspect that much of the knowledge that these programs have been designed to convey will be implicit rather than explicit, often resulting in unforeseen consequences rather than planned outcomes (Apple, 1999).

#### LITERATURE REVIEW

Becoming a teacher, far from being a simple process, involves innumerable complexities and multivalent social and individual dynamics that are not readily quantifiable (Verloop, Van Driel, & Meijer, 2001). Although faculties of education attempt to prepare teacher candidates for this complexity, students enrolled in initial teacher education programs often feel that they have not been adequately prepared for their teaching careers and as a result frequently question the validity of this education (Britzman, 2007). This questioning is due, in part, to teacher candidates having to consider schooling from perspectives with which they are unfamiliar. A further interrelated reason for their sense of dissatisfaction is that the institutional realities of schooling often contradict what they have learned in faculties of education (Hargreaves & Jacka, 1995), and alter their understandings of what it means to be a teacher (Flores, 2006).

Mentoring/induction programs arise primarily from a perceived need to bridge the knowledge/experience gap. In some cases, to counter the effects of apparently ineffective teacher education programs, mentorship/induction programs are introduced with the intention to standard-

ize the teaching profession (Wang & Odell, 2002). The assumption of these types of induction programs appears to be that standardization will ensure success for new teachers and, in turn, their students.

Cochran-Smith and Paris (1995) note that there are essentially two teacher induction/mentorship models: (a) knowledge transmission and (b) knowledge transformation. The first model, which focuses on knowledge and behaviours being passed efficiently from expert to novice, is characterized by an emphasis on mentors shepherding their mentees through the difficult transition from student to teacher (e.g., Feiman-Nemser, 2001), with a focus on helping a new teacher to assimilate efficiently into the culture of the school and the school district. This model depends on a mentor's level of skill and knowledge because a mentee is expected to essentially emulate the mentor, uncritically. A clear weakness in this model, from our perspective, is that if the culture of the school is one where considerations of equity, diversity, and social justice are absent from everyday pedagogical and curricular considerations then, regardless of board and province-based equity policies (e.g., Ontario Ministry of Education, 2009), these crucial areas of teacher responsibility will not be passed on from mentor to mentee. The result will be the reproduction of pre-existing attitudes towards these issues and, consequently, inequitable teaching practices. For example, a mentor who discusses equitable practices with her mentee by describing how she treats all her students the same way may be unaware of how the structure of the school system works to disadvantage some students while privileging others (Barton, 2001). The likely result is that the mentee will also view equity and diversity in strictly interpersonal terms (the taken-for-granted), ignoring larger societal issues that contribute to inequity.

Thus, in a transmission-based model of teacher induction/mentorship, the assumptions about good teaching that are being made are never interrogated because the transmission-based model does not encourage critique. Consequently, the system in which a teacher and students work is left largely unexamined or is, by default, perceived as given and unchangeable. This model does not encourage new teachers to question the role of outside institutions, social dynamics, the curriculum, or the historical and political forces that have coalesced to structure particular meanings and practices in modern day schooling. At best, trans-

mission models examine issues of equity, diversity, and social justice superficially, encouraging individuals to simply monitor their own biases (Henry & Tator, 1994).

The second model, which the authors of this article favour, is one in which a mentor works with a mentee to create a more equitable and inclusive classroom, and in so doing, by extension, attempts to reform the school and wider community (Cochran-Smith & Paris 1995). Transformative models are reconstructive and dynamic in nature, directly examining and interrogating institutional structures that perpetuate inequity (see Solomon, Levine-Rasky, & Singer, 2003, for a notable example). This critical scrutiny is pursued with the belief that this approach to pedagogy is rarely, if ever, contained in curriculum documents (Barrett & Pedretti, 2006). Rather, it is located in the dynamic interplay between students and teachers in the classroom, the school community, and the larger social context outside the school (Gay, 2002). Thus, transformative mentorship programs are far more complex than transmission-based models because they must balance the particular and individual needs of a mentee with larger societal issues (Jones, 2006). This balancing act is important because, regardless of their experiences in faculties of education, new teachers often suffer from “practice shock” (Achinstein & Barrett, 2004, p. 717), which is a feeling of not being prepared for the unique challenges of being an educator and responsible for one's own classroom and pedagogy. In response to this emotion, teachers often focus on student control rather than examining root causes. That is to say, a plethora of immediate concerns occur for a new teacher, most of which appear urgent to the neophyte. This sense of urgency makes the consideration of how the structure of the school system impacts new teachers' everyday practice unlikely without someone drawing their attention to these dynamics (Achinstein & Barrett, 2004). A mentor needs to recognize and take advantage of the teachable moments when such discussions might take place with a mentee, while, at the same time, knowing when more pressing concerns should be emphasized instead. A transformative model of mentorship deliberately normalizes such critical discussions.

The dynamic and critical negotiations of practice that occur between a mentor and mentee within transformative models of induction/mentorship enable new teachers experiencing practice shock to consider

more effective ways to manage their classrooms because transformative models view many classroom management difficulties as a result of a disconnect among student and teacher and curriculum. This conceptual approach means that mentors are more likely to encourage mentees to respond to these difficulties by increasing their understanding of students rather than by exerting power and control (Achinstein & Barrett, 2004). As a result, mentors in the transformative model are more likely to counter the tendency of teachers to exert power and control for the sake of quietude, while at the same time helping mentees to feel comfortable enough to take risks.

As we have seen, the role of mentor will be different depending on whether the induction program adheres to a transmission-based or transformative model. A transmission-based model requires a mentor who understands the system and knows how to help a new teacher adopt and integrate school and system procedures efficiently. A mentor within a transformative model, however, must be a liberatory teacher – one who aims to enhance a mentee’s understanding of the link between culturally appropriate pedagogy and student success. Culturally appropriate pedagogy begins with the student not just as an individual but as a member of a community which is defined, in part, in terms of language, neighbourhood, ethnicity, and family structure. This approach requires creativity on the part of teachers because it emerges through interactions with students and community rather than simply being an adaptation of a standard, top-down curriculum (Cummins, Chow, & Schechter, 2006). Because of its focus on critical examination of practice, a transformative model of teacher induction enhances a mentee’s creative freedom (Freire & Freire, 1997), a necessary aspect of teachers becoming transformative intellectuals themselves (Giroux, 1988). Transformative intellectuals are teachers who are aware of societal inequities, viewing schools as sites of political struggle. They focus on the relationship between knowledge and power, and the connections between their students’ knowledge and their political agency (Finn & Finn, 2007). Specifically, they “create spaces where parents, students, community members, and teachers can become collective actors with the ultimate goal of building powerful social movements that change policy and consciousness” (Finn & Finn, 2007, p. 51). Indeed, the goal of transformative models is transformation of men-



tors, mentees, and, eventually, the education system and the larger society. Aspiring to be this type of educator requires an understanding of education in a much larger context than a single classroom or school.

Even with the encouragement of their mentors, new teachers may find this larger context inaccessible because of the pressures associated with being on probation. School administrators are concerned with running a school smoothly – quiet and compliant students, organized classrooms – and are often evaluated on that basis. It is no wonder, then, that new teachers feel pressure to concentrate on this functional version of classroom management, even if their mentors encourage them to do otherwise (Achinstein & Barrett, 2004).

Examining the larger context of schooling entails explicating whom our schools serve (Barton, 2001). In addition, social structures that perpetuate racism, sexism, and classism must not only be scrutinized but also challenged (hooks, 1994). Teachers themselves need to learn not only how to counteract aspects of the overt and hidden curriculum but also how to mobilize their students so that they feel empowered to act (Freire, 1998). In other words, a transformative model of new teacher induction must go beyond helping mentees to avoid being part of the problem of social inequity and to instruct new teachers in how to become liberatory teachers themselves (Irish & Pashby, 2008). That being said, we do not underestimate the challenge of critically questioning the system that employs us.

#### METHODOLOGY

We utilized in-depth, semi-structured interviews (see Appendix A) (Creswell, 1998; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998) with teacher educators (TEs). To solicit volunteers for our interviews, we used surveys, e-mails, and word-of-mouth. Participants were made up of 47 TEs, including 17 males and 30 females, of whom 42 were in English faculties and 5 were in French faculties. The respondents represented eight faculties of education in Ontario. Ethics approval was obtained from each of the three universities at which the co-authors worked. Interviews were conducted at various locations around Ontario by the co-authors and four graduate assistants – some over the phone and some in person. Each was one to one-and-one half hours in length. They were transcribed by a service.

These transcriptions and their corresponding sound recordings were then available to the researchers as they did their analysis.

We analyzed the data inductively, using the techniques described by Bogdan and Biklen (1998). Analysis of the data included process coding, codes that reflect the common and various themes that emerged from the data. The qualitative data analysis occurred simultaneously with data collection. We analyzed the data using what Tesch (1990) characterizes as “de-contextualization” to identify themes and coding categories and “re-contextualization” to present a unified and coherent picture (pp. 122-124).

We triangulated the data through the use of multiple investigators examining the same data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), using the following protocol. First, after an initial reading of the transcripts, the research team met to discuss our interpretations of one transcript to establish protocols for analysis. Second, each transcript was analyzed by a single researcher who then traded his/her analysis with another researcher on the project for comparison and critique. Thus, two researchers analyzed each transcript independently. Third, the entire research team met again to compare and contrast themes that they had elicited from the transcripts. Finally, a researcher brought in at the end of the project went through the transcripts and critiqued, verified, or rejected the themes we had established based on her reading of the data.

## RESULTS

Several themes emerged through analysis, including the following:

- (a) the problematics of mentor selection;
- (b) ensuring an effective and collaborative mentor/mentee relationship;
- (c) increasing effective communication and knowledge while maintaining the importance of equity, diversity and understanding community;
- (d) mentorship as authentic performance tasks;
- (e) clear collaboration/partnership among stakeholders (faculty, school boards, schools, communities, etc);
- (f) mentorship and induction as a space for risk-taking and growth; and

(g) mentorship for conformity or critical democracy?

For the purposes of this article, we have focused on three themes, chosen because of their conceptual significance. That is, these themes raised important questions about the unintended effects of the structure of NTIP. The themes we have focused on are the following: (a) conceptions of essential skills, (b) the risk of critique, and (c) characteristics of transformative mentors. The first two themes were common for most of the participants. The last theme was raised by a relatively small group of teacher educators.

*Conceptions of Essential Skills: Classroom Management*

Because of the prominence of classroom management within the guidelines for the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP), we asked the participants to comment on this aspect of the program. Some participants felt that classroom management was the most important skill that new teachers need to learn. In the words of one teacher educator:

*Classroom management is at the top of the list because, basically if you're not able to manage your classroom time efficiently and effectively, then there will not be any learning. So definitely I agree with the government on that aspect—that it is definitely key. . . . Classroom management . . . in terms of behaviour management, has to do with routines, has to do with how effective you are in the classroom, how you're able to transition from one activity to the other. So it's extremely significant. [TE1]*

Note here the way this participant uses words like “efficiency,” “effectively,” and “behaviour management.” The emphasis is on control. She appears to be mainly concerned with managing behaviour and structure as the most efficient way to realize predetermined outcomes. This understanding was the most common conception of classroom management among the teacher educators whom we interviewed.

Although there was no question among any of the teacher educators that classroom management is essential, not all of them viewed it in such functional terms. At the other end of the conceptual spectrum, a small number of participants described classroom management in much more holistic terms. As one participant stated:

*Classroom management is about relationships and organization. If I go into a classroom I watch for that teacher candidate's ability to relate to those children. Do they speak to them in a way that is respectful? And is it reciprocated? Is there a rapport; is there mutual respect; is there care in how they are spoken to or how the teacher responds to the students? Is there love, care and fun? [TE2]*

We see here how TE2 acknowledged the organizational aspects of classroom management, while also envisioning it in a more holistic way to focus both on function and relationship.

Regardless of their conception of what constituted good classroom management, most teacher educators interviewed stated that the everyday organizational tasks of teachers needed to be part of NTIP. However, a small group of participants suggested that NTIP – and teacher education in general – needs a broader focus. One expressed this idea in the following way:

*I think that there's just too much of this hands-on practical stuff that is pushed forward and not the thinking part. The inquiry is being lost and then we wonder why teachers are technocrats. They are more concerned about how the classroom looks . . . , [not] why are you teaching what you are teaching? What is the basis for your programming? Think deeper. What is it about the curriculum that seems to be so static? Start to think about things that are deeper and broader as opposed to "Let's just get in there and teach." [TE3]*

Note how this participant characterizes “this hands-on practical stuff” as if it is something that she regards with a mixture of resignation and distaste. Her frustration was apparently due to her sense that new teachers were not focusing enough on the critical questioning of substantive educational issues. This teacher educator, like several others interviewed, implied that focusing on the daily pressures and demands of teaching eclipsed teachers’ abilities to think critically about deeper issues that dramatically impact teaching and learning. Given these concerns, some participants expressed their trepidation with how NTIP implicitly ignores these larger issues.

*The Risk of Critique: Evaluation and Self-Policing*

Most respondents wanted a safe constructive environment where genuine collaboration could occur freely. As one respondent noted:

*I think it is necessary to have your first year the time when you can take risks, practice what you've been taught and keep doing this, succeed, fail, succeed, fail and have someone there who will say it is okay. 'This is what you're doing right. This is what some of the challenges are. Let's look at how we can do these differently.'* [TE4]

This teacher educator, like many of the other participants, emphasized the necessity of collegiality, where a mentor was a supporter rather than evaluator. He explained that the on-going process of "succeed, fail, succeed, fail" would be difficult to engage in if mentoring were tied to assessment that would lead to eventual full certification.

Many respondents were supportive of the notion that mentorship and induction should include spaces for risk-taking with the assurance that a mentor will be there in a supportive, rather than in a potentially punitive role. To illustrate the implications of this thinking, many participants likened the mentor-mentee relationship in NTIP to that in the practice teaching placements at faculties of education. As one teacher educator summarized:

*You have so many situations where the associate/host teachers are making the lives of the teacher candidates miserable. Many teacher candidates I've spoken to say that was the worst part of their training: when they had to figure out how to teach somebody else's agenda.* [TE5]

This respondent alludes to the idea that a mentee might feel compelled to avoid contradicting a mentor to ensure a good evaluation. This acceptance may also entail teaching practices that run counter to what mentees have learned and internalized from their experiences in faculties of education (Hargreaves & Jacka, 1995).

Ontario's NTIP model does not specifically require mentors to evaluate mentees. Evaluation is a principal's responsibility. Yet, in some instances, according to some respondents, principals have simply taken on the role of mentor themselves. If this is the case, it is difficult to imagine a mentee feeling comfortable enough to take risks. Some participants

stated that external mentors – that is, teachers who do not work in the same school – would be helpful because they could encourage candour and ensure less intimidating support. Also these participants mentioned that having an external mentor might make questioning the system more likely and less risky for a mentee.

These concerns and considerations indicate that, for teacher educators at least, agreement on the outcome (i.e., new teachers finding spaces to try new things) did not guarantee agreement on how it should be done.

#### *Characteristics of Transformative Mentors*

In general, respondents were concerned that clear criteria for mentors' work be established. Other concerns focused on (a) who chooses a mentor, (b) the criteria to determine the most appropriate mentor, and (c) the preparation of mentors. The very nature of mentoring was also problematized, in particular the idea that mentors would be assigned to mentees rather than chosen by mentees. Many respondents favoured school administrators selecting mentors, while others were critical of the notion. Some respondents were adamant that the existing trends of using administrators and/or retired teachers as mentors be abandoned. These respondents reasoned that this decision reduced the possibilities of institutional socialization and reproduced the status quo, thereby moving away from a transmission-based model (Cochran-Smith & Paris, 1995).

There was also the problem of a mentor's view of a mentee as a person, an issue that a small group of participants raised. Again, a participant used the practice teaching experiences of his students as an example:

*Currently, in [our] context a lot of our minority students [teacher candidates] have suffered greatly . . . because many of the teachers in the county are not recognizing them as unique learners. I'm [also] concerned about administrators and the kinds of mentors they will choose. Would they become more like institutional mentors in comparison to an intellectual and professional mentor? [TE6]*

This participant had two particular concerns. One concern was the question of the type of mentor a principal was most likely to choose – that is, would they tend to choose mentors who would be effective in a trans-

mission model geared to maintain the status quo? Second, she wondered about the implications for a mentee of a mentor who displayed prejudice towards people who were not part of the dominant culture (whether based on race, sexual orientation, language, or any other social marker).

A mentee, recognizing a mentor's attitude, will be even less likely to feel secure enough to question or challenge current practices or institutional structures in an overt way. Thus, mentors themselves, if not chosen with care, could undermine the ability of a program such as NTIP to be transformative (Cochran-Smith & Paris, 1995). Mentors are the key to the outcomes of NTIP's curriculum. Do they recognize the unique needs and abilities of particular new teachers with whom they are working? Do they teach the new teachers how not only to navigate the system but also to critique it and act on that critique?

A mentorship/induction program, according to respondents, has the potential to continue philosophical and theoretical work started in the university. However, some respondents were critically aware of the need for new teachers to partner with mentors who could assist them to navigate the school community and infuse socially just practices and critical discourse into their work with students. To this end, a very small number of teacher educators believed that the ideal mentor was an "emancipatory teacher," defined vividly by TE7:

*The emancipatory teacher is somebody that helps a student unlock cultural, individual, political, economic, and social puzzles. One that walks along with them as they open those doors and walk a path to being actualized, but also being able to see the world and act upon it and not always be an object, but a subject. [TE7]*

The above quotation encapsulates many of our views concerning an ideal mentor, but, due to the complexity of this role, such mentors are rare. Further, the focus on function and organization, within NTIP, would not encourage a chosen mentor to aspire to such an ideal.

## DISCUSSION

Our original research questions were (a) In the opinion of teacher educators, what does the structure of NTIP tell us about the hidden curriculum of the program? And (b) In the opinion of teacher educators, to what ex-

tent does the hidden curriculum promote a critical-democratic stance among new teachers?

As noted, NTIP's explicit goals were the following: (a) orientation to a new school and school board, (b) mentoring by experienced teachers, and (c) professional development and training. These goals are highly functional and pragmatic, geared to provide a smooth transition from student to teacher – a laudable goal. Indeed, overall, teacher educators were highly supportive of a mentorship/induction model as an alternative to standardized teacher testing. However, they worried about the conceptions of essential skills that would be promoted through the program. For example, a focus on classroom management can have different underlying philosophical and pedagogical assumptions and goals. Most interviewees understood classroom management as the necessary base from which all good teaching arises, while a sub-group viewed classroom management as arising from a holistic and culturally-responsive approach to teaching and curriculum modification. For a teacher candidate, the need to control students comes from both within and without (Achinstein & Barrett, 2004) and, certainly, our participants acknowledged this problem. However, it is not clear that NTIP will help new teachers to see classroom management or any aspects of schooling holistically.

Beyond the immediate concerns of order within classrooms, a small group of participants was concerned with other aspects of the program that could leave new teachers in a vulnerable position where explicit critique of the school system might be difficult. Namely, these participants identified the following situations as problematic: (a) mentors being chosen by principals, or being the principal him or herself, and/or (b) mentors being a senior colleague within a school. Another structural problem is the skills of the mentor him or herself, who may be unaccustomed, unwilling, or unable to take on the role of emancipatory teachers, guiding a mentee through the process of interrogating the underlying assumptions of his or her practice and the system in which that practice occurs. We know that, as a mentor, understanding the societal structures in which schooling is embedded and then taking on the challenge of helping a mentee to understand and use such knowledge is incredibly



challenging (Jones, 2006) and those participants who expressed the need for transformative mentors recognized this.

Looking at Cochran-Smith and Paris' (1995) scheme, we see that NTIP can probably be classified as a knowledge transmission model of mentorship not only because its expressed intent is to help new teachers adjust to the system as it is (i.e., the status quo) but also because the structure encourages conformity through its emphasis on classroom management and successful evaluation. Knowledge is unlikely to be transformed through this process (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). In other words, transformation is unlikely to happen by accident within a transmission-based system (Barrett & Pedretti, 2006).

Thus, the hidden curriculum of NTIP is conformity and assimilation, which are not conducive to new teachers taking a critical, democratic stance. To the contrary, it would warn them against it.

#### CONCLUSION

An emerging democratic society needs teachers who engage in liberatory pedagogies, who provide a social environment to prepare the next generation of democratic citizenry. To prepare new teachers for this role, we envision ways to disrupt the reproductive aspects of mentorship and induction programs to transform schools. This transformation could be accomplished through, among other things, (a) teacher preparation activities such as reasoned dialogue on controversial social and political issues that impact schooling, (b) portfolio development, and (c) action research as a potential means to develop critical inquiry. However, not all teacher educators viewed this perspective as a priority. Although all participants expressed a desire to make connections with their educational partners in classrooms, schools, and school boards, only a small number of them envisioned teachers as the transformative intellectuals that Giroux (1988) describes in detail. We also found that the small group of teacher educators who recognized the need to deal effectively with the growing diversity of the student body did not necessarily indicate a belief that structures of power within schools needed to be changed if not dismantled. Similarly, a belief in the primacy of constructive and supportive relationships within classrooms did not necessarily translate into recognition of the connection between classroom dynamics and societal

structures, nor did it necessarily indicate to teacher educators the need for a concerted effort among all educational partners for the attainment of social justice. These complex and often contradictory notions of the New Teacher Induction Program need to be further explored.

We believe that a fundamental aspect in the design and implementation of any mentoring or induction program for new teachers must include critical inquiry into its assumptions: the origins and nature of the criteria envisaged and the procedures and practices that will be put into place. Moreover, it is crucial to examine whether or not the stated aims of such a program are actually reflected in the procedures associated with the program. Teacher educators are in a position to begin to frame such discussions, which will require some frank and open conversations among themselves about the nature and purpose of teacher education itself. If teacher educators wish teachers not only to relate to their students in the classroom but also to view their own work and their students' needs and wants in light of larger societal factors, all levels of teacher education need to provide spaces for critical reflection. Students would benefit because they would learn what it means to be critical, engaged, and empowered citizens through their teachers' actions and words, rather than as an abstract concept of procedures.

This article builds on earlier research about the form and content of effective teacher induction programs and the implications for pre-service programs (e.g., Cochran-Smith & Paris, 1995; Jones 2006). As a qualitative study, it is meant to highlight a specific instance in which a government policy may have unintended consequences on the ground. Thus we cannot necessarily transfer our findings directly to other contexts. However, our findings may inform considerations about other mentoring or induction programs or other aspects of teacher education.

Further research might involve interviewing mentors and mentees who are or have been involved in NTIP, and/or observing mentor training and mentor-mentee discussions within a school system. Other important issues to explore further include (a) who chooses mentors, (b) what criteria are used to select mentors – does this include their pedagogical orientations and commitment to innovation, (c) how mentees can participate in the choice and compatibility of their mentors, and (d) what

role teacher educators can play with collaborating school boards on revising induction programs?

Given this research, not only is an open conversation about the purpose of, and transformative opportunities within, a teacher induction program crucial, but so too is reconciling the needs and concerns of the stakeholders (i.e., teacher educators, school administrators, and new teachers) participating in the larger study. Indeed, this study has serious implications for all stakeholders in teacher education. Much more thought and planning must go into these programs to maximize their potential to prepare teachers to be thoughtful, courageous, and committed to a socially just society.

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Appendix A  
Interview Guide for Teacher Educators [TEs]

Introductory/General Questions

1. How long have you been associated with preservice teacher education? In what capacities?
2. What are your current roles and responsibilities in teacher education (e.g., course teaching, field supervision)?
3. What are your perspectives on preservice teacher education in Ontario today?

Mentoring Program Questions

4. The Ministry has proposed a one-year induction program with an emphasis on in-school mentorship for new teachers following their initial "teacher training". What do you think of this proposal?
  - What should an in-school mentorship program look like?
  - How should it be administered?
  - What infrastructure should be put into place to ensure that the induction/mentorship program be accountable to the province's broader policy mandates to address equity, diversity, inclusive and special education?
5. What kind of competencies should new teachers be developing in order to work for equitably, diversity and social justice with students' parents and their communities? (revised)
6. The Ministry has included classroom management as an important part of the induction process.
  - a. How high of a priority is it to you?
  - b. What do you look for to determine effective classroom management?
7. To what extent should professional portfolios be part of the induction/evaluation process?
8. Who do you see as the most appropriate mentor for new teachers and who should select them?
  - What criteria would you use for selecting them?
  - How do you think they should be prepared for their job as mentors?

- Who will provide this preparation?
  - How would you match mentors with mentees?
9. Should the induction process be part of certification, or should they be separate? That is, should one be certified first and then mentored, or vice versa? Why?
  10. To what extent should other stakeholders be involved in the induction process (parents, students, teacher educators, etc.)?
  11. Is there anything else you would like to add?

*Thank you very much for your contribution to this research.*