The Centre for the Analysis of Educational Futures

FLINDERS UNIVERSITY ADELAIDE AUSTRALIA

Social Justice Research Collective

'Social Justice
and
The Teachers of Tomorrow' Symposium

15th February 2007

9.00-9.30am	Introduction Dr Peter McInerney
9.30-10.15am	'Educating Fronnie' *presented & directed by Dr Paul Jewell*
10.15-10.45am	*'Prospective teachers' dispositions towards teaching and middle schooling'* *presented by Dr Marietta Rossetto*
10.45	Morning Tea
11.15-12.00pm	'Ideologies of the Teachers of Tomorrow' *presented by Dr Paul Jewell, Dr Ben Wadham & Dr Ross Boyd*
12.00-12.30pm	'Pre-service teachers and social justice: their stories, our challenges' *presented by Lyn Wilkinson*
12.30	Lunch
1.15-1.30pm	'Student Teachers: their voices' *presented by Associate Professor Kay Whitehead*
1.30-2.30pm	'Pragmatic Radicalism and Raging Against the Mass Schooling Machine' *presented by Andrew Miller (PhD candidate)* 'Inside the contract zone: White teachers in the APY Lands' *presented by Sam Schulz (PhD candidate)*
2.30-3.00pm	Questions & discussion
3.00	Afternoon break
3.15-3.45pm	'Marxism and Social Justice: The Case of Enterprise Education' *presented by Grant Banfield*
3.45-4.15pm	'Transformative Teaching Studies in Physical Education: foregrounding the learner' *presented by Shane Pill & Russell Brown*
4.15-4.35pm	Comments & reflections by Professor Jo-Anne Reid
4.35pm	Closing comments by Dr Peter McInerney

1: Symposium Flyer

Pragmatic Radicalism
And Raging Against the Mass Schooling Machine

Andrew Miller

Paper presented 15 February 2007 at the *Social Justice & Teachers of Tomorrow Symposium*, Flinders University, South Australia.

2: Symposium Paper

Surviving Socialisation
The making & remaking of the pre-service teacher

> Preservice students do not enter teacher education unsocialised; they have experienced a set of formative influences in school and society, which implicitly or explicitly shape their understandings of their future work.
>
> (Hatton, 1994, pp. 6-7)

> It has been argued ... that teachers' pre-existing beliefs about teaching and learning are so influential that attempts to change teaching styles will be ineffective unless these beliefs are directly questioned.
>
> (Dart et al., 1998, p. 293)

Teachers are constructed from their histories – from the social and cultural discourses and practices that shape and define them (Marsh, 2002). If we remain unconscious of this construction, we are unlikely to question the stories and values we carry into the classroom. In turn, our stories may become the official storylines of society (Grundy, 1994), rather than single stories in a range of stories that make up the classroom. Yet if we probe deeply into the influences that have gone into constructing our identities, we may just retain our potential to transform and outgrow our indoctrination. We may also come to listen more closely to the stories of others.

To question our conditioning we need to understand *how we are made* and *how we enact this making to influence and make others*. As Marsh (2002, p. 453) suggests, "[l]earning to examine the discourses through which we enact our teaching lives provides us with opportunities to select those discourses that allow for the creation of positive social and academic identities for the children in our care." Our students deserve nothing short of this type of self-examination—after all, they are relying on us get it right. Their futures are at stake.

Similarly, we need to examine how we are constructed and conditioned through university and practicum placements, and to what degree we 'choose' our professional identities. Alarmingly, many pre-service teachers enter university

believing they were *born* to teach and have a 'gift' and 'special calling' to the profession—in other words, that they already have the skills and qualities *to* teach (Darling-Hammond, 1999; Whitbeck, 2000). Given this, it is important that reflective practices are developed to challenge and interrogate such perceptions (Cochran-Smith, 1991; Darling-Hammond, 1999; Moore, 2004; Whitbeck, 2000). Pre-service teachers are *not* qualified to teach on the basis of birth or having been to school (Hatton, 1994; Whitbeck, 2000). Without a reflective and theoretical analysis of our school experiences and broader social conditioning, we may *unconsciously* reproduce the normalising discourses and social inequities we observed while growing up (Apple, 1997; Cochran-Smith, 1991; Hatton, 1994; Moore, 2004). Or worse, we may use our classrooms to *re-enact* social and emotional struggles we experienced as children (Moore, 2004, pp. 19-20).

Many commentators note that teacher education programs struggle to 'undo' the deeply held preconceptions of pre-service teachers (Cochran-Smith, 1991; Darling-Hammond, 1999; Dart et al., 1998; Hatton, 1994; Moore, 2004; Whitbeck, 2000). Hatton (1994, p. 10) writes: "However, it is possible to move beyond one's biography. It need not be inevitable that teachers from dominant groups mindlessly reproduce through their practices the inequalities already present in society." And Groundwater-Smith et al. (2001, p. 127) remind us that: "Your own experience as a student, irrespective of how long ago this was, no doubt provides you with a set of 'scripts' for the roles that teachers and students play in these institutions."

Prospective teachers need to know from the start that they are part of a larger struggle and that they have a responsibility to reform, not just replicate, standard school practices.

(Cochran-Smith, 1991, p. 280)

I do not want to become the teacher constructed through stereotypes in my younger head. I do not want to exclude others as I was excluded. I want to remain conscious of the forces that play upon my making. I want to be aware of the normalising discourses and practices that so readily play out in repeat performances (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2001, p. 127; Hatton, 1994; Marsh, 2002; Moore, 2004). I want to teach who I am *today* – and who I can become *tomorrow* – by interrupting my conditioning, *reading myself against the grain* (Boomer, 1988), and being a *reflective practitioner* (Dart et al., 1998, p. 294; Moore, 2004). I want to scrutinise the problems and dilemmas of teaching (Cochran-Smith, 1991, p. 299) and actively turn myself *into*

the very best teacher I can be. After all: "We teach who we are" (Boomer, 1988, p. 31, 170), *and who we are can be changed.*

Pre-service Teaching
And pedagogical perversity

All students, whether students of education, school, or life, need opportunities to test and extend their capacities to think, feel, act, and be in the world (Delors, 1996). They need to do so in a range of contexts, with a variety of people, and with different degrees and levels of agency and collaboration. Garth Boomer (1988, pp. 190-191) suggests that if teachers are to escape "the tyranny of a decadent [educational] discourse", one that relies on age-old teaching habits and mind-numbing pedagogical and institutional routines, they will need to *teach against the grain* and question the assumptions and lies that dominate the profession. Initially, he suggests, this will require a revolution in 'explicitness' and 'honesty' – even *perversity* and *courage* – as teachers "call education at all levels *as it is*." This is about teachers (whether new to the profession or not) working against their own occupational socialisation and former school conditioning, questioning the status quo and its claims to natural order, and involving students in their own schooling lives through rich and empowering pedagogies. The alternative is to solicit student complicity and conformity through pedagogies of poverty (Haberman, 1991), the competitive academic curriculum (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2001), the hidden curriculum (Seaton, 2002), and naturalistic representations of school life (Boomer, 1989). Given today's educational climate, where teachers and students are being increasingly monopolised and stood over by those in positions of power outside the school (and university), Boomer's call to critical arms and collaborative resistance is equally relevant and equally pressing.

If we, as teachers and students, are to overturn oppressive schooling discourses and practices which privilege some while excluding and devaluing others, we need to enable and empower students (and teachers) through deeper learning, real agency, genuine communication, and socially critical orientations to school and life (Kemmis et al., 1994). Teacher-dominated approaches need to make

Curriculum is never 'neutral', or inevitable. That is an important point as I see it. Many students don't question the curriculum; it is simply there to be taken, they *receive* it, and they never question that it is made by someone. That may be the case with many teachers too.

(Boomer, 1988, p. 154)

way for student-centred and productive pedagogies to create exploratory classrooms that pose real questions and real challenges directly related to students' everyday and future lives (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2001, pp. 80-82). This way, classrooms are both *learner*-centred and *learning*-centred (Darling-Hammond, 1999) rather than formulaic and prescriptive. Ons size does not fit all (Tomlinson, 1999, 2003).

Given that schools (and schooling) have changed little in decades (Boomer, 1988; Groundwater-Smith et al., 2001; Seaton, 2002; Tomlinson, 1999), and that teacher education programs struggle to reverse this trend (Cochran-Smith, 1991), it is our responsibility – as learners, educators, and individuals – to disrupt and challenge these toxic and repressive habits and to actively promote reform (Boomer, 1988; Cochran-Smith, 1991). We need to break through the habit barrier to help students break free from uncritical obedience to us and the system; we need to make explicit the powers we have and those that control us; we need to help students develop critical reflection and considered action, not heartless and mindless robotics. We need to treat students as people *now*, not people-in-waiting (Smyth et al., 2000, p. 297). In the *Report to UNESCO*, Delors (1996) outlines four foundations for education in the 21st century, one of which concerns traditional content knowledge while the others are concerned with *being* and *becoming* the best human beings we can be in a rapidly changing and uncertain world (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2001). The same, I suggest, could be said of all learning paradigms, including teacher education programs.

Take away the decorations, and teaching from decade to decade is largely reproduction.

(Boomer, 1988, p. 190)

With a compelling, well informed, and articulate professional identity and theory at hand, one that is pragmatic, radical, patient, and persistent, beginning teachers like myself *can* fortify themselves against the 'decadent discourse' that Boomer (1988, pp. 190-191) talks about and shake off the thick 'musak' of educational ritual that numbs beginning teachers into its ranks

Those seeking to transform existing arrangements need to fist acquire a knowledge and understanding of the way in which power and privilege work within their own setting.

(McInerney, 2004, p. 68)

'It wasn't an easy time to be a schoolteacher, if it ever had been. Squeezed by the state for higher standards and by parents for higher grades, under the magnifying glass for any ethnic insensitivity or sexual impropriety, torn by the rote demands of proliferating standardized tests and student cries for creative expression, teachers were both blamed for everything that went wrong with kids and turned to for their every salvation. This dual role of scapegoat and savior was downright messianic… ' (Shriver, *We need to talk about Kevin*, 2003, p. 390).

(Boomer, 1988, p. 182).[1] Beginning teachers *can* and *do* make a difference to the lives of the students in their care. The question is whether this influence is positive and progressive or negative and regressive. As Cochran-Smith (1991, p. 280) points out, "teaching is fundamentally a political activity in which every teacher plays a part by design or by default." Clearly, I view education (in schools and elsewhere) as the practice of freedom, not oppression (Freire, 1996; hooks, 1994). That said, I intend to be the kind of teacher who promotes student empowerment and active and relevant learning through pragmatic and radical means. This involves "going to the root of things" and questioning and threatening "the very basis of society" by transforming and making opaque "transparent habit and common sense" (Boomer, 1989, p. 5). It is about transformative action that provokes students and teachers out of their respective lethargies and complicities; it is about recognising what can and cannot be done, when to wait, when to push, and how to act with tact and caution (p. 5). People's life chances are at stake – my own and theirs (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2001, p. 211, 214; McInerney, 2004; Smyth et al., 2000; Stiggins, 1997), and I intend to increase and protect these chances rather than undermine and neglect them.

I have good reason to question my making. Through my experiences in school and life, I know I have the capacities and 'weapons' necessary to tyrannise the classroom, monopolise the curriculum, and disempower rather than empower those in my care. I need to resist these conditioned authoritarian scripts and question their innocence and legitimacy, however 'normal' and 'commonsensical' they appear to some observers and some social groups. I imagine myself otherwise, and through imagining I intend to free myself (as far as possible) from the conspiracies of 'tact and illusion' that dominate the profession (Boomer, 1988, p. 190) and incorporate instead more democratic ways of being and acting in the mass schooling machine. If I don't help myself – who will? Fantasies of power need to be actively deconstructed to include *all* people in the learning journey, not just teachers indulging in 'privately composed fantasies' of classroom synergy and order (Boomer, 1988, p. 188). *Everyone needs to get involved.*

[1] Boomer (1988, p. 5) writes: "Armed with your own theory, you are less likely to be manipulated and colonised by someone else's world view." And: "Her main protection is her articulate theory of education. With faculty heads, the school principal or outside questioners, she is strong in knowing why she teaches as she does. Opposition tends to wilt if it argues from dogma and entrenchment rather than from rationality and understanding" (p. 96).

(Anti-Social) Socialisation
And raging against the mass schooling machine

Cochran-Smith (1991, p. 280) argues that pre-service teachers need to *learn* to teach against the grain through *collaborative resonance* with experienced teacher-reformers in one school, one classroom, and one day at a time. Beginning teachers cannot simply take on the entire education machine from day one. Collaborative resonance is a form of counter-socialisation—of learning how to critique existing educational habits and personal assumptions in partnership with others. This way, pre-service teachers set in motion a professional identity and attitude dedicated to ongoing activism and reform. Rather than be mere functionaries of social reproduction, pre-service teachers develop the capacities and outlooks necessary to sustain reformative activities into the future. They do not simply swallow guidelines and later regurgitate them. They think critically about *what* they do and *how* they do it in collaboration with others.

Teaching against the grain is challenging and sometimes discouraging work, and it is often difficult for experienced teachers to keep on and keep heart, and even more difficult for student teachers – often young and always inexperienced in the politics of schooling – to join the struggle.

(Cochran-Smith, 1991, p. 285)

Learning by *talking* and teaching by *listening* (Darling-Hammond)

Whilst I agree with 'collaborative resonance' in principle, the problem I face as a (would-be) reformer and activist is that I haven't yet worked with experienced teacher-reformers on placement (not in the strictest sense). In the absence of collaborative resonance, I am forced to adopt what Cochran-Smith (1991) suggests is the less effective of the two activist traditions – that is, *critical dissonance*. Critical dissonance involves reflecting critically on teaching practice *outside* the teaching situation through such outlets as university workshops, essays, reports, and articles like this one. For me, there is only one option: to reflect critically on my teaching practices *in private* while on practicum and then *in public* through university endeavours once outside again. This may be going against the odds, but the alternative is worse: doing nothing at all and just accepting the script. Given the perceived impotence of exterior methods of counter-socialisation, I need to work

twice as hard to undo and re-construe my teacher identity if I wish to resist the traditional induction (and brainwashing) process *and* remain true to my 'Self.'

Whilst I welcome the day that collaborative resonance is an integral part of the practicum process, my in-school experiences have focused on sustaining and perpetuating the status quo rather than improving or changing it. The emphasis has been on how well I have looked, sounded, postured, and acted *like a teacher* in the traditional sense, rather than on how well I have scrutinised practice and sought reform—in other words, on socialising me into particular mass schooling 'scripts' (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2001; Smyth et al., 2000). Deviations from the norm have usually – but not always – been met with polite if not slightly amused resistance, and sometimes even openly condemned as subversive and wrong. This form of socialisation has been both subtle and overt, but nonetheless persistent.

By in large, my teaching performance has been assessed on the 'technicalities' of teaching over and above the innovations and dispositions I bring to the classroom, or the ethics and morality of teaching per se. This isn't to say that supervising teachers ignore these aspects of their work, but rather that pre-service teacher evaluation criteria are largely couched in technical terms. I am being judged on the way I plan lessons and units of work; the way I teach and 'transmit' information to students; the way I evaluate and assess student learning; the way I position myself in the classroom to maintain power and control; the way I read out morning notices and perform surveillance on yard duty; the way I adhere to instructions and institutional routines; how often and how much homework I set; whether I am punctual and well organised; whether I attend faculty and staff meetings; and how well I administer punishments and sanctions to maintain order. The technicalities are certainly important elements of teaching – granted. However, the deeper issues and conundrums that face beginning (and experienced) teachers in a rapidly changing and globalising world are largely unexamined. Competing claims to social justice and inclusivity are often lost, for instance, in the languages and conventions of the system. Procedures and routines which are designed to make schools efficient, manageable, and fair to all, often overlook the particularities and background differences of individuals, thereby justifying their exclusion, harm, and/or neglect. Rules and expectations for students and teachers are often articulated using language that suits and reproduces certain types of people and behaviour. Human differences are not acknowledged. The system welcomes and imagines a particular type of student (obedient, quiet, and hardworking) and a particular type of teacher (obedient, quiet, and hardworking). Somewhere in all these directives and discourses real people are lost, and in their place are idealised and two-dimensional caricatures that epitomise the mass schooling dream.

[S]chools are still based on assumptions about uniformity and homogeneity, and obedience to school rules tends to be based on administrative convenience rather than principles of moral justice. ... [M]ost educational policies which express some commitment to protecting the rights of individuals and specific groups do so on the basis of the imperative to eliminate prejudice and discrimination, rather than a positive recognition and affirmation of difference.

(McInerney, 2004, p. 62)

Supervising teachers are themselves dictated to by the rigorous mandates and technical demands of day to day school life – including the accommodation and surveillance of the (displaced and nomadic) pre-service teacher. It would be exceedingly difficult, I expect, to break away from the usual teacher-student relationship, as adopted and perpetuated in the classroom, to one that accommodates the pre-service teacher, who occupies an in-between identity, and who may threaten and challenge the accepted scripts of the profession with new and unusual university-based ideas and research findings. Whether to treat the pre-service teacher as a student or colleague, outsider or insider, threat or ally, must be difficult. The discourses passing from experienced teacher to beginning teacher often reflect this tension, and alter depending on which relationship and which perspective is adopted or resisted, and what the pre-service teacher has or has not done. The teacher's task is a difficult one. Are they a supervisor, a cooperating teacher, or a mentor? Or are they in fact a teacher imparting the rules of the game to the newcomer and assessing compliance? Do they side with change or convention? Do they mould the newcomer into replicas of themselves? Do they have time to think about such issues and the potentially career-altering influences they impart to their charges?

And the task of the beginning teacher is equally daunting and ambiguous. Are they a student, a teacher, a colleague, a competitor, or some foggy blend of each? Are they trespassing on someone else's intellectual and physical space? Where do their loyalties lie? How far, in real terms, can they go with the threat of assessment hanging over their heads (and therefore their careers)? Do they dare question the system and challenge its methods? Or do they niggle at the fringes and attempt to

pass through the gaps unharmed and intact? Do they keep their secrets close to their chests and simply aim to pass?

For this reason I usually resisted the temptation to question deeper school issues. I felt reluctant, for instance, to question behaviour management strategies that relied on sanctions, standover tactics, punishments, and surveillance, since any tentative efforts to broach these issues and to propose humanistic alternatives were usually met with tokenistic explanations or complete indifference. *That's just the way we do school here* (Tomlinson, 1999, p. 115). Yes, very quietly, very subtly, I feel the pressure to *go with the flow* and to accept and uphold the status quo (Boomer, 1988; Cochran-Smith, 1991). I am being socialised into the profession. I am also learning to speak a language I don't believe in, to nod in assent when I mean dissent, and to do these things with an inner knowing that I will eventually hatch out of this containment and begin my work. *The real work. The social justice work. The ethical work. The learning work.* I am biding my time and inwardly raging against the mass schooling machine. Boomer (1988, 1988b, 1989) suggests that I should not feel guilty about what I can or cannot do in conservative hegemonic systems, but should look instead to better compromises and long-term rather than short-term goals for the sake of personal and professional survival. Change, whether of the Self or of the System, is a slow and gruelling process. Patience and persistence are essential.

Having not experienced the 'collaborative resonance' that Cochran-Smith (1991, p. 280) advocates, my pragmatic radicalism has been emerging, as suggested, through 'critical dissonance.' I have relied less on school-based collaboration and more on imagining and conceptualising 'teaching against the grain' through university endeavours and critical inquiry. For me, university educators have been better positioned to smash through the cosmetics of teaching to the conundrums and dilemmas beneath because they are not under threat from the school system; whereas in-school educators are less accustomed to collaborative resonance and ongoing reformative action because they are hampered by social and systemic restraints. Instead, these educators are contained by the never-ending list of tasks and competing interests that make their days a mine-field of frustration, red-tape, and

hypocrisy.[2] It is because of this in-school frustration that I have sought my own de-socialisation (or re-socialisation) through articles like this one. As Cochran-Smith (1991, p. 285) points out:

> In most of their student-teaching placements ... there are few opportunities for either the experienced teachers or the student teachers to participate in thoughtful inquiry, reflect on their daily decisions, or collaborate with others. In most of their encounters with school and university supervisors, student teachers are encouraged to talk about 'relevant' and technical rather than critical or epistemological aspects of teaching. Finally, in most of their preservice programs, the role of the teacher as an agent for change is not emphasized, and students are not deliberately socialized into assuming responsibility for school reform and renewal.

Cochran-Smith (1991, p. 280) reminds us that teaching against the grain "is not a generic skill that can be learned at the university and then 'applied' at the school." What university provides is a place to 'affirm' and 'call forth' the already present radical impulse, and to turn this latent potential *into* effective practice (B. Kameniar, personal communication, September 19, 2006). However, in the absence of authentic 'collaborative resonance' on practicum placements, the pragmatic radical educator, the me, the I, the human being, will fly solo *if need be*, and practice the craft of teaching against the grain *in secret* through 'critical dissonance' and self-analysis rather than succumb to ethical suicide, transmission teaching, blind obedience, neo-liberal bullying, and the Fordist factory model script.[3] *We can still rage against the machine on the inside.*

[2] Thomson (2002, p. 12) writes: "[Teachers] must fulfil the potential of each child; ensure that all children are active, tolerant citizens, good parents and productive workers; sort and select for higher education and employment; keep children safe and occupied while their parents are at work; improve standards; deliver a hierarchy of credentials; discipline the disruptive and prevent future social mayhem; assist the national economy ... the list seems endless. In significant ways, the mandates and expectations pull in different directions."

[3] While Boomer (1988, p. 145) suggests that "[i]ndividual action is usually contained and rendered ineffectual when it begins to threaten the established order", he also suggests that this should not deter would-be reformers. He writes: "*This does not mean that individual teachers should delay action until they can find support from their colleagues.* At least, teachers can talk to their students openly about why they do what they do, about how they think people learn, and about societal consequences of various behaviours" (p. 145).

Teacher Construction
And critical awakenings

As teachers we need to do more than simply reflect upon school experiences at university (and home) to revolutionise our teaching practice. We need to carry this capacity with us. We need to scrutinise the discourses and practices we take to the classroom in ongoing and reflective ways to get to the heart of our *hidden* assumptions and *unconscious* habits. That said, we will never completely undo our assumptions. We will never completely eradicate stereotypes. We are all socially situated agents with personal histories and perspectives. To eradicate these biases would require erasing our identities and being re-conditioned in a culture free of dogmas and assumptions of any kind – a culture that cannot co-exist with human agency and human perception. Certain aspects of Self will always remain hidden to Self, but this should not deter us.

What we can do is question our theories and practices to see what 'toxic' habits and views we do uncover (Thomson, 1992, p. 250). In other words, we can make the unconscious *conscious* (Smyth et al., 2000, p. 2) and the taboo *public*. We can turn our critical awareness back on ourselves, as pragmatic radicals and reflective practitioners do, before turning our attention to the social, political, and cultural *mores* that position and shape us, including those of governments, policy writers, and school hierarchies. We need to de-naturalise and de-mythologise these unquestioned habits (McInerney, 2004; Meadmore, 1999; O'Farrell, 1999) and resist being used as unthinking functionaries of the mass schooling machine. We can invigorate our practice by being sensitive human beings capable of personal and social reflection and action when 'toxic' practices are discovered. We can become conscious of our own foibles and idiosyncrasies and prepared to confront and challenge them rather than overlook and bury them. We do not hide behind history and tradition to perpetuate harmful and exclusionary practices. We do not hide behind social and personal prejudices and stereotypes to perpetuate social inequities and personal hostilities. We do not mindlessly follow government directives because we are told to. No, we challenge them, we expose them, we critique them, and we act on them in socially-critical and socially-responsible ways. *We read them against the grain* (Boomer, 1988; Cochran-Smith, 1991). This, for me, is the radical impulse. It *is* pragmatic radicalism in practice.

Similarly, we cannot rely on solid subject matter knowledge to teach effectively and to revolutionise the classroom (Darling-Hammond, 1999). Simply knowing something doesn't mean we can teach it. Rather, we need to deliberately, conscientiously, and reflectively 'transform' ourselves *into* effective teachers through ongoing scrutiny and ongoing practice. This dispels the egoic myth of being born to teach or pre-equipped to teach on the basis of expert knowledge and/or liking and loving children. We need to do more than simply turn up and regurgitate facts and/or entertain. Darling-Hammond (1999) suggests that beginning teachers need to learn *how* to teach effectively through in-school practice *and* university reflection – a la, authentic praxis (Freire, 1996). Darling-Hammond (1999, p. 227) writes:

> Learning to practice in substantially different ways from what one has oneself experienced can occur neither through theoretical imaginings alone nor unguided experience alone. It requires a much tighter coupling of the two. This tighter coupling of theory and practice in the context of a broader and deeper base of knowledge about learning, development, and teaching is perhaps the key feature of teacher education for the twenty-first century.

University knowledge and school knowledge should not remain separate. I need to *transfer* knowledge constructed at university to the classroom. I need to *transform* this knowledge *into* effective practice. There is no point writing powerful essays on learner-centred pedagogies only to enter the classroom and revert to tyrannical teacher-directed practices observed and endured while at school. And I have done this: under the watchful and approving eye of supervising teachers, I have done this. I have embodied the personas and practices of former teachers. I have spoken their orders and mimicked their behaviours. I have lost *me* and become *them*. This is how quickly the in-school socialisation process can 'go to work' on new teachers and cajole and coerce them back into historical habits: to assumptions and stereotypes struggled against at university, to heartache and despair, back to Teacher with a capital T. But being mindful of the socialisation process has permitted me to undo and unpick (some of) these forces and to act differently on subsequent occasions. This gives me some chance of resisting conservative pressures in the future, some chance of retaining my integrity and hope, and some chance of living up to and respecting the expectations and experiences of a younger me, *whose cries for help still ring in my ears* (Beckett, 1965, p. 79).

Cochran-Smith (1991, p. 283) suggests that both 'dissonant' and 'resonant' teacher education programs recognise that:

> ... the formal aspects of preservice preparation are largely incapable of altering students' perspectives, while the less formal, experiential aspects of student teaching are potentially more powerful. Both recognize that an important part of what happens during the student-teaching period is 'occupational socialization', or learning the culture of the profession, including how to behave, talk, and think like experienced members, and both aim to *interrupt the socialization that normally occurs* (my emphasis).

For me, this is motivation enough to work against the (anti-social) socialisation process, and to sure/shore up my teaching identity in a manner that is functional, ethical, and powerful in the face of conservative pressures and neo-liberal agendas.[4] Ultimately, I need to maintain my personal integrity as well as contribute to the broader school effort; but I must do so in a way that does not damage and demoralise the Self or permit systemic violence to batter me down. I need to stand up for me *and* the students in my care. I need to make **hope** practical, achievable, and accessible to all (McInerney, 2004).

In *Making Hope Practical*, McInerney (2004) describes the reformative activities of teachers (and parents) at Wattle Plains who are committed to critical pedagogies and social justice in a political regime hell-bent on the marketisation of schooling. Similarly, in *Learning to Teach against the Grain*, Cochran-Smith (1991) describes the reflective activities of a group of teachers at Community Central Lower School who actively challenge their own assumptions and those of traditional teaching practice. Like these teachers, I view myself as an active agent who has the right and moral obligation to "make certain aspects of teaching problematic" (p. 290).

[4] I view this as *anti-social* socialisation because it actually attacks the aspirations and knowledges of many groups in society. It keeps them powerless, disenfranchised, invisible, and peripheral, while it naturalises and legitimises the privileges and advantages of more powerful social groups. A truly 'social' socialisation would expose these invisible atrocities and work against them. It would seek to empower *all* people and *all* social groups – not just the powerful, and not just in namesake. Anti-social socialisation actually works against social equity and social improvement since it is satisfied with things *as they are*.

As Cochran-Smith points out: "...the underlying image of the teacher as an active agent poses a sharp contrast to the image of the teacher as a pawn pushed around by the fingers of habit, standard procedure, and expert outsider knowledge. Instead, the teacher is put forward as one who is centrally responsible for raising questions, interrogating her own knowledge and experiences, and then beginning to take responsible and reasoned action" (p. 290). To me, these actions are pragmatic and radical, strategic and considered, and active and empowering for *all*. They take in both the mechanics of teaching and the people and morals involved. As one contributor in Cochran-Smith's (1991, p. 293) paper points out: "What is at issue is the right of practitioners to be emancipated from the stifling effects of unquestioned habits, routines and precedents, and in their stead to develop ways of analysis and enquiry that enable the exposure of values, beliefs and assumptions held and embodied in the way practitioners experience and lead their lives." It seems that at Community Central and Wattle Plains, in an era of standardisation and teacher repression, pragmatic radicals not only exist, but thrive.

As a teacher, I need to set the example. I need to think-out-loud and role-model action. I need to make explicit my agendas, activities, and outlooks. I need to involve students in their own schooling lives, including the grubby machinations that go on behind the scenes (Boomer, 1989, p. 13). This requires smashing through our "willing suspension of disbelief" about the naturalistic and innocent nature of classrooms, curricula, schools, and hegemonies (Boomer, 1989, p. 12), and evoking an 'alienation' or 'estrangement' effect that ensures that "the audience distances itself and develops a critical frame of mind as well as an awareness of the theatrical effects being used didactically to change and sharpen the audience's opinions and views." In turn, "The audience, while critically estranged, is nonetheless pressured to see the familiar in a new light, to question old constructs and to be shocked (though not surprised)" (p. 13). Such a teacher, or anti-teacher, is still very much concerned with scaffolding (and therefore manipulating) meaningful learning, but she does so by revealing her props, prejudices, ambitions, and values, and by letting hitherto hidden and secret knowledge disrupt and invigorate the learning space—*and the learning mind*.

Critical Reflexivity
And (self) consciousness

Turning the gaze back on me reveals that I have not been a particularly successful pragmatic radical *yet*. My practicum experiences tell me that I haven't completely resolved the 'pragmatic—radical' duality. I shift vicariously between the binaries, along the continuum, from blind obedience to concerted defiance, in order to try to 'balance' myself against the situation or person at hand. This isn't easy. I have made many mistakes. I have ruffled too many feathers to have slipped under the radar of convention and got away with it. I am a pre-service teacher, after all, and when in school I am situated awkwardly between opposing worlds and opposing identities. According to one view, I am a bona fide teacher and power holder; in another I am an itinerant worker, pseudo-teacher, and wayfarer who works for peanuts; and from another I am a quasi-student – a rogue from the badlands – who cannot be completely trusted given my close proximity and natural affinity to other students. This is a shaky and in-between identity. At times I am treated like a colleague, at others like a defiant student steeped in university nonsense (and they might be right). I don't want to bring the school – *and my career* – down on my head in one grand and futile act of disruption. Rather, I want to adopt theories and practices that are consistent with my evolving experiences and outlooks, but also subtle enough to avoid the ire of 'authorities.' I need to stay within the system in order to help revitalise and reform it, even if only in small ways and with some learners and part of the time. Having said that, I haven't – *that I know of* – got blood on my hands – *yet* (Finley, 2005, p. 690). I haven't – *that I know of* – victimised, ostracised, or deliberately hurt or excluded any students – *yet*. This is important. But the real question remains: 'How do I *remain* a pragmatic radical in the years ahead?'

Perhaps most importantly, teachers who work against the grain must name and wrestle with their own doubts, must fend off the fatigue of reform and depend on the strength of their individual and collaborative convictions that their work ultimately makes a difference in the fabric of social responsibility.

(Cochran-Smith, 1991, p. 285)

This is what I'm writing for – to indelibly impress the importance of praxis, reflexivity, and pragmatic radicalism upon my developing professional identity and practice. I

am doing this for the sake of my health and survival as a human being in a conservative and habituated (*Fordist* factory model) educational landscape (Groundwater-Smith et al., 2001, p. 41); and for the sake of the wellbeing and welfare of the students in my care. Reflexivity is about critical *self-removal* from dominant discourses and practices and occupying spaces outside and across discourses and positionings (Moore, 2004, p. 12). It is about occupying the border territories (Anzaldúa, 1987; Boomer, 1989; Chambers, 1995), between certainties, where the term 'radical' still means socially-responsible and socially-considered action, not terror and mayhem. Pragmatic radicalism provides a means of resisting the seductive allure of the mass schooling dream and positioning the Self in strategic locations of awareness and opportunity.

As such, pragmatic radicalism is a risky business, involving a delicate balancing act between restraint and action. It involves occupying different roles and different spaces – *strategically* – to maximise the potentials and resources of each (L. Wilkinson, personal communication, February 1, 2006). This is a way of *being*, a chameleon aspect, in which our identities shift and alter to accommodate different perspectives, different agendas, different positions, and different demands. It involves being strategically placed to survive the system and to help reform the system. We need to adhere to the system in order to subtly subvert it – thereby using the system in its own transformation. Pragmatic radicalism is both an ideological outlook and a way of being and acting in the world: an activity, a process, an act of disruption and praxis. It involves teaching students (and teachers) to *read against the grain*: to read the system, read the curriculum, read the classroom, read the teacher, and read books and texts in the traditional sense (Boomer, 1988, 1989). Pragmatic radicalism is a constructive, calculating, patient, and didactic activity rather than a destructive, impulsive, and

The pragmatic radical tries to know as much as possible about the power relationships, goals, and values of the school, the system, the state, and the international scene. While the teacher strives, individually and collectively, to transform **and** change **things which impede his or her project in education, he/she also has a** sensible comprehension **of what is not possible. He/she is** not weighed down by guilt **or despair about what cannot be done yet, but is always alert to openings and opportunities to make** "strategic gains".

(Boomer, 1989, p. 17)

fanatical protest. It is about turning binaries into harmonies and turning our struggles *against* people into struggles *with* people (Wachtel & McCold, 2004). This is the ambition of the pragmatic radical.

In order to break these various complicities of tact and illusion, in order to liberate teachers from the tyranny of a decadent discourse, I advocate a revolution in explicitness and honesty which will require, initially, concerted perversity and courage. We need to call education at all levels *as it is*. We need to make opaque many of the presently transparent follies and absurdities that flow through our system. And perhaps the best technique for doing this is to begin swimming against the flow.

(Boomer, 1988, pp. 190-191)

'Hold on to your scepticism about *everything* (everything but love, that is: abandon yourself to that) (Mackay, *Advance Australia Where*, 2007, p. 343).

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'SMS (short message service) text has led the way, with its arcane language of abbreviations and symbols that seem to be shredding the written language – or, perhaps, to be inventing a new kind of language. Emails are increasingly adopting the same abbreviated style (Mackay, *Advance Australia Where*, 2007, p. 122).