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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses education reform efforts, specifically the need to improve schooling by improving the status, power, and working conditions of teachers through professional development programs. Two issues which continue to undermine the authenticity and social value of efforts to promote teacher development are addressed: (1) underneath the rhetoric of many current efforts to empower teachers to take control of their own professional development is a reality in which teachers remain extremely limited in the scope of their power to influence the conditions of their work; and (2) even when efforts to promote teacher development and reflective teaching are not illusory, teacher development often becomes an end in itself unconnected to broader questions about education in a democratic society. Teacher development needs to be genuine, connected to the promotion of equity and social justice, a means toward the education of everyone's children, and supportive of teachers' efforts to reflect on and change the practices and social conditions which undermine and distort the educational potential and moral basis of schooling in democratic societies. Forty-two references are included. (LL)

Issue Paper 92-1

Connecting Genuine Teacher Development to the Struggle for Social Justice

Kenneth M. Zeichner

NCRTL

National Center for Research on Teacher Learning

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CONNECTING GENUINE TEACHER DEVELOPMENT TO THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

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[1] Formerly known as the National Center for Research on Teacher Education (1985-1990), the Center was renamed in 1991.

Abstract

This paper discusses two issues which continue to undermine the authenticity and social value of efforts to promote teacher development. First, it is argued that underneath the rhetoric of many current efforts to empower teachers to take control of their own professional development is a reality in which teachers remain extremely limited in the scope of their power to influence the conditions of their work. Second, it is argued that even when efforts to promote teacher development are not illusory, teacher development often becomes an end in itself unconnected to broader questions about education in a democratic society. The author argues for efforts to promote teacher development which is both genuine and connected to the promotion of equity and social justice.

CONNECTING GENUINE TEACHER DEVELOPMENT TO THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE[1]

Kenneth M. Zeichner[2]

In this paper I will share with you some of my hopes and concerns about the so-called second wave of educational reform in North America which has stressed the need to improve schooling by improving the status, power, and working conditions of teachers. This emphasis on teachers as the most important actors in educational reform has come after belated recognition, by at least some educational reformers and administrators, of the futility of attempting to improve schools primarily through greater external prescription of school processes and outcomes.

For the last 25 years, I have worked hard as an elementary school teacher, teacher center director, and university teacher educator either to prepare student teachers to be active agents in their own professional development and in determining the direction of schools, or in supporting the efforts of teachers who were already engaged in doing so. It would be very easy for me to spend all of this paper delineating the numerous reasons why we should make teacher development, teacher learning, and teacher empowerment absolute priorities in our efforts to improve schooling for everybody's children, or in describing some of the exemplary schools where this is now a reality.

It is still important to do this. Even today with all of the talk of teacher empowerment and teacher development, we see a general disregard for the craft knowledge of good teachers in the educational research establishment which has attempted to articulate a "knowledge base" for teaching minus the voices of teachers (Grimmett & MacKinnon, in press; Lytle & Cochran-Smith, 1990). For example, in the most recent edition of the American Educational Research Association's *Handbook of Research on Teaching* (Wittrock, 1986), which is supposed to be a compilation of the state of the art of our knowledge about teaching, there are 35 chapters and over a thousand pages on various aspects of teaching—teaching mathematics, teaching social studies, classroom organization and management, teaching bilingual learners, and so on. Not a single chapter is authored by a classroom teacher and there are few if any references to anything written by a classroom teacher. The same is true for the recent American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education compilation of a *Knowledge Base for the Beginning Teacher* (Reynolds, 1989) and

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[1]A revised version of a lecture given in July 1991 at the Institute in Teacher Education, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada.

[2]Kenneth M. Zeichner, professor in the Department of Education and Instruction, University of Wisconsin-Madison, is a senior researcher with the National Center for Research in Teacher Learning.

most other books of its kind under the editorial control of university academics. As Susan Lytle and Marilyn Cochran-Smith (1990) of the University of Pennsylvania have put it,

> Conspicuous by their absence from the literature of research on teaching are the voices of teachers, the questions and problems they pose, the frameworks they use to interpret and improve their practice, and the ways they define and understand their work lives. (p. 83)

Also, despite all of the rhetoric in the professional literature about the importance of improving the working conditions of teachers and supporting their efforts to play more meaningful roles in determining the content and contexts of their work and of building collaborative professional environments within schools (e.g., Lieberman, 1988, 1990), we see efforts (often under the banner of teacher development) which maintain the teacher's subservient position to those removed from the classroom with regard to the core aspects of their work—curriculum and instruction—and which deny them any say about the contextual conditions of their work which greatly influence their actions in the classroom (e.g., their time and resources).[3]

For example, much of the staff development that I see in Wisconsin school districts and elsewhere across the United States ignores the knowledge and expertise that teachers bring to the sessions, and relies primarily on the distribution of prepackaged "research-based" solutions to school problems (often at great expense) by some entrepreneurs of staff development who are often former university academics or school administrators who have gone into business for themselves after one of their ideas has "caught on." The selling of educational solutions and gimmicks is big business today in the United States often consuming precious resources of school districts that could otherwise be used to tap the expertise of their own staff and to support genuine rather than bogus teacher development (Slavin, 1989; Stover,1988).

I do not want to minimize the importance of continuing to struggle in support of teachers' efforts to gain more control of their work and to make schools places where teacher learning is valued as much as student learning. Despite the importance of these efforts, however, I want to focus here instead on some aspects of the teacher development and school restructuring movement that trouble me even as I continue to do all that I can to serve it. These are aspects of the teacher development movement that I rarely see discussed in the literature or at professional conferences. They raise difficult questions that

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[3]See discussions of the de-skilling and re-skilling of teachers by Apple (1986) and Densmore (1987).

are often uncomfortable for us to face. It is important that we talk about them though because they continue to undermine the authenticity and social value of efforts to facilitate teacher development.

I want to focus on two specific issues. First, I will argue that underneath the rhetoric of many efforts to empower teachers to take more control over their own professional development, teachers often remain under tight control and limited in the scope of their power to influence the conditions of their work. In other words, not all that we see going on today under the banners of teacher empowerment and teacher development is actually empowering or developing in its effects. I will discuss the case of reflective teaching and the reflective practitioner to illustrate my concerns about bogus teacher development.

Second, even when teacher development is a real concern and not a charade, I become concerned when teacher development and teacher empowerment become ends in themselves unconnected to any broader purposes and to questions of equity and social justice. In its extreme form, we see a glorification of anything that a teacher does or says and an outright rejection of anything that is initiated outside of the immediate context of teachers' classrooms. The issue is oftentimes *who* is speaking and *not* what they are saying.

One example of this in the literature on reflective inquiry in teacher education is the frequent assumption that teaching is necessarily better merely because teachers are more deliberate and intentional about their actions. This view ignores the fact that greater intentionality may help, in some cases, to further solidify and justify teaching practices that are harmful to students. One consequence of this extreme reaction to oppressive forms of staff development and educational reform is that questions related to the broader purpose of education in a democratic society sometimes get lost. I will discuss specific aspects of the teacher research movement to illustrate my concerns here.

Reflective Teaching and the Illusion of Teacher Development

First let us examine the problem of efforts to foster teacher development which are illusory. In the last decade, the terms reflective practitioner and reflective teaching have become slogans for reform in teaching and teacher education all over the world. In addition to efforts in North America to make reflective inquiry the central component of teacher education program reforms, we can see similar efforts in such countries as the United Kingdom, Australia, Norway, the Netherlands, Spain, Thailand, and Singapore (see Zeichner, in press-a). Amid all of this activity by educational researchers and teacher educators, there has been a great deal of confusion about what is meant in particular cases by the term *reflection*. It has come to the point now, where the whole range of beliefs within

the education community about teaching, learning, schooling, and the social order have become incorporated into the discourse about reflective teaching practice and the use of the term by itself has become virtually meaningless. I agree with Jim Calderhead (1989) of the United Kingdom who says,

> Terms such as reflective practice, inquiry-oriented teacher education, reflection-in-action, teacher as researcher, teacher as decision maker, teacher as professional, and teacher as problem solver, all encompass some notion of reflection in the process of professional development, but at the same time disguise a vast number of conceptual variations with a range of implications for the design and organization of teacher education courses. (p. 43)

On the surface, the international movement that has developed in teaching and teacher education under the banner of reflection can be seen as a reaction against a view of teachers as technicians who merely carry out what others, outside of the classroom, want them to do, a rejection of top-down forms of educational reform that involve teachers merely as passive participants. It involves a recognition that teachers are professionals who must play active roles in formulating the purposes and ends of their work as well as the means. Reflection also signifies a recognition that the generation of knowledge about good teaching and good schools is not the exclusive property of universities and research and development centers, a recognition that teachers have theories too, that can contribute to a knowledge base for teaching. Although there is the danger that these sentiments could lead to unthinking rejection of university-generated knowledge (and I think that would be as big as a mistake as the dismissal of teacher knowledge), there is a clear recognition that we cannot rely on university-generated knowledge alone for school improvement.

From the perspective of the individual teacher, it means that the process of understanding and improving one's own teaching must start from reflecting upon one's own experience, and, as Richard Winter (1987) of the United Kingdom has argued, the sort of wisdom derived entirely from the experience of others (even other teachers) "is at best impoverished, and at worst illusory" (p. vii). Reflection as a slogan also signifies a recognition that learning to teach is a process that continues throughout a teacher's entire career, a recognition that no matter what we do in our teacher education programs, and no matter how well we do them, at best, we can only prepare teachers to begin teaching. There is commitment by teacher educators to help prospective teachers internalize during their initial training, the disposition and skill to study their teaching and to become better at

teaching over time, and a commitment to help teachers take responsibility for their own professional development.

Despite all of this high-sounding rhetoric about the values and commitments associated with the reflective inquiry movement in teaching and teacher education, we get a very different picture when we look more closely at the ways in which the concepts *reflection* and the *reflective practitioner* have been employed in teacher education programs. Over the last year and a half, I have been conducting a systematic analysis of the ways in which these concepts have been used by teacher educators in the United States. I have examined the writings of teacher educators who say that reflective inquiry is a central force in their preservice teacher preparation programs and have also attended several conferences where these programs have been described. I have also examined a number of the curriculum materials designed to assist teacher educators in encouraging reflective teaching by their students such as the materials on *Reflective Teaching* developed at Ohio State University. Finally, I have also reviewed three book manuscripts for various publishers that seek to help teacher educators teach their student teachers to be reflective teachers.[4]

As a result of analyzing all of this material and of my discussions with teacher educators from across the United States, I have come to the conclusion that the ways in which the concepts of reflection and the reflective practitioner have come to be used in United States teacher education programs have frequently done very little to foster genuine teacher development. Instead, an illusion of teacher development is created that maintains in more subtle ways the subservience of the teacher. There are four characteristics of the way in which the concept of reflection has been employed in preservice teacher education that undermine the expressed emancipatory intent of teacher educators.

First, one of the most common uses of the concept involves helping teachers to reflect about their teaching with the primary aim of better replicating in their practice what university-sponsored empirical research has found to be effective. Sometimes the creative intelligence of the teacher is allowed to intervene to determine the situational appropriateness of employing particular strategies, but oftentimes not. Grimmett, MacKinnon, Erickson, and Reicken (1990) refer to this perspective as one in which reflection serves merely as the instrumental mediator of action. It clearly falls within the social efficiency tradition of reform in teaching and teacher education (see Liston & Zeichner, 1991) where the source of knowledge for reflection is external to the practice being studied. What is absent from this very prevalent conception of reflective teaching

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[4]See Zeichner (in press-a; in press-b) and Zeichner and Tabachnick (1991) for the results of some of these investigations.

practice is any sense of how the practical theories that reside in the practices of teachers (knowledge in action, if you will) are to contribute to the "knowledge base for teaching."

Ironically, despite Donald Schon's very articulate rejection of this technical rationality in his presentation of the case for an epistemology of practice in several very influential books (Schon, 1983, 1987, 1991), "theory" is still seen by many to reside exclusively within universities and "practice" to reside only within elementary and secondary schools. The problem is still wrongly cast by many as *merely* one of translating or applying the theories of the universities to classroom practice. The fact that theories are always produced through practices and that practices always reflect particular theoretical commitments either is not grasped or is deliberately ignored.

There are many examples of this in contemporary teacher education programs. I will share just one of them with you now—the definition of a reflective teacher in the graduate teacher education program at the University of Maryland, a program which bills itself as one of the cutting-edge reflective inquiry programs. According to a recent description of the program by faculty (McCaleb, Borko, & Arends, in press),

> A reflective teacher is a teacher who has command of the knowledge base for teaching. This teacher can: (1) explain the core ideas emanating from the knowledge base and cite appropriate best practices associated with them; (2) cite key pieces of research associated with the knowledge base and provide thoughtful critique of the research; (3) execute effectively (at a novice level) selected best practices which grow out of the research in simulated and laboratory settings and in real classrooms.

The definition goes on, but I think the emphasis is clear. Although here and in many other similar programs, we see language which emphasizes the empowering effects of reflecting upon an externally generated knowledge base of teaching, and a clear message to teachers that they should engage in thoughtful and critical use of the research by engaging in problem solving, decision making, critical analysis, and so on, the fact is that this conception of reflective practice denies the teacher the use of the wisdom and expertise embedded in her own practices and in the practices of her colleagues. She is merely to fine-tune and/or adapt knowledge that was formulated elsewhere by someone unfamiliar with that teachers particular situation. The relationship between theory and practice is seen as one-way instead of as dialogic. In a dialogic relationship, theory and practice inform each other.[5]

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[5]See Britzman (1991) pp. 46-49 for a brief but insightful discussion of different views of the theory-practice relationship.

Closely related to this persistence of technical rationality under the banner of reflective teaching is the limitation of the reflective process to consideration of teaching skills and strategies (the means of instruction) and the exclusion from the process of defining the ends of teaching and the exclusion of the ethical and philosophical realms of teaching from the teachers' purview. Here again teachers are denied the opportunity to do anything other than fine-tune and adjust the means for accomplishing ends determined by others. Teaching becomes a technical activity. Important questions related to values such as what should be taught to whom and why are defined independently and relegated to others removed from the classroom. This instrumental conception of reflective practice, which officially limits teachers to carrying out the values of others, ignores the inherent ethical quality of reflective teaching practice.

John Elliott (1991) of the University of East Anglia in the United Kingdom has articulated very clearly how it is impossible to define in a final way the ends of instruction prior to and independent of teaching practice and why if one is truly concerned about teacher development one must reject the kind of means-end thinking that limits teachers to technical concerns:

> Improving practice . . . necessarily involves a continuing process of reflection on the part of practitioners. This is partly because what constitutes an appropriate realization of value is very context bound. It has to be judged afresh in particular circumstances. General rules (e.g., curriculum outlines) are guides to reflection distilled from experience and not substitutes for it. What constitutes an appropriate realization of a value is ultimately a matter of personal judgement in particular circumstances. But since personal judgements are in principle infinitely contestable, practitioners who sincerely want to improve their practice are also under an obligation to reflect continuously about them in situ. Values are infinitely open to reinterpretation through reflective practice; they cannot be defined in terms of fixed and unchanging benchmarks against which to measure improvements in practice. The reflective practitioner's understanding of the values she attempts to realize in practice are continually transformed in the process of reflecting about such attempts. . . . Thus values as ends cannot be clearly defined independently of and prior to practice. In this context, the practice itself constitutes an interpretation of its ends in a particular practical situation. The ends are defined in the practice and not in advance of it. (pp. 50-51)

One of the clearest examples of limiting teachers to instrumental reasoning while claiming to liberate them, can be found in the *Reflective Teaching* materials developed at Ohio State University and disseminated throughout the world by the U.S. Association of Teacher Educators and Phi Delta Kappa (Cruickshank, 1987).[6] On the one hand, these materials speak very eloquently about the empowerment of teachers through reflective teaching:

> The point is that teachers who study teaching deliberately and become students of teaching can develop life-long assurance that they know what they are doing, why they are doing it, and what will happen as a result of what they do. Foremost, they can learn to behave according to reason. To lack reason is to be a slave to chance, irrationality, self interest, and superstition. (Cruickshank, 1987, p. 34)

On the other hand, when teachers use these materials in teacher education programs, the content of what is to be taught is provided to student teachers in 36 reflective teaching lessons, 32 of which are actually claimed to be "content-free." Not surprisingly, what results from this structure and from the discussion questions that are provided with the materials, is a great deal of thinking and discussion about teaching techniques and strategies divorced from ethical questions related to what is being taught.

A third aspect of the recent proliferation of the teacher education literature and programs with material related to reflective teaching is a clear emphasis on focusing teachers' reflections inwardly at their own teaching and/or on their students, to the neglect of any consideration of the social conditions of schooling that influence teachers' work within the classroom. This individualist bias makes it less likely that teachers will be able to confront and transform those structural aspects of their work that hinder the accomplishment of their educational mission. The context of the teacher's work is to be taken as given, unproblematic. Now while teachers' primary concerns understandably lie within the classroom and with their students, it is unwise to restrict their attention to these concerns alone. As the philosopher Israel Scheffler (1968) has argued,

> Teachers cannot restrict their attention to the classroom alone, leaving the larger setting and the purposes of schooling to be determined by others. They

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[6]It should be noted that these materials are still being widely promoted throughout North America. For example, the inside front cover of the November 1991 issue of *Phi Delta Kappan* is a full-page ad for the newly revised *Reflective Teaching* materials.

> must take active responsibility for the goals to which they are committed and for the social setting in which these goals may prosper. If they are not to be mere agents of others, of the state, of the military, of the media, of the experts and bureaucrats, they need to determine their own agency through a critical and continual evaluation of the purposes, the consequences, and the social context of their calling. (p.11)[7]

We must be careful here that teachers' involvement in matters beyond the boundaries of their own classrooms does not make excessive demands on their time, energy, and expertise, diverting their attention from their core mission with students. In some circumstances, creating more opportunities for teachers to participate in school-wide decisions related to curriculum, instruction, staffing, budgeting, and so forth, can intensify their work beyond the bounds of reasonableness and make it more difficult for them to accomplish their primary task of educating students (see Zeichner, 1991). It does not have to be this way, of course, but it can, unless efforts are made to incorporate their participation in school-wide decision making into their work, instead of adding it to their work.

A fourth and closely related aspect of much of the material in the reflective teaching movement in preservice teacher education is the focus on facilitating reflection by individual teachers who are to think by themselves about their work. There is very little sense in a great deal of the discourse on reflective teaching of reflection as a social practice, where groups of teachers can support and sustain each other's growth. The definition of teacher development as an activity to be pursued by individual teachers greatly limits the potential for teacher growth. The challenge and support gained through social interaction is important to helping us to clarify what we believe and to gaining the courage to pursue our beliefs.

One consequence of this isolation of individual teachers and of the lack of attention to the social context of teaching in teacher development is that teachers come to see their problems as their own, unrelated to those of other teachers or to the structure of schools and school systems. Thus we have seen the emergence of such terms as "teacher burnout" and "teacher stress," which direct the attention of teachers away from a critical analysis of schools as institutions to a preoccupation with their own individual failures. If we are to have genuine teacher development in which teachers are truly empowered, then we must turn away from this individual approach and heed the advice of those like the teachers who

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[7]See Lawn (1989) for a discussion of this issue in relation to teacher research.

were members of the Boston Women Teachers Group in the 1980s (a group who conducted their own research related to the institutional aspects of teachers' work). These teachers argued that

> teachers must now begin to t. 1 the investigation of schools away from scapegoating individual teachers, students, parents, and administrators toward a system-wide approach. Teachers must recognize how the structure of schools controls their work and deeply affects their relationships with their fellow teachers, their students, and their students' families. Teachers must feel free to express these insights and publicly voice their concerns. Only with this knowledge can they grow into wisdom and help others to grow. (Freedman, Jackson, & Boles, 1983, p. 299)

A statement by one of the 25 elementary school teachers who was interviewed in their research illustrates how concern for the institutional context of schooling can serve to strengthen the teacher's commitment to their educational mission. The comments refer to a discussion about the attempts of a school district to reduce teaching positions:

> Probably for the first time in my school we have not talked specifically about the kids and subject matter and school problems. We've been talking about political things and how it affects our personal life too. I think it's taught me a lesson that you cannot hide your head in the sand. I'm not just fighting for me either. Yeah I'm fighting for my job, but I'm also fighting for the kids too. I think it's going to help my awareness of things and help me maybe stick through it a little bit. That I'm not alone in this and I've got other people to talk with and see how its going to affect other people. I think it has already made me mentally and in action make more of a commitment to my work. (Freedman, Jackson, & Boles, 1983, p. 299)

In summary, when we examine the ways in which the concepts of reflection and the reflective practitioner have been recently integrated into preservice teacher education programs at least in the United States, but I suspect to some extent in other countries as well, we find four themes that undermine the potential for genuine teacher development: (1) a focus on helping teachers to better replicate practices suggested by research conducted by others and a neglect of the theories and expertise embedded in their own and other teachers' practices, (2) a means-end thinking which limits the substance of teachers' reflections to technical questions of teaching techniques and internal classroom organization and a neglect of questions of curriculum, (3) facilitating teachers' reflections about their own teaching while ignoring the social and institutional context in which the teaching takes place,

and (4) an emphasis on helping teachers to reflect individually. All of these practices help create a situation where there is merely the illusion of teacher development.

Teacher Development and Social Justice

Ironically, my second general concern has to do with those situations where these four characteristics are not present. There are clearly many conceptions of reflective teaching and teacher development other than those I have been describing thus far, even though what I have been discussing is still very prevalent in preservice teacher education programs in the United States. A so-called second wave of educational reform has swept across North America in the last five years or so that has transcended the limitations of what I have been describing. This recent aspect of the reform movement, while coming in the United States, according to Darling-Hammond and Berry (1988), at the expense of greater regulation of teacher education programs and more detailed teacher certification laws, has clearly focused on genuine and not bogus teacher development. During the last few years the professional literature and the popular press have been flooded with calls for the empowerment of teachers to participate in a more central way in the determination of school goals and policies and to exercise their professional judgment about both the content of the curriculum and the means of instruction. Along with these calls for the empowerment of teachers have come proposals for restructuring the institution of the school to become a more professional and collaborative work environment. Teacher empowerment, teacher leadership, teacher collaboration, and school restructuring are clearly the buzzwords of the day (e.g., Barth, 1990; Maeroff, 1988).

If all of this is now happening in the general educational context, one might argue that all that needs to be done is to enlighten the teacher education community in universities to adopt this broader vision. This would make me happier but not happy. My concern is that the movement to empower teachers and to restructure schools has been taken to such an extreme by some, that the really important questions about the purposes of education in a democratic society sometimes get lost. Teacher development becomes an end in itself unconnected to any broader purposes.

Reflection, as Stephen Kemmis (1985) tells us, is unavoidably a political act that either hastens or defers the realization of a more decent and just society, whether acknowledged or not. All teaching actions have a variety of consequences which include such things as (a) personal consequences—the effects of classroom actions on students' self-images, (b) academic consequences—the effects on students' intellectual achievement,

and (c) social consequences—the cumulative effects of school experience on students' life chances (Pollard & Tann, 1987).

What concerns me is that the teacher empowerment and school restructuring movement, while attending very carefully to the intellectual and personal consequences of classroom and school events, often gives very little attention to how these events are joined to issues of social continuity and change, to issues of equity and social justice. How teachers' everyday actions challenge or support various oppressions and injustices related to social class, race, gender, sexual preference, religion, and numerous other factors needs to be a central part of teachers' reflections, teacher research, and collaborative decision-making schemes. I do not want to reduce my students' deliberations to consider *only* these things, but I do want to help extend their thinking to *also* consider them. It is also important, as Nell Noddings (1987) and others have reminded us, that in our pursuit of social justice that our commitment to the quality of relationships (i.e., an ethic of care) is not abandoned.

For example, instead of merely talking about such things as "teaching for understanding," "developmentally appropriate instruction," "whole-language instruction," and "conceptual change teaching," all of which are currently fashionable terms in North America to describe some version of enlightened teaching practice, we need to think very clearly about who is to benefit from these innovative instructional approaches. Furthermore, instead of merely discussing teaching and learning for understanding for everybody's children (a currently fashionable slogan in the United States, thanks in part to the Holmes Group), we also need to ensure that everybody's knowledge and everybody's cultural heritage is represented in that which we seek students to understand. Unless we do these things, the likelihood is that many students will continue to be bypassed by innovative school practices and continue to be denied, with the complicity of the school, access to decent and fulfilling lives.[8]

The evidence is very strong that we cannot assume teachers' willingness to educate everyone's children to the same high standard and that, even when teachers are well intentioned, their actions will always have the effect of promoting democratic education. For example, there is clear evidence that the empowerment of teachers through school-restructuring schemes can serve under some circumstances to undercut important connections between schools and their communities as teachers use their strengthened position to minimize more effectively the influence of parents (see Zeichner, 1991).

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[8]See Kozol (1991) for a vivid documentation of some of these problems in U.S. schools.

Let me be clear. I am not suggesting, as some have, that the numerous injustices that can be found in our public school systems are caused by teachers and schools (gaps in achievement between students of different races, grouping and labeling practices that create gaps in access to knowledge, school suspension and drop-out rates that are highly correlated with race and social class). Schools did not cause these problems and school reform by itself cannot solve them.

There is irrefutable evidence in many countries that social class background, gender, and race play strong roles in determining access to a variety of things in addition to a quality education—quality housing, health care, rewarding work that pays a decent wage—and that they affect the incidence of a whole host of rotten outcomes such as malnutrition, child abuse, physical and psychological stress, childhood pregnancies, violent crime during adolescence, and drug abuse. Over 13 million children in the United States, for example, currently live in conditions of poverty which make them highly vulnerable to many of these factors.[9] I don't know all that much about the situation in Canada, but I suspect that it is not all that different for certain segments of its population.

Anyway you look at it, this situation is simply outrageous. One can agree that it is an outrageous situation, though, and see little connection between what one does as a teacher and these economic and social problems. Or, one can see the connections and feel so overwhelmed by the enormity of the problems that you try to insulate yourself from them. There were many times during my career as an elementary school teacher in inner city schools in the northeastern United States when I felt so overwhelmed by all of the problems that my students brought with them to the school door that I was ready to give up. We can't give up, of course. We must do the best we can within our classrooms and schools, and, importantly, we must also link up with those who are struggling in various other sectors of society for the achievement of the social preconditions that will enable our educational efforts to be more successful.

While educational actions by teachers within schools cannot solve all of these societal problems by themselves, they can contribute their share to the building of more decent and just societies. The most important point is that teaching cannot be neutral. Neither can teacher development. We as teachers, at whatever level, must act with greater political clarity about whose interests we are furthering in our daily actions, including our approach to professional development, because, like it or not and whether acknowledged or not, we are taking a stand through our actions and through our words. We should not, of course,

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[9]See Children's Defense Fund (1991) for documentation of some of these factors in the United States. See Schorr (1989) for a discussion of the interrelatedness of educational, social, and economic factors in the United States.

reduce teaching only to its political elements, but we need to make sure that this aspect of teaching does not get lost as it often does.

Let me give you one example of how practices, which in many ways deal with the limitations I outlined earlier, do not go far enough in connecting to issues of equity and social justice. My example deals with teacher research, the "systematic intentional inquiry by teachers into their own school and classroom work" (Lytle & Cochran-Smith, 1990, p. 83). In preparing for the course on teacher research that I taught at Simon Fraser University this summer, I came across an article published in the *British Educational Research Journal* (Weiner, 1989) that documents some of the uneasiness that I have been feeling for a while with the failure of some of the knowledge production by teachers to connect to issues of social justice.

The article is written by Gaby Weiner of the Open University in the United Kingdom who was involved from 1981-1983 in a teacher research project sponsored by the British Schools Council, the Sex Differentiation Project. The aim of the Sex Differentiation Project was to "establish the eradication of gender inequities in the schools as a mainstream educational priority" (Weiner, 1989, p. 42). One of the main aspects of the project was supporting teachers as researchers in exploring issues in the schools and in accumulating examples of practices from the teachers' research which served to reduce gender inequities. This is research by teachers that clearly makes the connection to issues of social justice.

The problem is that this kind of teacher research is not all that common, according to Weiner's appraisal of the teacher-researcher movement. In her analysis of teacher research in Britain in the 1980s, she identified two different segments of this movement, the mainstream movement and the gender research movement. The mainstream movement, according to Weiner, concentrated on issues related to the professional development of teachers and placed the emphasis on the process of reflective inquiry rather than on the outcomes of the research. In contrast, the gender researchers placed more emphasis on the latter (the outcomes) and were committed to increased social justice within a professional development framework. Both groups of researchers were concerned with the liberation and emancipation of teachers, with creating conditions where teachers—and not academics or external researchers—could develop educational theory grounded in classroom practice, but only the gender researchers connected their efforts explicitly to questions of equity and social justice. In her analysis of 75 action research papers in the 1984 *Bulletin of the Classroom Action Research Network*, for example, Weiner could only find one mention of a gender-related topic. Gender as a substantive classroom issue was largely ignored by mainstream teacher researchers. Weiner expressed the hope that in the future all teacher

research should embrace the dual aims of increased self-knowledge and increased social justice.

Despite some oversimplification of the richness of the teacher-researcher movement, Weiner is right. Much of the research now being produced by teachers fails to incorporate an explicit concern with equity questions of any kind. My own experience confirms Weiner's. In the many teacher research studies that I've read over the years, as well as studies conducted by our student teachers at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, I too have seen a great deal of concern with increased self-knowledge and professional development and a great deal of concern with the personal and academic consequences of teaching, but often very little evidence of a connection of the research to issues of equity and social justice, to issues related to gender, social class, race, ethnicity, physical handicaps, and so on (e.g., Gore & Zeichner, 1991). Of course this is not a problem solely of teacher research. University-initiated educational research is just as lacking. What needs to happen, though, especially with teacher research and other forms of genuine teacher development, is for teachers to extend their inquiries to consider how their actions challenge and support the access to and achievement of a high quality education by *all* students.

There are many examples of teacher research which exemplify just what I am proposing. For example, this past year a group of eight elementary school teachers in the Madison Metropolitan School District conducted studies in their own classrooms that focused on ways to improve the school experiences of students of color. In one of these projects, for example, Ellen Ranney, an elementary English as a Second Language teacher explored the impact on her students of various ways of teaching English as a second language both in and outside of the regular classroom. In Madison, like many other cities in the United States, there are serious problems with achievement gaps between minority and majority students. The teachers' studies will be fed into an overall plan for dealing with these problems. This group was so successful that the school district has agreed to sponsor two more groups the next year, a group of middle school teachers and a group of principals. All of this work is focused directly on promoting greater educational equity throughout the school district.[10]

In my course at Simon Fraser University this past summer, we read about a similar project at a middle school in Fairfax, Virginia (Langston Hughes Intermediate School, 1988), and about a project by Donna Cutler Landsman, a Madison-area elementary teacher who

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[10]Copies of the Madison teachers' action research reports can be obtained at no cost from the auth University of Wisconsin-Madison, 225 N. Mills St., Madison, WI 53706.

sought to promote greater gender equity in science education in her sixth-grade classroom.[11] All of these research projects were completed by full-time classroom teachers at little extra cost to their school districts. In all of the projects, greater equity was an explicit concern.

While I strongly agree with those who argue that the voices of teachers need to be at the center of the dialogue and debate surrounding current educational reform and research on teaching (e.g., Miller, 1990), we have to ensure that teacher development does not become an end in itself. Teacher development needs to be genuine and not a fraud, and it also needs to be a means toward the education of everybody's children. It needs to support teachers' efforts to reflect on and change the practices and social conditions which undermine and distort the educational potential and moral basis of schooling in democratic societies.

I would like to close by quoting from a talk that was given at Simon Fraser University 11 years ago at a similar Summer Institute in Teacher Education by Lawrence Stenhouse from the United Kingdom, who devoted most of his career to furthering the cause of genuine teacher development. In his lecture "Artistry and Teaching," Stenhouse clearly set forth the conditions which must be realized to foster genuine teacher development and the supportive roles that must be assumed by people like many of us, who claim to want to see it happen:

> Good teachers are necessarily autonomous in professional judgment. They do not need to be told what to do. They are not professionally the dependents of researchers or superintendents, of innovators or supervisors. This does not mean that they do not welcome access to ideas created by other people at other places or in other times. Nor do they reject advice, consultancy or support. But they do know that ideas and people are not of much real use until they are digested to the point where they are subject to the teacher's own judgment. In short, it is the task of all educationists outside the classroom to serve the teachers. For only they are in the position to create good teaching. (Quoted in Ruddick & Hopkins, 1985, p. 104)

. would add that it is only teachers who are in the position to create good teaching *for everyone's children*. Those of us who say we are concerned about genuine teacher development need to ensure that the connection to "everyone" is not forgotten.

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[11]This report, "Lego TC Logo: Bridging the Gender Gap," can also be obtained from the author.

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