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Recovering the Social Dimension of Reflection

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Upon its publication in 1983, Schön's The Reflective Practitioner *became almost instantly influential in the design of teacher education programs in North America. Within eight years of its publication, it was nearly impossible to find a teacher educator not emphasizing the importance of reflection (Erlandson, 2007; Zeichner & Tabachinick, 1981). Despite a paucity of research establishing its benefits, the practice continues to play an important role in teacher education programs, including programs for preservice teacher education located at Catholic colleges and universities. After describing how reflection in teacher education is popularly conceived and after reviewing critiques of the practice as currently understood and commonly promoted in teacher education programs, I will propose in this article an understanding that recasts reflection as a social practice that (a) has experience as its principal object and (b) takes place in social encounters among teachers.*

Introduction

Upon its publication in 1983, Schön's *The Reflective Practitioner* became almost instantly influential in the design of teacher education programs in North America. Within eight years of its publication, it was nearly impossible to find a teacher educator not emphasizing the importance of reflection (Erlandson, 2007; Zeichner & Tabachinick, 1991). Despite a paucity of research establishing its benefits, the practice continues to play an important role in teacher education programs, including programs for preservice teacher education located at Catholic colleges and universities. After describing how reflection in teacher education is popularly conceived and after reviewing critiques of the practice as currently understood and commonly promoted in teacher education programs, I will propose in this article an understanding that recasts reflection as a social practice that (a) has experience as its principal object; and (b) takes place in social encounters among teachers.

The article will propose an alternative vision of reflection that reflects contemporary sensibilities, which treat teaching as a craft and as a way of relating to others (Grossman & McDonald, 2008). The article will also serve as an

object lesson in using the charism of a sponsoring institution to inform the design of teacher preparation programs. In this regard, I will engage in a sort of *ressourcement* (a return to the roots) of St. Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), in order to show how programs inspired by his vision at Jesuit universities can recast reflection as a more relational practice.

　　Ressourcement is a French word associated especially with a theological school advocating renewal through a return to the sources (particularly the Church Fathers). Joseph Ratzinger captured the importance of the movement when he wrote: "Whoever reads [Henri] de Lubac's book [*Catholicisme*, 1938] will see how much more relevant theology is the more it returns to its center and draws from its deepest resources" (Ratzinger, 1988, p. 11). Recognizing the distinctive American context of teacher preparation programs, I will treat John Dewey similarly.

Reflection as a Central Dimension of Teacher Education

With the publication of *The Reflective Practitioner* (1983), Schön proposed an alternative to the "technical rationalism" that has characterized the professions. In education, this objectivist understanding (Edwards, Gilroy, & Hartley, 2002) has been closely aligned with efforts to distinguish the knowledge of professional educators from the knowledge of laypersons by establishing an official and formal knowledge base, "knowledge-for-practice" as Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) refer to it. Technical rationalism leaves very little room for practitioner-generated knowledge or theories about classroom practices, and its adherents make judgments about the proficiency of professionals based on their abilities to successfully implement, translate, or otherwise put into practice the knowledge they acquire from experts and sources outside the classroom, such as researchers and scholars at universities or authoritative texts (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999). By encouraging the practice of reflection, Schön attempted to de-emphasize the prominence given to the formulaic and static nature of professional knowledge.

　　One alternative to the objectivist approach is the reflective one proposed by Schön (1983), who criticized "technical rationality" (p. 21) on the grounds that it does not allow for the "ordinary practical knowledge" (p. 54) that his case studies showed exists in professions. At the same time, he also rejected the chaos of a subjectivist approach characterized by the autonomy of the individual and his or her experience over and above other possible sources of knowledge (what Schön referred to as "no knowledge at all") (Schön &

Rein, 1994, p. 42). Instead, Schön argued that professionals work with a tacit form of knowledge, which he termed "knowing-in-action," knowledge gained through a process he called "reflection-in-action." According to Schön, knowledge is implicit in action. This implicit knowledge can be made *explicit*—and thus available to the practitioner—by means of conscious reflection on practice.

Zeichner and Liu (2010) offered three principal reasons for the model's becoming "the prevailing orthodoxy in teacher education" (Edwards et al., 2002, p. 37). First, reflective practice recognizes teachers as subjects who "should play active roles in formulating the purposes and ends of their work" (p. 69). Second, and related to the first, reflective practice proposes an alternative to the traditional position by which teachers are positioned as recipients of knowledge handed down to them by university-based experts. A third related reason for the popularity of reflection-in-action in teacher education, according to Zeichner and Liu, is that teachers are positioned as theorists in their own right: they too can contribute to the professional knowledge base about what constitutes commendable teaching practice.

Shortcomings of the Reflection-in-Action Model in Teacher Education

Despite the enduring popularity of reflection as an important activity in most teacher education programs, the practice is not without problems. In their review of reflection as a goal for teacher education, Zeichner and Liu (2010) outlined four themes regarding the practice of reflection as popularly conceived that "undermine the potential for genuine teacher development" (p. 69).

First, they observed that reflection has neither fostered teacher subjectivity in "formulating the purposes and ends of their work" (p. 69) nor encouraged teachers to assume leadership roles in school reform. Instead, Zeichner and Liu (2010) noted the illusion of agency of teachers in the educational process and teacher development.

Second, and related to the first, the turn to reflection has not in fact provided an alternative to technical rationalism. Instead, the concept has been commandeered to support the status quo. Very often, the focus of reflection is not so much on the experience of teachers in classrooms and schools, but rather on how successfully a curriculum or teaching method has been replicated.

Third, with a focus on such things as curriculum and methods, teachers are discouraged from reflecting on larger social issues. As Zeichner and Liu (2010) noted, because the context of teachers' work is taken for granted, it is

less likely that they "will be able to confront and transform those structural aspects of their work that undermine their accomplishment of their educational goals" (p. 71).

Finally, the focus on fostering reflection by individual teachers has conspired with the historical individualism of the teaching profession (Lortie, 1975) to further isolate teachers. The result has been teachers struggling alone. As presently conceived, "there is still very little emphasis on reflection as a social practice that takes place within communities of teachers who support and sustain each other's growth" (Zeichner & Liu, 2010, p. 72).

Despite its popularity, the effectiveness of reflection on teachers' growth in the profession remains uncertain. The uncertainty about its effectiveness is evident in the absence of any substantial discussion of reflection in recent significant reports on teacher education, including the American Educational Research Association's *Studying Teacher Education: The Report of the AERA Panel on Research and Teacher Education* (Cochran-Smith & Zeichner, 2005), the Association of Teacher Educators' *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education* (Cochran-Smith, Feiman-Nemser, & McIntyre, 2008), and the National Academy of Education's *Preparing Teachers for a Changing World: What Teachers Should Learn and Be Able to Do* (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2007).

In an article identifying problems that account for many of the difficulties with the concept of reflection as popularly conceived in teacher preparation programs, Rodgers (2002) reconstructed the concept by returning to Dewey (whose influence on his thinking Schön [1983] readily admitted) and identifying four distinct criteria for properly defining and practicing reflection in light of Dewey:

1. reflection as a meaning making process;
2. reflection as a rigorous way of thinking;
3. reflection in community; and
4. reflection as a set of attitudes.

Rodgers (2002) offers these criteria as a place to begin to talk about reflection, "so that it might be taught, learned, assessed, discussed, and researched, and thereby evolve in definition and practice, rather than disappear" (p. 842).

These criteria, along with the themes advanced by Zeichner and Liu (2010) can serve as a resource for considering both how Dewey's work might support reconceiving the practice of reflection in teacher education programs in the United States and how Ignatius Loyola (whose charism informs Jesuit institutions) can serve in a similar way for Jesuit-sponsored teacher education programs.

Reflection at Jesuit-Sponsored Teacher Education Programs

In so far as they encourage reflection as an important aspect of teacher learning, Jesuit-sponsored teacher education programs are typical. An informal review of four conceptual frameworks (CFs), guiding theoretical documents produced at Jesuit-sponsored institutions as part of the process of accreditation by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), reveals the continuing popularity and use of the concept by faculty at Jesuit programs. NCATE is the principal professional accrediting program for teacher education programs, helping to ensure that graduates of such programs are competent educators. According to NCATE, a conceptual framework "establishes the shared vision for a unit's efforts in preparing educators to work in P-12 schools and provides direction for programs, courses, teaching, candidate performance, scholarship, service, and unit accountability" (National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education [NCATE], 2009, Precondition #4). NCATE accreditation is highly valued because the organization is recognized by local, state, and federal agencies as the principal accrediting body for schools, colleges, and departments of education. Its importance is reflected in the number of accredited institutions, which stands at close to 700 (NCATE, 2010).

In some of the CFs of Jesuit schools, there are sections devoted to reflection as a practice. For instance, Seattle University lists "reflective" as an organizational theme:

> All College of Education programs prepare students to be self-initiating and life-long learners who 1) integrate and extend their professional knowledge, self-understanding, and professional experience; 2) examine their intentions, assumptions, and personal and professional goals in light of their professional experience, relevant theory, research, professional practice, and the actual outcomes of their own professional practice; and 3) create and apply new understanding from such examination. Reflection is the primary process to achieve these three professional goals. (Seattle University, 2004/2007)

The understanding of reflection expressed in this statement goes beyond technical rationalism, for it clearly takes into account experiences and intentions of teachers. However, as it is expressed in the CF, reflection seems to be principally an individualistic, Cartesian exercise.

In a section entitled "Response to the Individual," the CF for New York City's Fordham University (2011) states that "We value excellence, reflection, research, and theory-based best practice, ethical behavior, and social justice." In an earlier section entitled "The Reflective and Inclusive Educator and Professional," reflective educators are described as "individuals who apply best practice in the design, development, delivery, and evaluation of inclusive instruction for all students." Interestingly what is highlighted in the description of the reflective teacher is the application of best practices, reminiscent of the very sort of technical rationalism and education-for-practice (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999) that Schön (1983) challenged. This stance toward reflection is mitigated to a certain degree in a subsequent sentence that describes best practice as something not simply received from experts but rather derived from "study and reflection, inquiry, and research that springs from collaboration among and between researchers and practitioners" (Fordham University, 2011).

The CF of the School of Education and Human Services (SEHS) at Canisius College, Buffalo, New York, proposes an understanding of reflection not unlike Zeichner and Liu's (2010) description of reflection as suppressing teacher subjectivity and instead protecting the status quo in which teachers receive knowledge from experts and "reflect" on how such knowledge is best applied:

> Candidates benefit from the acquisition of self-reflection as a habit of mind, continuously assessing and refining their professional practice (Schön, 1983) as they construct a rich repertoire of research-based knowledge, skills, and attitudes for effective candidate and/or counseling instruction and assessment, ensuring that all students and/or clients have optimal opportunities to learn and grow. (Canisius College, 2005/2010)

In an earlier section devoted to knowledge, the school's CF states, "Programs in the Canisius College SEHS provide candidates with the content, pedagogical, and professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for quality performance in their field" (Canisius College, 2005/2010). Though the CF includes a lengthy block quotation from Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) regarding "local knowledge" and "knowledge-of-practice," these notions are obscured by the later use of terms like "acquisition" and "application."

The School of Education at Loyola Marymount University (LMU), Los

Angeles, considers the practice of reflection in a section entitled "Integration of Theory and Practice." The role of reflection in this integration is made explicit. Early in the section, the teacher educators are described as "reflective practitioners who integrate theory and practice in order to prepare graduates who will work for a more just and equitable society" (LMU, 2009). After referencing the influence of Jesuit "concepts and goals" and the work of Dewey, LMU's CF continues:

> As reflective practitioners ourselves, we recognize that the purpose of theory is to assist in the organization of information and knowledge so that it can better inform practice. The integration of theory and practice is a dynamic and reciprocal process involving reflection and dialogue. Believing that knowledge is socially constructed, courses in the School of Education have incorporated the principles of sociocultural/constructivist theory. (LMU, 2009)

By placing reflection and dialogue together, LMU's CF begins to provide one way by which Rodger's (2002) third criterion (reflection in community) can be addressed.

LMU's CF notes the influence that Jesuit "concepts and goals" and the thought of John Dewey had on its composition. In this regard, LMU is not extraordinary, for both influences (Jesuit and Dewey) are acknowledged in many of the CFs of Jesuit institutions. As members of communities of memory (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985), teacher educators at Jesuit institutions in the United States have both Ignatius Loyola and John Dewey as resources to help them to address the deficiencies in the understanding and practice of reflection. In particular, the thought of John Dewey can serve as a resource for reconsidering teacher experience as the proper principal object of reflection, and the thought of Ignatius Loyola can likewise serve as an important resource for reconsidering reflection as a social, intermental practice (as opposed to an individual, intramental one).

Reflection and the Ressourcement of John Dewey and Ignatius Loyola

John Dewey: Reflection on Experience

In a famous essay on the relationship of theory to practice, Dewey (1904/1964) expressed his concern about the lack of "intellectual independence among teachers, their tendency toward intellectual subserviency" (p. 321):

The 'model lesson' of the teachers' institute and of the educational journal is a monument, on the one hand, of the eagerness of those in authority to secure immediate practical results at any cost; and upon the other, of the willingness of our teacher corps to accept without inquiry or criticism any method or device which seems to promise good results. Teachers, actual and intending, flock to those persons who give them clear-cut and definite instructions as to just how to teach this or that.

The alternative to this sort of subserviency is the recognition among teachers of their own intelligence independent of prescriptions from others that dictate practices for classroom application. Dewey (1904/1964) notes that "If teachers were possessed by the spirit of an abiding student of education, this spirit would find some way of breaking through the mesh and coil of circumstance and would find expression for itself" (pp. 321-322).

For Dewey it is not a matter simply of teachers taking up knowledge-for-practice or putting theory into practice; rather, it is the dynamic and reciprocal relationship between understanding and experience. "Understanding and experience are," after all, "in constant interaction–are indeed, mutually constitutive" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, pp. 51-52). Dewey (1939/1988) proposes the legitimacy of local theorizing when he writes that "all thinking is research, and all research is native, original, with him[1] who carries it on" (p. 155). Theory has often been considered in platonic terms, as an abstraction, an ideal put into practice. Nothing could be further from Dewey's own conception of the relationship between theory and practice. He insists on the "necessity of an actual empirical situation as the initiating phase of thought" (Dewey, 1916/1985, p. 160); that is, the necessity of experience as the content of reflection. As Dewey writes:

An ounce of experience is better than a ton of theory simply because it is only in experience that any theory has vital and verifiable significance. An experience, a very humble experience, is capable of generating and carrying any amount of theory (or intellectual content), but a theory apart from an experience cannot be definitely grasped even as theory. It tends to become a mere verbal formula, a set of catchwords used to render thinking, or genuine theorizing, unnecessary and impossible. (1985, p. 151)

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[1]   Any instances of non-inclusive language found in this article are reproduced from the original text(s) and are not the preferred word choice of the Author or the Editors of the *Journal of Catholic Education.*

From a Deweyan perspective, what is needed are opportunities for teachers to reflect on their experiences and so become more aware of the relationships between what they try to do and the ensuing consequences instead of exogenous procedures—knowledge-for-practice—conferred with the status of theory and introduced to teachers in their teacher education programs (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999).

Popular approaches reminiscent of the process-product research that sought to explain how teacher behaviours (processes) correlate with or cause student achievement (products) have not proven to be successful (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999) because the approaches do not account for the extent to which teachers have to adapt their practice to changes (demographic, curricular, contextual) as well as to the varying strengths and needs of students (Hatch, 2006).

Teacher education programs have traditionally assumed that teachers' effectiveness owes more to their being introduced to the latest ideas, techniques, or strategies developed by experts than to their own skills and accomplishments (Hatch, 2006). However, by their nature, exogenous ideas, techniques, and strategies (proposed as objects for teacher reflection) are difficult for a teacher to appropriate because there is little room for the teacher's own intentions (Bakhtin, 1981). For instance, teachers might very well master the surface discourse of "best practices" and yet not appropriate the actual meanings or understand in which circumstances they are best used or employed (Wertsch, 1998).

An approach to teacher education based on Dewey's notions regarding the practice of reflection is different from popular approaches built on the knowledge-for-practice framework. Dewey promotes the cultivation of improvised, spontaneous classroom practices, practices that are web-like, driven by tacit knowledge, and that serve as provisions for responding to the contingent, unpredictable nature of the classroom (Brown & Duguid, 1991; Hatch, 2006). Such an approach accommodates the contribution of practitioners (both preservice and inservice teachers) as members of a community of professionals dedicated to generating knowledge and theories about classroom practice. Such an approach proposes more freedom to reflect on their experiences of teaching and a greater desire to be a "student of education"(Dewey, 1904/1964, p. 321).

"Freedom," Dewey (1916/1985) writes, "means essentially the part played by thinking—which is personal—in learning: —it means intellectual initiative, independence in observation, judicious invention, foresight of consequences,

and ingenuity of adaptation to them" (p. 311). Knowledge's content has to do with what is "settled and sure," but its reference has to do with what is prospective, for it "furnishes the means of understanding or giving meaning to what is still going on and what is to be done" (1916/1985, p. 351). Emphasis on technical rationalism (Schön, 1983) "omits availability in dealing with what is yet to be" (Dewey, 1916/1985, p. 352), whereas more practice-based understandings of knowledge understand it as a resource for the interpretation of "unknown things," as a means to fill out "partial obvious facts with connected suggested phenomena" to foresee their probable trajectory, and to plan accordingly (p. 351).

Teaching does not require so much reflection about discrete pedagogical methods and classroom management techniques as it requires skills of perception that situate knowledge in the living context of classrooms by means of reflection on experience. For Dewey, the significance of experience is realized in reflection. It is important to note, however, that reflection is not simply Cartesian cogitation for Dewey (1916/1985); it is founded in social interaction:

> In final account, then, not only does social life demand teaching and learning for its own permanence, but the very process of living together educates. It enlarges and enlightens experience; it stimulates and enriches imagination; it creates responsibility for accuracy and vividness of statement and thought. A man really living alone (alone mentally as well as physically) would have little or no occasion to reflect upon his past experience to extract its net meaning. (1916/1985, p. 9)

That this thinking for Dewey (1916/1985) is "personal," does not mean it is individual. It is a social affair: "All communication (and hence all genuine social life) is educative" (p. 8).

Regarding this social dimension of reflection, the work of Ignatius Loyola can provide guidance for considering reflection as a potential resource available to faculty members at teacher education programs at Jesuit-sponsored colleges and universities for thinking about the interactional and dialogic aspects of reflection.

Ignatius Loyola: The Social Dimensions of Reflection

In *The First Jesuits* (1993), an account of the early history of the Society of Jesus, O'Malley recounted the spring and summer of 1534 in Paris "when the

seven students spent their free hours together in devout conversation and in trying to imagine where their futures might lead" (p. 32). These seven students referred to by O'Malley included Ignatius Loyola, Francis Xavier, and Pierre Favre. Their conversations served as opportunities for each to come to a greater understanding of his experience and to imagine possible futures together. For Ignatius and his companions, conversation was essential for making sense of experience, that is, for learning.

In his *Memoriale*, Favre (1996), who served as a sort of mentor at the University of Paris for new student Ignatius Loyola, wrote the following:

> For after providence decreed that I was to be instructor of that holy man, we conversed at first about secular matters then about spiritual things. Then followed a life in common in which we two shared the same room, the same table, and the same purse. As time passed he became my master in spiritual things and gave me a method of raising myself to a knowledge of the divine will and of myself. In the end we became one in desire and will and one in a firm resolve to take up that life we lead today. (p. 64)

Favre's growth in understanding comes in large part as a result of conversation and his shared life with Loyola. There is at the beginning an asymmetry: Favre has knowledge of the workings of the University of Paris that the newcomer Ignatius does not, so he guides Ignatius. They begin with conversation and move to sharing a common life; over the course of their interaction, the roles change and Ignatius becomes the guide for Favre. The result of their social interaction, their conversation and common life over time, is that they become one in desire, will, and resolve. It was on the basis of a certain sort of mutuality created over time and not on adversarial, coercive, or exacting relationships that the unity of which Favre writes was founded and that learning occurred.

Learning to teach is not so different from the sort of learning recounted by Favre. It, too, is a process with a social dynamic rather than an individual problem of behavior. Britzman (2003) observes that "While learning to teach is individually experienced and hence it may be viewed as individually determined, in actuality it is socially negotiated" (p. 30). It is socially negotiated because it is situated in a context in which a teacher's own intentions, values and epistemological, ethical, and aesthetic commitments come into contact with contradictory realities, requiring negotiation and struggle.

Such social negotiation is shaped by and at the same time shaping the individual selves engaged in the development of knowledge. We know, for instance, that Ignatius modified the Spiritual Exercises in light of the experience of retreatants (Asselin, 1969). Learning is neither principally the reception of knowledge transmitted from teacher to student, nor is it principally the natural product of individual inquiry and discovery. Instead, learning is "a process of transformation of participation itself" (Rogoff, 1994, p. 209). What is clear in Favre's (1996) account is that the development of understanding is a function of transforming roles relative to participation in the activities of a community.

In the spring of 1539, the early companions deliberated about what form their companionship would take. Division, chaos, and disagreement marked their deliberations. It was out of this muddle that Ignatius, Favre, and Codure (another companion) were given the material from which they would forge the document constituting the Society of Jesus as such. The details of the deliberation are not so important to narrate here. What is important to note is that it was in part as a result of their interaction, as messy as it was at times, and not despite it that those men came to an understanding of what they were about, that they together made sense of their experiences. This is an important dynamic to note and to respect: Disagreements among those who share personal bonds of trust can propel the understanding of the participants, acting as a resource for refining knowledge. Deliberation—the social face of reflection—often involves some amount of friction. Disagreement and friction can be productive. As Tsing (2005) notes, "A wheel turns because of its encounter with the surface of the road; spinning in the air it goes nowhere. Rubbing two sticks together produces heat and light; one stick alone is just a stick" (p. 5). Deliberation serves an educational purpose as a dynamic that supports change (Matusov, 1996), or, in other words, fosters learning (Bateson, 1972).

In the excerpt from his *Memoriale* (1996) quoted above, Peter Favre wrote of receiving from Ignatius Loyola a "method of raising myself to a knowledge of the divine will and of myself" (p. 64). The method is the Spiritual Exercises, which provide two other, related examples of the role of interaction in learning.

In his presentation of the first exercise in the *Spiritual Exercises*, Ignatius (1548/1991) introduces a "first prelude," a "composition made by imagining place":

   [T]he composition consists of seeing in imagination the physical place
   where that which I want to contemplate is taking place. By physical

place I mean, for instance a temple or mountain where Jesus Christ or Our Lady happens to be in accordance with the topic I desire to contemplate. (para. 47)

The goal of the composition of place according to Jerónomino Nadal, who was deputed by Ignatius to elucidate the Exercises, is not simply to produce a mental drama of a biblical scene that unfolds in a retreatant's mind but to compose a place, a scene, in which a dialogue between the persons in the gospel passage and the retreatant can take place. The contemplation is for encounter, not observation (Standaert, 2007).

This starting point provides an opportunity for interaction between the retreatant and the persons in the scene that is "composed." The contemplative encounter is an affordance for the retreatant to "relocate" himself or herself in light of the Gospel scene imagined. This is to say that the contemplative encounter is educative: It provides a possibility for the "reconstruction or reorganization of experience which adds to the meaning of experience, and which increases ability to direct the course of subsequent experience" (Dewey, 1916/1985, p. 82).

Another, related practice commended by Ignatius in the *Spiritual Exercises* is the colloquy (from the Latin *colloquor*: "to talk, converse, confer, parley, hold a conversation" [Lewis, 1891, p. 168]). A colloquy—a conversation with Mary, Jesus Christ, or the Father—is the culminating movement in prayer in the Spiritual Exercises, preceded by preparatory prayer and contemplation. These conversations serve as a means for the retreatant to formulate his or her experience of the prayer and contemplation that has gone before in order to communicate it. As Dewey notes, "To formulate requires getting outside of [an experience], seeing it as another would see it, considering what points of contact it has with the life of another so that it may be got into such form that he can appreciate its meaning" (1916/1985, p. 8-9). In that sense, the colloquy can be said to be educative insofar as every telling provides the narrator with an opportunity for understanding (Ochs & Capps, 2001).

For both Ignatius Loyola and John Dewey, learning is principally a social rather than an individual affair. For Ignatius, the retreatant learns not by passive reflection and reception but by active encounter with the other. Likewise for Dewey, communication enlarges and changes the experiences of those interacting with one another. McDermott (1996) captured this view of learning and knowledge when he wrote:

> Learning is in the conditions that bring people together and organize a point of contact that allows for particular pieces of information to take on a relevance; without the points of contact, without the system of relevancies, there is not learning, and there is little memory. Learning does not belong to individual persons, but to the various conversations of which they are a part. (p. 292)

Learning so conceived is not simply about the reception of information transmitted by a more knowledgeable other; instead, it involves the whole person living in relationship with others.

Understanding Experience in Conversational Narrative

It is clear that for both Loyola and Dewey social interaction plays a crucial role in a person's learning, in his or her growth in understanding. Experiences are a fundamental resource for understanding, even as understanding provides the interpretive framework for novel experiences that serve as the content for learning. Understanding, founded in experience, provides for the interpretation of new experiences and so forth. In the conversational telling of our experiences, we invite others to search for, to grapple with, and to organize meaning with us. The stories preservice teachers tell about their experiences in classrooms and schools are accounts that are subject to "dispute, flux, and discovery" (Ochs & Capps 2001, p. 57). Storytelling in interaction can serve, in fact, as a theory-building activity "wherein interlocutors jointly construct, critique, and reconstruct theories of mundane events" (Ochs, Taylor, Rudolph, & Smith, 1992, p. 38). In this regard, conversational storytelling can be understood as a sort of reflective activity as understood by Schön (1983).

Conversational storytelling among teachers (preservice, inservice, teacher educators) are opportunities for them to engage with others in the collaborative production of a vision (theory) of what happens in classrooms and schools. The Greek word θεωρία (*theoria*) and its derivatives have to do with seeing, beholding, considering. Listeners in the storytelling activity play a crucial role in advancing understanding; that is, in refining vision. Conversation among teachers is an important resource for the refinement of their vision, their ability to understand what constrains and facilitates learning in the everyday, naturally occurring events of the classroom.

The notion of refinement of vision—the construction of theory, the growth in understanding—situates the activity of learning at the most basic

interactional level, at the finest points. The questions listeners pose to narrators draw the attention of the speaker to what matters. The desire to know provokes the pursuit of a question until an answer is made: "Desiring to understand opens ourselves to experiencing what is new as new, and the already known under new aspects" (Bettencourt, 1991, p. 3, as cited by Wells, 2000, p. 64). In that regard, such questions serve not only as resources for theory-building but also multiple perspective-taking (Ochs et al., 1992). Participants who share a history of such reflective conversations foster among themselves "multiple perspective-taking, theory building and other complex cognitive skills" (Ochs et al., 1992, p. 67) Where there is a sense of community marked by trusting relations and where conversations about practice abound, teachers begin to gain a sense of shared understanding which in turn enriches their teaching and provides the stimulation they need to pursue continued personal and professional growth and development (Lieberman & McLaughlin, 1992); that is, they become students of education (Dewey, 1904/1964).

The effort to make an experience meaningful in reflective conversation can bring its participants to a "fuller and clearer understanding" (Wells, 2000) of the experience. It is the sort of knowledge generated by teachers who "treat their own classrooms and schools as sites for intentional investigation at the same time that they treat the knowledge and theory produced by others as generative material for interrogation and interpretation" (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, p. 250).

In Conclusion

Reflection and, more recently, inquiry, are both part of a recent research tradition that emphasizes the role of teachers as generators–and not just recipients–of knowledge. Contemporary sociocultural theories of learning suggest that teacher commitment to reflection understood as intramental cogitation on experience or to inquiry understood as the intentional study of one's own professional practice are alone insufficient for teacher learning. If learning is an inherently social activity–not merely occurring in the context of social relations, but constructed in the work of relating socially (Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989; Greeno, 1997; Lave & Wenger, 1991), it follows that reflection and inquiry are most effectively introduced to pre-service teachers as social practices associated with the teaching profession within which they are learning to participate.

Learning to teach must be less about the preservice teachers' acquisition of knowledge from some "base" tapped by their teacher educators than about their growth in the ability to recognize and interpret the opportunities for learning and the subsequent possible actions to be taken (Edwards et al., 2002). Because teaching occurs in complicated perceptual fields, teachers must be able to judge what matters in unfolding action. Given this contingent nature of everyday life in classrooms, specifications regarding exactly what to do next in any given circumstance are impractical. Instead of reflection as customarily understood, what is needed is an understanding of reflection that takes seriously the need for perceptual awareness of surroundings and the possibilities they afford for action (Ingold, 2000).

This perceptual awareness is situated in the community; it is a sort of professional vision learned through participation in the community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and honed in conversational storytelling and in authentic questioning situated in these conversational stories told among teachers, pre-service and in-service. Put differently, teaching requires skills of discernment, the ability to recognize what deserves attention, to discriminate between figure and ground. For John Dewey this meant analyzing "conditions by observations, which are as discriminating as they are extensive, until we discover specific interactions that are taking place, and learn to think in terms of interactions instead of force. We are led to search even for the conditions which have given the interacting factors the power they possess" (Dewey, 1939/1988, p. 40). For Ignatius of Loyola, this meant developing skills "to aid us toward perceiving and then understanding, at least to some extent, the various motions which are caused in the soul—the good motions that they may be received, and the bad that they may be rejected" (1991, par. 313).

Dewey and Ignatius can serve as resources for changing how reflection is conceived and practiced. Dewey's essays and Ignatius's *Spiritual Exercises* and his experiences are potential resources to begin to address the ways in which reflection as presently promoted in teacher education programs undermines authentic teacher development (Rodgers, 2002; Zeichner & Liu, 2010). Rather than serving as an individual activity focused principally on prescribed practices, reflection becomes a rigorous social practice of meaning making aimed at developing a professional vision, fostering subjectivity, challenging the status quo, including the cellular structure of schools (Lortie, 1975).

Aiden Downey, who considers how ethnographic and narrative research offers lenses into better understanding the lived experiences of teachers, has noted that there is a tendency to overstate the cellular organization of schools

(Lortie, 1975). "Prisoners find ways to communicate with one another in even the most formidably fortified cells, and so do teachers" (A. Downey, personal communication, December 2, 2005). Downey did not intend to suggest that such communication ("tapping between the walls," as he referred to it) was good or even sufficient. What his observation provides is a trajectory for future research on the many ways teachers communicate between and among themselves. It is an invitation to research how such things as texting and the use of new social media supports or hinders the practice of reflection (based on the insights of Dewey and Loyola) of preservice and inservice teachers, who, gathered into discerning professional communities of inquiry, learn to scrutinize not only what is happening in schooling in general but also what they are doing everyday in their own classrooms.

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