

2002-2004 and the Transformation of CCTE

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In 2001, the California Council on the Education of Teachers (CCET), the State of California Association of Teacher Educators (SCATE), and the California Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (CACTE) became a single merged organization, the California Council on Teacher Education (CCTE). As the last president of CACTE, I was honored to be a part of the deliberations and discussions that resulted in what many organization members hailed as a new era in teacher education in California. Indeed we were at a pivotal moment in CCTE's history, with great expectations for what this new inclusive organization might become.

As a delegate to CCTE from California State University, Los Angeles, I was more than content to contribute to the scholarship, policy positions, conference planning and camaraderie that have always characterized CCTE's professional learning community. Never did I expect that I would be nominated for the post of CCTE President. But the nomination came and I accepted the challenge with great humility and some trepidation. I offered the following statement for my candidacy:

This is the first year of the new California Council on Teacher Education (CCTE). It is exciting to see CCTE realized and to recognize that

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it represents an important vision of inclusive teacher education in California. As our state tackles the inevitable and real challenges of building relationships between the preparation of teachers and reforms in curriculum and schooling, CCTE will serve as a model for the way in which critical conversations take place, professional development occurs, research and practice are explored, alliances are forged, and educational policy is guided by the teacher education community. These activities require a strong and shared leadership. I would like to participate as President Elect of CCTE. (Maxie, 2002)

I was elected President of CCTE and, from 2002–2004, worked with an extraordinary Board of Directors, executive secretary, and journal editorial team, to lead CCTE as it entered the early years of its transformation within a context of the prevailing transformation of teacher education in California. This article examines the significant issues and challenges confronting CCTE in 2002-to-2004, and the accomplishments and organizational change that continue to characterize CCTE as a transformative community of practice. It concludes with implications of CCTE's organizational change for teacher education in California.

Transforming Teacher Education in California

The 1990s into the early years of the 21st century ushered in a national epoch of accountability and compliance in education and teacher education. It was an epoch characterized by the standardization of curriculum and the assessment of student learning and teaching. Undergirding many of the *No Child Left Behind* mandates was the emerging research-based relationship between quality teaching and student achievement. The rhetoric of highly qualified teachers dominated the educational landscape and certainly fueled debate and change in teacher education policy and practice in California. In 1998, the state responded with new teacher credentialing legislation. Under SB 2042, California undertook a comprehensive approach to the reform of teacher preparation.

At the heart of this reform was the state's historic effort to improve educational opportunities for all children by creating a relationship between the preparation of teachers and the content of student learning. Reform in teacher preparation further supported a summative assessment of teaching in pre-service teacher education, and a system of teacher learning that would include initial pre-service preparation, induction, and professional growth. With the *California Standards for the Teaching Profession* and the *Professional Preparation Program Standards*, California embarked on what would be a coordinated infrastructure to support a continuum of teacher education—a learning-to-teach system. It was a system that would require important relationships between

subject matter preparation and professional studies programs, K-12 schools and postsecondary colleges and universities, and the teacher education, research, and education policy communities. A paradigm shift in teacher education was underway.

Transformation in the California Council on Teacher Education

Within this context of national and state-level reforms in teacher education, CCTE was undergoing its own organizational transformation. As a newly-merged and transforming organization, CCTE had revamped its governance structure to include not only the voices of teacher educators in California, but to maintain communication, alliance, and affiliation with teacher educators nationally. The new structure thus included a CCTE vice-president for the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE) and a vice-president representing the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE). Given its new inclusive governance structure, and much effort to expand its membership base to include the education policy community, teacher educators in public school districts and county offices of education, and teacher educators in institutions of higher education, CCTE probed important research, policy, and practice issues.

Through conferences, position statements, and journal articles, CCTE deliberated critical questions including advocacy for equity and democratic practice in teacher education within a climate of compliance, voice in shaping state and national teacher education policy, alliance-building with key stakeholders in teacher education, leadership for research on teacher education, and leadership in advancing the meaning of quality teaching. In addition, CCTE, as a transforming professional community of practice, undertook a comprehensive self-study. These efforts were captured within the themes of the four conferences during my 2002–to-2004 presidential years.

The Fall 2002 Conference, “Fearless Innovation—Advocacy in an Era of Compliance,” set in motion collective thinking and action regarding how to further the social justice aims of education through teacher education, all against a backdrop of intense regulation. Robert Moses, a keynote speaker, used the metaphor of sharecropping to characterize the long-held traditions of education for underserved children in America. He appealed for quality education as a civil right and for teacher educators to advocate and do their work with a spirit of generosity, much like his work with the now famous *Algebra Project*. The conference played a key role in clarifying and confirming CCTE’s mission and facilitating new thinking about quality teaching. As CCTE President, I believed the conference offered

much perspective on quality teaching. I asked that California's teacher education community lead the effort to define quality teaching:

At a time when quality in teaching is the key variable in student achievement, particularly in schools with few resources, it seems most urgent that California's teacher education community takes leadership for continuing to define quality teaching and to articulate its meaning to the profession and to the public. In my view, this undertaking is central to the professionalization of teaching and to quality schooling for all children. (Maxie, Winter 2002)

Indeed, CCTE began an effort to take a fresh look at teacher quality, teacher learning, teaching practice, and the assessment and evaluation of teaching at the Fall 2002 Conference. Conference participants entered into critical conversations around issues of quality in delivering a continuum of teacher education within the framework of SB 2042, and quality in the assessment of teaching. As a professional learning community, CCTE brought forth a passionate appeal to action concerning California's Teaching Performance Assessment. Among the issues raised were those concerning the reliability, validity, fairness, and legal defensibility of the assessment.

There were other issues concerning quality teaching. Many teacher educators who participated in CCTE strongly believed that the CSTP were insufficient in fully describing all features that characterize teaching as a profession. Quality teaching was a centerpiece of critical conversations and continued as the primary topic driving the Spring 2003 Conference. The Board of Directors, Conference Planning Committee, and membership undertook an ambitious conference in format and outcomes. "Honoring Wisdom, Judgment, and Trust through Reflective Inquiry" was a conference that, for the first time, engaged the entire CCTE membership in organizational self-study and change. With a keynote address offered by Lee Shulman, conference participants worked tirelessly to craft critical priorities for CCTE. What emerged from three days of self-examination were nine priority areas:

1. Define Quality Teaching
2. Clarify the Value of Pre-service Teacher Education
3. Build Alliances with Organizations of Similar Interests
4. Support an Ongoing Dialogue on Social Justice
5. Develop a Strategic Plan
6. Inform National Policy Frameworks
7. Develop a Policy Response Structure
8. Develop Technology in CCTE
9. Develop CCTE's Role in External Grants and Contracts

These priority areas framed the work of the Board of Directors and individual delegates who took up the mantle of strategic planning in 2003-to-2004. The Spring 2003 Conference, in my view, was pivotal in giving direction to CTE and shaping its future practices. More important, the Spring 2003 Conference, with its very diverse planning committee, and innovative forum and processes, illustrated professional wisdom, judgment, and trust. It further demonstrated that equity, critical thinking and expression, intellect, creativity, adherence to principles of democracy, and strong pedagogy with research are also among the hallmarks of quality teaching. The conference was a highly collaborative learning experience.

As I considered conference outcomes, and the growing national press to provide quality research on teacher education, I better understood the alliances and relationships that CTE had built and sought to develop. I saw a key need to build partnerships in support of research and policy:

I think California's teacher education, P-12, and policy communities need to develop one or more strategic partnerships to explore the state's teacher quality issues. Though the reform of teacher preparation is in its early stages of implementation, what is needed in my view is a "community or culture of research, policy, and practice." This community would do more than respond to policy, but would work together to shape policy important to California. Its mission might very well be to craft a research agenda on teacher education and teacher quality, particularly as these consider equity in schooling, teaching and learning. At a time when the efficacy of teacher preparation is in question and policy makers seek research that informs policy decisions, a community of research, policy, and practice could determine as well as respond to the important questions on teacher preparation. (Maxie, Fall 2003)

In the Fall 2003 Conference, CTE did take a close look at new meanings for collaboration. "Beyond Collaboration: Fostering Communities of Practice" introduced the work of Etienne Wenger and the notion of building innovative networks and learning communities to support the continuum of teacher learning. Conference participants learned about innovative collaborations in teacher education already underway in California and nationally.

By the Spring, 2004 Conference, CTE returned to its focus on social justice in education and teacher education. This conference, "Furthering Social Justice through Teacher Education Policy and Practice," highlighted a persistent theme of social justice aims in educating underserved children. It featured Gloria Ladson-Billings and Carol Thomas as keynote speakers. The conference, which coincided with the 50th anniversary of the *Brown Decision*, focused on teacher educators as agents of change

and offered the opportunity to develop skills of activism and voice in setting policy. It was during this conference that delegates mounted an important and unified position against the possible entry of the American Board for the Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE) into teacher credentialing in California. The Spring 2004 Conference, which included a workshop by CCTE's newly-hired Legislative and Policy Analyst, was also significant in guiding the ongoing development of CCTE's policy response strategies.

Significant Outcomes in 2002-2004

The years 2002-to-2004 saw significant achievements in CCTE as the organization sought to begin a process of organizational transformation. Self-study led to strategic planning involving the membership and Board of Directors. Advocacy and voice in policy resulted in hiring a Legislative and Policy Analyst and developing improved policy-response strategies. Advocacy for social justice continued and was supported in policy statements, conference themes, and journal articles. CCTE expanded alliances with similar organizations and intentionally brought teacher education stakeholders representing K-12, higher education, and policy communities to its membership and Board of Directors. Lastly, CCTE began its ongoing effort to promote its mission and priorities through the use of technologies. In effect, CCTE demonstrated through cutting-edge and controversial conferences, policy positions, inclusive governance, reflective inquiry, strategic planning, collaboration, and research how an organization engages in transformation.

Implications for Teacher Education in California

As President of CCTE from 2002 to 2004, I asked the teacher education community to examine teacher quality, to celebrate the unique role of the organization and its semi-annual conferences in advocating for social justice and building a professional learning community, to foster strategic partnerships to support teacher education research, and to make strategic planning a normative process in CCTE's work. I recognized that CCTE was transforming itself at a very challenging moment. To be innovative and vital, to exercise influence, to change policy and practice in a climate of compliance was not and is not easy. But we were and remain a dynamic community of practice. I have always said that I owe so much of my professional growth and understanding of teacher education policy and practice to CCTE. It has been, and continues to be, that place to which I can go twice a year to learn, support, contribute

and be supported. I have come to know wonderful, dedicated teacher educators, researchers, local and national scholars, and policy makers who, throughout the years, have consistently joined the conversations led by CTE. Moreover, I have seen an organization achieve stability with growth, move its policy framework and mission comfortably into the 21st century, and remain a vital and inclusive professional learning community. These are features of successful, transformative organizations, in my view.

Today, CTE has expanded its special interest groups. It has intentionally invited graduate students into many organizational activities and roles. This encourages sustainability by supporting the next generation of teacher educators. In addition to engaging graduate student participation, CTE conferences are co-sponsored by more stakeholder organizations. Our two journals have earned both national and international respect. In this 70th Anniversary year, CTE is supporting innovation and collaboration in research on teacher education through a grant from AACTE. As a transformative organization, CTE continues to be a model for how stakeholders in teacher education in California must build important relationships that advocate for social justice in education and teacher education, shape policy in teacher education, define quality in teaching and teacher education, and lead research on teacher education.

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