A Social Reconstructionist Framework for Reflection:
The "Problematizing" of Teaching

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It is impossible to ignore that most national and state accrediting entities (i.e., NCATE, CCTC) outline "reflection" as a requirement in their professional standards for teaching. Regardless of the official certification requirements imposed upon them and/or their orientation to teaching, teacher educators would probably agree, at least publicly, that "one of the goals of teacher education is to develop each preservice teacher into a reflective educator, one who is a life-long learner who perceives every experience as an opportunity for growth, change, and development of understanding" (Hutchinson & Allen, 1997, p. 226).

There are many strategies that teacher educators employ to develop these reflective "habits of mind" in their preservice teachers (Brookfield, 1995; Vali, 1995; Zeichner & Liston, 1996). Teacher preparation programs commonly require that students keep journals and support participation in other "reflective" activities (i.e., developmental portfolios, action research, writing educational philosophy statements and metaphors for teaching, telling teaching and learning stories, etc.).

In my own experience as a teacher educator, I have found that preservice teachers are generally willing to engage in reflective practice when they feel it is worthwhile and connected to issues they face in the classroom. It seems that when preservice teachers are able to see direct connections to their practice, they are more disposed to ask questions

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about what they are doing and to engage in thoughtful dialogue with their peers and mentors (Brookfield, 1995; Duckworth, 1997). Still, despite the requirements that programs must provide evidence of their graduates' reflection and formalized standards that outline the importance of reflection, conceptions of reflective practice are currently difficult to articulate and teacher educators often find that preservice teachers need more direct support and guidance to pose "critical" questions and confront their unquestioned assumptions (Goodwin, 2002). Frykholm (1997) actually describes the beginning teacher as "an outsider looking through the lens in order to identify with the experiences of students from different cultural, ethnic, and economic backgrounds" (p. 51). Teacher education must support the development of the critical lens, not only as a sign of growth, but also as "foundational to the growth" (Meyer et. al, 1998, p. 24).

I propose that a social reconstructionist framework of reflective practice provides an important orientation for preservice teachers to more successfully negotiate the rapidly changing contexts in which they will no doubt teach. Zeichner (1994) explains that a social reconstructionist orientation to teaching draws attention to "teachers' own definitions of their experience and facilitates an examination of different aspects of that experience" (p. 217). This type of examination is imperative for new teachers because it adopts a "democratic and emancipatory impulse and teachers' deliberations focus upon substantive issues which will help them examine the social and political consequences of their teaching" (p. 217). The reflective framework I present in this paper offers a scaffolding tool for teacher educators who play an essential role in the reflective development process. The framework also acts as a model for preservice teachers by allowing them to more clearly envision-critical reflection.

While I have utilized many reflective strategies in my work over the years with preservice teachers and have always hoped that their teaching would ultimately represent a critically reflective approach, I had until recently never considered directly introducing my students to the definitions and various frameworks of reflective practice that exist in the field. I simply asked my students to "reflect" on their teaching without ever examining the reflective process itself, identifying what exactly preservice teachers were reflecting about, or determining to what degree their reflections involved exploring the social and institutional contexts of their teaching contexts and practices. Perhaps most importantly, I never provided explicit guidance for reflection. Instead, I presented my expectations for reflection in a way that insinuated that I would know "it" (meaning reflection) when I saw "it." Of course, this vague expectation also assumed that my students would automatically and somewhat naturally know what reflection should look like.

These vague expectations had something to do with the fact that I was hesitant to impose a restrictive structure on the concept of reflection in an attempt to avoid inhibiting its personal and creative nature. I did not want to constrain the individuality or authenticity of my students' reflective process by providing prescriptive expectations. In any case, this ambiguity was understandably frustrating for the preservice teachers who were always trying to achieve whatever they thought "it" (reflection) was.

In this paper I first illuminate the influence others have had on my understanding of reflection, arguably a somewhat elusive concept. Next, I briefly describe a group of preservice teachers engaged in a reflective study group and present the framework I developed as result of my role as participant observer/facilitator of this group. The framework is primarily intended to be used as a tool for teacher educators to define and identify patterns of reflection in preservice teachers' oral and written discussions. In an effort to illuminate the social reconstructionist orientation of the framework and to situate it more specifically in the context of teacher preparation, I utilize examples of dialogue that took place in the study group. The preservice teachers' voices become a definition of sorts and provide models of reflective practice. This framework can help teacher educators consider how they might scaffold reflective development within a teacher education program and provide a structural tool for modeling and assessment. In the concluding remarks I delineate how this reflective framework more broadly contributes to teacher education.

Conceptions of Reflective Practice

A general assumption that seems to exist in the field of education equates reflection with quality teaching. However, more often than not, educators fail to define reflection or clearly articulate what it looks like in practice. It is therefore important to contemplate how educational researchers have interpreted the concept of reflection and the role these scholars propose it plays in effective teaching. It is not my intention to define quality teaching or to necessarily contribute to that discussion; instead, I hope to illuminate how reflection has been perceived as contributing to the idea of "good teaching."

Zeichner and Liston (1996) describe the concept of reflective teaching as "making more conscious some of the tacit knowledge that we often do not express" (p. 15). They believe that "by surfacing these tacit understandings, we can criticize, examine, and improve them" (p. 15). Therefore, it might be said that unless preservice teachers engage in a process where they methodically consider their teaching, it is unlikely they will challenge ineffective practices, let alone identify them as ineffective.

Putnam and Grant (1992) state that reflection is an "interactive ability to think, understand, and act on a number of levels" (p. 86) whereby teachers systematically examine aspects of their teaching practice to determine their effectiveness and responsiveness.

Dewey (1933) defined reflection as the "active persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends" (p. 9). He emphasized that critically reflective teachers must view their practices from multiple perspectives and use these different lenses to consistently challenge their work as teachers.

Like Dewey, Schon (1987) regards reflection-in-action as "bounded by the zone of time in which action can still make a difference to the situation" (p. 62). Schon insists that a transformative action must take place as a result of the reflection, but believes that the impact might not be immediate. In fact, while the transformation can sometimes take place in as little as a few minutes, it can also take weeks or even months for the reflection to impact classroom practice. Buchman (1990) argues that critical thinking is only about the action that immediately follows the actual teaching action and states that "reflection is looking backward in hopes that light will be thrown by thought on experience" (p. 490).

Other scholars suggest that it is more important to recognize reflection at various levels. For example, Handal and Lauvas (1987) propose three levels: the level of action, the level of practical and theoretical reasons for action, and the level of ethical justification for action. These levels allow us to discern not only the timing of the reflection, but also consider the theoretical lens that is being used to reflect upon the issue at hand.

Van Manen (1977) developed another leveled framework, but he distinguishes the different levels by focusing on the content being reflected upon. His first level, technical reflection*,* is "concerned with the efficiency and effectiveness" (as cited in Zeichner, 1994, p. 12) of teaching. Technical reflections are those that focus on procedural knowledge and more immediate skills that teachers need to succeed or merely survive in the classroom. Practical reflection, the second level, concentrates on the "task of explicating and clarifying assumptions and predispositions underlying teaching activity and assessing the adequacy of the educational goals toward which an action leads" (p. 12). Practical reflection emphasizes teacher effectiveness on student performance and demonstrates informed and intelligent decisions about appropriate practices. Teachers engaged in the third and highest level of critical reflection "incorporate moral and ethical criteria into the discourse of practical action" (p. 12). Feiman-Nemser (1990) supports Van Manen's conception

of reflective engagement by describing teachers who critically reflect as those who "adopt a critical orientation that combines a progressive social vision with a radical critique of schooling" (p. 226) and society.

Despite a recognized preference for evidence of engagement at the higher levels of reflective practice, Van Manen (1977) contends that most preservice teachers will likely stay in a place of reflecting only on technical issues of teaching if they are not pushed to think more deeply. His position clearly illuminates the potential influence that teacher education can have and the important role teacher educators might play in the process of facilitation and interruption. According to Zeichner (1994) preservice teachers not only need opportunities to engage in reflection, but they need to see this reflection modeled by teacher educators who support them in their preparation.

Challenges Teacher Educators Face

It is apparent from the previous discussion that reflection can occur on varying levels in terms of quality and depth, and that vast differences exist in the actual content upon which preservice teachers reflect. What further complicates matters for teacher educators is that "the extent to which reflective teachers take into consideration personal, organizational, social, ethical, and political factors in their deliberation" (Calderhead, 1992, p. 142) depends on the individuals themselves, the program expectations, the context in which they teach, and any number of other factors.

It is not surprising then that teacher educators are challenged in their attempts to promote a reflective way of thinking about teaching. While sharing the challenges, they also share the contention that "prospective teachers need explicit guidance in reflection so as to advance their natural tendencies beyond mindless ritual towards a critical stance on the pedagogic understandings and actions" (Risko, Roskos, & Vukelich, 1999, p. 7). The charge seems to be in determining how to provide this explicit guidance within teacher preparation programs, both in the field and in formal course work.

A framework for reflection can be helpful in this process, but only when it provides an explicit rationale that both articulates its definition and outlines what reflection might "look like" in practice. When the definition remains vague or when the language used to differentiate between the different levels is abstract, the framework continues to perpetuate the lack of clarity and continues to support the idea that reflection is subjective and elusive. This makes it difficult for both preservice teachers and teacher educators to interpret what might constitute critical reflection and support it in the first place.

The most notable difference among the frameworks discussed above is that some (i.e., Van Manen, Brookfield) offer more detail in outlining and differentiating what they call critical reflection. These authors essentially assert that critical reflection occurs when teachers incorporate the cultural and political complexities of teaching into their reflective process. I suggest that while this is an important distinction, their image of critical reflection still remains vague and difficult to measure.

Zeichner (1994) raises another important challenge to existing frameworks by charging that the hierarchical levels typically represented evaluate reflection in a way that "devalues technical skill and the everyday world of teachers which is of necessity dominated by reflection at the level of action" (p. 217). In effect, reflective frameworks rarely provide specific and clear examples of what it means to demonstrate mastery and excellence in a particular level of reflection. Instead, what is presented is a sort of reflective ladder. The final destination, the one all good teachers should seek, is off in the distance and perhaps impossible to reach. There is also an underlying assumption that once teachers reach the highest level, no other growth is possible and that everything they reflect upon is critically important and that they will now always be reflecting critically. Perhaps most significantly for teacher educators, frameworks often fail to recognize or place emphasis on growth and development within the various reflective levels. Particularly, the frameworks neglect to appreciate the complexities of teaching and overlook the important influence of engaging in collaborative inquiry.

A Teacher Study Group: A Place To Document Reflection

In an effort to develop a way of identifying and/or assessing reflection that uses a social reconstructionist approach as a conceptual frame, I investigated the reflective discussions that took place in a preservice teacher study group. One of the primary goals of my research was to use the analysis of the study group discussions to develop guidelines for reflective practice that could be shared with preservice teachers and/or be used by teacher educators to assess reflective practice. I sought to create a framework for reflection that further defined and delineated the reflective process, regardless of the level of reflection a person may currently be engaged in and regardless of the particular content focus of the reflection.

I invited a group of eight prospective teachers to participate in a semester long (bi-monthly) teacher study group in which they would have ownership of the topics discussed at each two hour meeting. My intent was to examine whether their participation in this reflective setting allowed them to better understand their practice as new teachers. As

these eight preservice teachers engaged in their own process of inquiry, I concurrently investigated the role I should play as a teacher educator within the context of a reflective community. I was particularly interested in legitimatizing the issues that preservice teachers brought to the study group and investigating whether preservice teachers were interested in engaging in a critically reflective dialogue and had the necessary reflective capabilities to do so.

Seven of the eight study group participants were female. One female participant was African American, while the rest were White. Six of the eight participants might be loosely characterized as "typical" undergraduate students enrolled in the teacher education program where this study took place: in their early twenties, from Midwest rural communities, high academic achievers, and sharing similar experiences of success in their elementary and high school years of schooling. Two of the participants were "non-traditional" students in that they were coming back to the university a little later in life (late twenties and early thirties), had chosen teaching as a second career (one had previously been a chef and the other had multiple employment experiences prior to her acceptance into the teacher education program, including school bus driver and educational assistant), and shared frustrations with their own schooling experiences (one graduated from an alternative high school program and one expressed feeling alienated in many classroom settings).

One of the participants had graduated from the program just prior to the beginning of this study. While preparing application materials for the upcoming school year, she was teaching regularly as a substitute in the local school district. The remaining seven participants were at various points in the preservice program: two having completed their final student teaching semester, but taking course work back on campus, three in the process of completing their full time student teaching semester, and two in a final practicum just prior to their semester of student teaching.

This paper focuses on the framework that I developed to analyze the discussions that took place in the study group and concentrates on the ways in which the preservice teachers reflected upon the topics of discussion. This careful examination allows the reader to identify "spaces" where teacher educators might more actively participate in the discussion and consider ways in which they might organize and structure reflective activities to better scaffold reflective practice.

A New Reflective Framework That Responds to These Challenges

The reflective framework I propose in this paper identifies three patterns of reflection based on a problematized and social notion of

teaching. Rather than focus on the content of reflection, this framework examines the ways in which preservice teachers "problematize" their teaching within the reflective action (see Table 1).

Table 1: A Framework for Reflection

Unproblematized Reflection	Generalized inquiry and abstract discussion of teaching and questions about practice.
Problematized Reflection	Deliberate questioning that leads to an examination of teaching ideas and practices. An articulated response indicates a revised sense of understanding based on the problematizing that occurred through the reflective examination.
Critically Problematized Reflection	Problematized understanding that causes profound and dramatic change in thinking and results in transformed practice that potentially impacts the greater educational community.

To problematize something according to this framework is to ask questions and critique more deeply the issue at hand, whatever that issue may be. For example, preservice teachers might discuss the concept of grouping students for instruction. In such a discussion, this framework does not focus primarily on the concept of grouping. Instead, it concentrates on whether the preservice teachers problematize the concept, what this process of problematizing involves, and if the preservice teachers discuss the ways in which their practices have been transformed or impacted in any way as a result of the problematizing process. This framework allows teacher educators to analyze the depth of problematizing that occurs in any number of reflective activities. The focus on the way in which the preservice teachers reflect upon topics is intended to diminish the hierarchical levels inherent to other reflective frameworks that focus on content rather than process.

I recognize that a hierarchical continuum still exists to some extent in this framework. The fact that I am identifying patterns of reflective practice that indicate a "level" of problematizing assumes and evaluates whether a critically reflective teacher demonstrates greater ability and willingness to problematize. However, this framework seeks to respond more generally to the complexity of teaching and place value on the way in which teachers reflect upon the questions they have about their teaching.

In an attempt to illustrate the patterns of reflection as outlined in the

reflective framework, patterns of dialogue that represent the various depths of critical engagement are presented. The examples provided in the following sections are not only evidence of the dialogue that occurred in the particular study group setting, but also provide scaffolding and guidelines to encourage further depth in the three patterns of reflection: *unproblematized reflection, problematized reflection, and critically problematized reflection*. While presenting the patterns as they emerged in the preservice teacher study group, I discuss questions and possible further implications that are raised for teacher educators through the analysis of these patterns.

Most frequently, the discussions in the study group were unproblematized examples of reflective inquiry and demonstrated preservice teachers investigating a topic related to teaching in a very generalized and abstract way. Still, it is through these examples of unproblematized reflection that we can analyze what further problematizing might look like as well as ways to specifically scaffold a more critically reflective approach. Since my role in this particular study group was primarily as a participant-observer, it is also important to identify "spaces" for disruption and ways in which critical disruption may have contributed to the problematizing process.

Illuminating Patterns of Reflective Practice

Unproblematized Reflection is the first pattern of reflection that I identify. Often an unproblematized approach is only focused on the practical strategies a teacher might implement and there is little or no evidence that the issues and assumptions under discussion are examined to any extent. For example, this preservice teacher raises a generalized concern that she is experiencing in her classroom:

> I wonder about how I should handle discipline in my classroom. Of course, it's pretty much not my call since it's my cooperating teacher's classroom, but she is pretty willing to let me try new strategies. The thing that I am finding is that I seem to be dealing with certain kids all the time. I am so tired of feeling negative toward those students and always trying to get them to change their behavior. What I'm looking for from you guys [study group participants] are some new ideas to try. (Transcript, February 2000)

Instead of examining her classroom management philosophy in greater depth, this preservice teacher looks to her peers for ways in which to address the problem with immediacy. She uses the study group to share her experiences and gain insight into how to make changes that will result in greater success in her classroom. She will probably only equate

this conversation's effectiveness after experiencing successful implementation of the idea. In many instances, the preservice teachers left these kinds of discussions feeling more prepared, but never having problematized the issue or even publicly recognizing that the initial question may in fact have deeper significance.

The preservice teachers typically explored their beliefs about students and teaching in a general and descriptive way. They also failed to demonstrate any critique of their thinking. Namely, these study group discussions lacked a clear understanding of the classroom context and the greater school community in which the participants were working for them to reflect critically upon their teaching. The following illustrates an unproblematized example from a discussion around the topic of instructional grouping:

> I would really like to talk to everyone here [in the study group] about your beliefs about grouping kids when working on projects and other activities. We talk a lot on campus about heterogeneous grouping and how important it is to mix kids up and how doing that successfully can really support the learning that takes place in your classroom. I just see a lot of people doing this pairing thing where they put the 'gifted' kid with the 'less academically able' kid or the African American kid with the White kid and while I am not necessarily making an association between the two kinds of grouping, I find that these kinds of decisions are made quite frequently in my classroom-and often, the same groupings actually result. I want to hear what other people think about grouping. (Transcript March, 2000)

The superficial tone of the excerpt demonstrates how this study group participant failed to appreciate the importance of particular contextual conditions, the learning needs of students, and the societal influences that are inherent to an instructional strategy such as grouping. This teacher appears unable to examine the social and political implications of grouping practices as they relate to greater equity in society at large.

Although a discussion that begins in this way may in fact lead to a more contextualized look at appropriate grouping strategies, a problematized discussion would have to begin with a more careful and critical consideration of the specific students in this individual teacher's classroom. Still, these unproblematized patterns of discussion lay the groundwork for a process that involves a more critical examination of these decontextualized issues. The same preservice teacher who participated in the earlier discussion about grouping strategies might demonstrate problematized reflection if she instead came to the study group ready to question more specifically the existing practice of grouping in her classroom and in analyzing her own instructional decision making. The prior knowledge that she has from engaging in other discussions regard-

ing the general concept of grouping might help her to recognize the challenges of heterogeneous grouping within her particular classroom. By asking this initial question about grouping, she is indicating perhaps that the grouping strategy that she traditionally held as effective is failing to meet the needs of her students and she is confronted with her previously held assumptions about the practice. Although this might lead her to place blame on the students or the strategy, it can also challenge her to problematize the concept itself.

It is important to point out that unproblematized thinking does not necessarily translate into meaningless discussion. In a program that supports a social reconstructionist orientation to teaching, it is sometimes this foundational way of talking about teaching that promotes the problematizing of thinking in the first place. One notable challenge is that preservice teachers rarely have the opportunity to engage their cooperating teachers and supervisors in meaningful discussions of effective practice that problematizes assumptions about teaching and students in the actual context where these practices are occurring. Therefore when preparing to teach their lessons, preservice teachers must predict the impact their practices will have on students without the contextual understanding that might lead to productive problematizing.

I am not suggesting that it is impossible to critically reflect upon theoretical teaching practices without a specific context in mind. In fact, academics do this all the time. However, I am suggesting that it is partly this contextualized understanding that helps preservice teachers make the kinds of connections that help them to question and analyze their assumptions about teaching and learning and consider the social and political implications of these beliefs.

Lieberman (2000) found that "having a professional community differentiated those teachers who worked together to change the culture of their classrooms and their departments from those teachers who either tried new ideas in fragmented ways on their own or who blamed students for their inabilities to learn" (p. 222). One study group participant reflected upon his involvement in the reflective community in this way:

> There just really isn't enough time to talk to my cooperating teacher and supervisor as much as I would like. We are just so busy getting through the day and before I know it—I am running out the door and back to campus. It's really tough to talk through a lesson and consider everything I need to think about. When I come to this study group and listen to you as you share ideas about lessons, it makes me think about things differently. It's all about the perspectives you don't get when you're sitting at home or in your classroom planning in isolation. As one person shares, others join in, and it's that feeding off of other perspectives that

> helps me consider what I'm really doing and to more carefully articulate my purpose. (Transcript, March 2000).

It is statements like these that illuminate the potential of collaborative inquiry in scaffolding reflection for preservice teachers, allowing teacher educators to envision how they might implement opportunities to support this problematizing process.

Problematized Reflection implies that teachers have acquired greater insight in the teaching context by seeking to understand the student population, the social and political conditions of the community that influence the students' lives and their success in school, and the resources available to meet the diversity of needs present in the specific setting. This increased understanding leads preservice teachers to question existing beliefs that confront their new-found insight. It is ultimately the internal confrontation that forces them to problematize their thinking and reflect critically about the experience. The study group demonstrated a problematized approach when they challenged one another with questions and encouraged their peers to share their stories and details of perplexing situations they were confronting in their teaching. The following excerpt demonstrates how, when challenged to do so, the participants responded to questions and gained feedback from the group:

> So, let's go back a bit…tell me more about the unit you are beginning tomorrow. That will help me think about directions that you might want to try. I think the whole approach towards video instruction is great, but I am not quite sure what you want your students to be researching and I think you need to consider how you plan to present that part of the project. I think you need to make sure that you are really clear about your purpose. That purpose must really help lead you in your planning. When you've really considered what it is that you want your students to learn, you can build in activities to support that learning. (Transcript, March 2000)

When preservice teachers clearly demonstrate careful and attentive engagement with an issue, have worked to gain a clear contextual understanding, and then problematize their understanding in a way that confronts or disrupts their assumptions and way of thinking, they have engaged in problematized reflective practice. For preservice teachers this problematized articulation often includes a contextual reference to their particular teaching setting. Elliot (1976) described this as "self-monitoring" in which "one becomes aware of one's situation and one's role as an agent in it" (p. 5). In a collaborative reflective setting, this self-monitoring and articulation actively involves the process of utilizing multiple perspectives to confront and problematize their views about teaching. It is often through consultation with others that preservice

teachers are challenged to consider alternative perspectives, thus prompting them to problematize their original way of thinking.

I actually found very few representations of problematized reflection in the study group discussions. In some isolated cases, participants asked contextualized questions about their practice which led them to further critique their thinking. This was evidenced when participants problematized the original way they were thinking and publicly articulated their new-found knowledge and understanding of an issue. Following is a brief example of how one participant shares her problematized reflection with the group:

> The other day I was looking at this kid's final copy of a writing assignment and I realized—there is really something wrong here. I did not support this student the way I needed to and here I had the evidence staring me in the face. I can't look at things the same way anymore. I can't just dismiss something that doesn't meet my expectations the way I used to. I know that before—when I would get these kinds of results on assignments-I used to say a lot of things like—they must not have been listening or here they go again, they have put no extra thought or time into this piece. In other words—I made a lot of excuses for my failure in connecting with my students and doing what I could to make sure they were successful. The thing with this paper is that I couldn't lie to myself. I have been able to connect with this kid and I now know what he needs from me to succeed. But, in this case, I didn't give him what he needed. He gave me—exactly what I gave him. I have to stop and consider my responsibility in this situation. With this particular writing assignment—I realized that he needed support from me that I just didn't give him. (Transcript May, 2000)

It is difficult to identify the exact nature of the child's needs from this quote alone. What is clear is that the preservice teacher has deliberately examined her teaching practice and then problematized both her teaching and her thinking about this particular student. She no longer blames the student for failing to succeed. Instead, she assumes responsibility and holds herself accountable in connecting more successfully with the student. Her problematized thinking demonstrates an understanding of what is now required from both parties to help ensure success.

Culturally relevant teaching involves the problematizing of how teachers think about curriculum and instruction. Ladson-Billings (1995) describes how culturally relevant teachers "utilize students' culture as a vehicle for learning" while at the same time engaging in this examination of curriculum and instructional practices (p. 161). Preservice teachers can support students in their development by maintaining cultural competence and personally investing in the learning process. For

preservice teachers, this often involves the problematizing of traditional ways of thinking and learning.

It is important to point out that teachers can problematize the way they think about an issue and still fail to consider the social and political implications of their practice. For example, preservice teachers can problematize the way they think about the teaching of reading yet fail to critically examine the cultural and socio-economic influences that can impact children's ability to read. In some cases, one must take the framework further and address the actual content of the discussion to delineate the ways in which teachers reflect upon their practice. It is sometimes only through the investigation of content that one can determine whether an issue is being problematized.

Critically Problematized Reflection is the third pattern of reflection. The difference between this pattern and the other two presented in this framework is that critically problematized reflection translates into a profound action or set of actions based on a fundamental change in thinking that resulted from the problematizing of thinking about teaching. It is the translation of transformed thought into radically different practice.

Critically problematized reflection was not something that I was able to distinguish in the study group setting. I found no examples of dramatic shifts in any of the preservice teachers' thinking, let alone evidence of any transformed practice. However, I believe this was due in part to the structure of the study. First, had I been studying classroom practice and the link between these study group discussions to what may have been happening in the preservice teachers' classrooms, I may have been able to "witness" and thus observe concrete evidence of the shifts that may have indeed been occurring. Secondly, this study took place over a single semester, which perhaps does not allow for the significant transformation I have outlined in the framework. While I was not able to identify critically problematized reflection in the research I have discussed in this paper, it is possible for me to delineate what it might look like and how I can provide opportunities for my students to "share" their engagement in critically problematized practices.

Critically problematized reflection involves a greater understanding of the conditions that exist outside the classroom, especially those that greatly influence practices within schools. These are the societal influences that represent the political struggles for equity and justice in schooling. Critically problematized reflection begins with this same disruption and problematizing of beliefs that occurs in problematized reflection, yet it includes a more drastic shift in understanding that results in an innovative action that potentially impacts the greater

educational community. As I define it in this framework, critically problematizing one's teaching means that teachers enact curriculum, assessment, instruction, and other policies through a lens that reflects and examines the influences of race, socio-economic conditions, and other conditions that impact teaching.

It would seem that preservice teachers who are supported as they engage in collaborative reflective inquiry might more likely seek out experiences that lead them to the kinds of radical shifts in practice that are evident in critically problematized reflection. Opportunities that provide for more contextualized understanding and problematizing of teaching with occasions to apply these insights to classroom practice are important steps in this transformative process. Further studies are needed to explore the lives and work of teachers who actively engage in critically problematized reflective practices and who have made radical changes to their teaching philosophy and demonstrate how their practice has significantly impacted the greater educational community. Teacher educators need to recognize and understand the contexts that support this kind of reflection and agency.

Lessons for Teacher Educators

In this paper I propose a framework as a step toward empowering preservice teachers in their reflective practice. First, the framework represents an attempt to more explicitly describe and model reflection, primarily so that preservice teachers can more effectively emulate these practices in their own teaching as they develop in the profession. Secondly, it provides an organizational structure for teacher educators to scaffold reflective activities.

Lieberman and Miller (1999) predict that until "teachers are at the center of all efforts to improve schools, that without their full participation and leadership, any move to reform education—no matter how well intentioned or ambitious—is doomed to failure" (p. xi). Their prediction demonstrates the importance of providing empowering reflective opportunities for teachers at all levels of experience, so they may realize the potential of "strategies that support the risk taking and struggle entailed in transforming practice" (McLaughlin & Talbert, 1993, p. 15).

However, unproblematized reflection is not limited to preservice teachers. The current conditions of most schools make this lack of critical engagement a reality for experienced teachers as well. Large class sizes and curricular demands impede the success teachers have in trying to understand and meet the needs of all students. While teachers may be seeking out successful strategies through curriculum and instruction,

teachers generally fail to problematize the questions they have about teaching and their students' learning. They seldom examine the conditions in which they teach and the influences that affect their students' success in the classroom. This kind of critical examination is especially difficult because teachers are rarely supported or provided collaborative environments in which to engage in these types of inquiries. The reflective framework presented in this paper suggests a way to monitor reflection and scaffold greater depth in the process.

This reflective framework serves as a tool that might be utilized in reflective discussions such as those that occurred in the teacher study group presented in this paper. It could also be used to document written reflective activities that either preservice or practicing teachers might be asked to engage in. Teacher educators should work to identify examples of critically problematized practice in the field through curricular and/or instructional enactments and provide opportunities for preservice teachers to engage in discussions and emulate the models. While our goal should not be to achieve the top rung of some reflective ladder, the framework presented in this paper provides the scaffolding and modeling that facilitates further problematizing of the questions we have about teaching and therefore encourages greater depth of reflection.

Despite the fact that in this paper I downplay the aspect of content in reflection, this framework illuminates the importance of contextualized discussions. As teacher educators, we need to appreciate the importance of this contextualization while supporting our students' reflective capabilities. Not only does this issue indicate that further support is needed to nurture closer partnerships with our school-based teacher educators, but it reinforces the need for teacher educators to seek out classroom teachers who can model critically problematized practices and reflective engagement. Frameworks and models of the practices we espouse help us to envision a culture of inquiry, a culture of teaching that is more likely to make the kinds of radical teaching changes that will impact the children in our classrooms more significantly.

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