The Interplay between Teachers' Biography and Work Context
Effects on Teacher Socialization

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Abstract

In this article, I use the process of self-reflection to examine how my biography influenced my teaching experiences in a particular school context. Drawing on these experiences and the work of scholars in this area, I contend that such self-knowledge is critical for teachers' successful socialization and retention in diverse schooling environments. I conclude by offering suggestions for reconstructing teachers' preparation and socialization to foster a stance of critical self-reflection on teaching and learning that includes reflecting on how biography shapes the teaching experience in given schooling contexts.

Introduction

Teachers' biographies delve into "the problems and issues that make someone an educator" (Bullough, Jr., & Pinnegar, 2001, p. 17). The foundation of these biographies is formative life experiences that shape the teaching self and become major determinants of the teaching experience. Similarly, the work context, that is, the school environment in which teachers perform their daily work as instructional leaders, strongly influences the type of experiences that they come to understand as teaching (Achinstein, Ogawa, & Speiglman, 2004; Bullough, Knowles, & Crow, 1991; Butt, Raymond, McCue, & Yamagishi, 1992; McAninch, 1993). Bullough et al. (1991) comment, "becoming a teacher is an idiosyncratic process reflecting not only differences in biography, personality,

and in conceptions of teaching and how well or poorly they are developed, but also in school and school-community contexts" (p. 187). Additionally, Butt et al. (1992) note:

> How teachers, through experience, both in their private lives and in professional contexts, have educated themselves, and been educated, as teachers, can be answered through biographical inquiry . . . A person interacting with situations in particular contexts gives rise to experience and the evolution of personal knowledge. In order to understand how a person thinks, acts, feels and intends, and how a person knows what they know, it is necessary to understand the relationship and tensions among context and individual lives not only related to the present but the past as well. . . . In order to understand a teacher's knowledge with respect to classrooms we need to understand the contexts within which they currently work—that is their working realities. . . . Seeing the pressure of the formal situation and the force of the inner private definition of the situation enables us to see relationships and tensions that contribute to thoughts, actions and the shape and shaping of a teacher's knowledge. (pp. 60–61)

Butt et al. (1992) further discuss how the teaching self is created through an interaction between the personal self that is brought to the public context of teaching and the resultant integration of personal knowledge with professional knowledge. They are deeply interested in how the personal, the biographical, interacts with the work context to create a teaching self. Biography and context must be studied together.

In this article, I use the process of self-reflection (Dinkleman, 2003; Loughran & Russell, 2002; Tidwell, 2002; Valli, 1997) to examine how my biography, with the contributing elements of race, ethnicity, social class, gender, and age, determined how I experienced the work of teaching in one particular school context. Drawing on these experiences and the work of others such as Bullough et al. (1991), Darling-Hammond, French, and Garcia-Lopez (2002), Feiman-Nemser (2001), and Raths (2001), I conclude by offering suggestions for reconstructing teachers' preparation and socialization to foster a stance of critical self-reflection on teaching and learning. This critical stance must necessarily include reflecting on how biography shapes the teaching experience in a given schooling context. Such self-knowledge is critical for teachers' successful socialization and retention in diverse schooling environments.

Teachers' Biography and the Work Context

Bullough, Jr. and Pinnegar's (2001) definition of teacher biography as an educator's story condenses Knowles's (1992) discussion of the term as "those formative

experiences of pre-service and beginning teachers which have influenced the ways in which they think about teaching and, subsequently their actions in the classroom" (p. 99). Knowles adds, "Biography especially refers to those experiences that become the basis for teacher role identity . . . the way in which individuals think about themselves as teachers—the images they have of self-as-teacher" (p. 99). Deciphering which elements of a teacher's biography more strongly interacts with the work environment is a complex challenge. Knowles concurs, saying that "biography interacts with context and experiences of teaching in a variety of ways, some of which may be extremely difficult to determine" (p. 126). Similarly, Butt et al. (1992) note, "patterns and emphases differ" (p. 90). Depending on the particular work context, one or several biographical factors may be more important determinants of experience than others. Much of recent research has focused on the dilemma stemming from the demographic mismatch between a predominantly White, female, and middle-class teaching force serving school populations comprised largely of students of color (Cochran-Smith, Davis, & Fries, 2004; Delpit, 1995; Gay, 2000). Yet combining teachers' personal and professional experiences with their race, gender, and social class creates more complex biographies for today's classroom teachers. This sophisticated intermingling and variegated weighting of elements that comprise identity (such as race and gender) and the personal and professional experiences that are biography render a rich and unique teaching personality. Any attempt, then, to analyze the influence of each biographical factor on how the work context is experienced must be equally sophisticated.

Like biography, there are many salient factors that shape the work context. These include school leadership; teachers' beliefs and attitudes about students, teaching, and learning; community, school staff, and student demographics; the school's levels of academic achievement; and available professional learning opportunities (Bullough et al., 1991; Corson, 1998; Nieto, 2004; Raths, 2001). The schooling context in which the novice teacher is placed is crucial to that teacher's subsequent development. Indeed, based on their study of the development of three beginning teachers, Bullough et al. comment, "the importance of the teaching assignment cannot be underestimated" and that the work context "may be a major cause of increased teacher vulnerability, or of security and confidence" (p. 180). We are steadily accumulating evidence of the defining factors of a given work context. For instance, we now know that vibrant professional learning communities, where teachers reflect on their practice, are crucial in creating and sustaining effective schools (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; McLaughlin & Talbert, 1990, 2001). We also know that successful schools place their students' cultures at the center of their missions and curriculum (Delpit, 1995; Gay, 2000; Nieto, 2004; Villegas & Lucas, 2002).

To undertake this task of examining my unique biography's interaction with the context in which I taught, I turned to the well-suited method of self-reflection.

Self-Reflection as a Form of Self-Study

Self-reflection, a form of self-study, is gaining increasing acceptance in the field of teacher education and is considered to be a necessary pedagogical stance for improving teaching and learning (Dinkleman, 2003; Hamilton, 1998; Loughran & Russell, 2002; Tidwell, 2002; Valli, 1997). As teacher education programs face the challenge of improving the preparation of teachers and providing evidence of their effectiveness (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2001; Darling-Hammond, 1997; Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002; Zeichner, 2003), this form of research continues to offer avenues through which teacher educators can analyze and improve their practice.

Dinkleman (2003) locates teacher self-reflection within the more formal practice of self-study that provides opportunities for gaining critical insights and growth in one's teaching practices. He writes of the importance of teacher educators becoming self-reflective teachers who model this stance of critical inquiry to pre-service teachers, adding that teacher education itself (and K–12 teaching) can be revolutionized as the practice of reflection becomes embedded in university contexts. The form of self-reflection I use here is personalistic (Valli, 1997), in that I focus on my personal development and relationships with students. I join this revolution that Dinkleman describes by telling the story of how my biography interacted with a particular work context to define my teaching experience.

Biographical Inquiry

I was raised in a working-to-middle class family that held education in high esteem. The last child in a blended family of six, I understood that I was to continue the tradition of academic excellence set by my siblings. Jackson and Marsden (1962) in their seminal study of education and the working class discovered a socioeconomic class that they termed the sunken middle-class. This class position was occupied by families that had fallen from the middle class into the working class. This often meant that the children in those families were forced to leave school early. In adulthood, these individuals were often able to work themselves back into the middle class and were extremely supportive of education for their children because they saw it as a foolproof avenue into that social class. My father was one of those individuals.

My mother, while very intelligent, had been unable to complete her own schooling. This was due to economic hardship that prevented her family from providing eyeglasses to correct her extremely poor vision. Because her educational aspirations were thwarted, she, too, instilled in her children a strong respect for education and the improved life chances it would assuredly bring. As a result of their life experiences, my parents handed down an unshakeable confidence in the value of education to their children.

Once socialized into the world of school, I focused singly on achieving and maintaining academic excellence and was well rewarded with the approbation of my family, teachers, and friends. The schools I attended were orderly and stressed high academic achievement. The classrooms were teacher-directed, and students were expected to be studious, if somewhat passive, recipients of knowledge. As Lortie (1975) argues, I began my long apprenticeship of teaching in this environment, learning to teach in the manner I had been taught and internalizing the expectations for teachers and students in that context.

The island on which I grew up was economically impoverished and could provide precious few jobs for its citizens. In spite of this, or perhaps because of this, the people held a strong work ethic. Class-ism was the ruling ill, and not racism, even though class lines were drawn in such a way that those who held the little wealth of the country were lighter-skinned peoples of Syrian and Arab descent. Yet in that ruling class, or perhaps just a little below it, were people of African origin, the predominant racial group on the island, who, through education, had been able to enter the realms of banking, business, politics, and education. From this, I learned that it was possible to rise above your social class through education, an important lesson for the working class child (Jackson & Marsden, 1962). And, Middleton (1992) would agree that this historical and political context in which my formative years were spent largely shaped my views about and relationship with education: Education was a means of economic and social advancement.

Social class is a composite of educational background, income, and type of occupation (Corson, 1998; Metz; 1990; Rothenberg, 2004). Determining where my family fit into the class system of my country is an intriguing task. We lived in a mixed (working and middle class) neighborhood where many of the adults had not completed high school and many of the children were from single parent homes. Yet, in my neighborhood, there were also two-parent families where one or both parents held well-paying jobs. My parents being married seemed to afford our family an extra point toward the direction of the middle class. The fact that my father earned a relatively sizeable salary and worked as ship captain in a managerial position for a distribution company again removed our family a little from the working class. Yet, this is not to say that we did not carefully ration provisions as we awaited his next paycheck. We owned our home and were able to keep adding rooms to enlarge the house, however, we did not own a car and that was a definite marker of middleclass-dom. These competing class markers meant that I sometimes felt very working class, and, at other times, my sentiments regressed toward the middle.

It was with these family experiences, community values, and educational background that I entered the teaching profession. However, due to the upheaval of immigration to the United States, I was destined to teach, not in a school like the ones in which I had been a student, but at Granger High School (a pseudonym

for the school and its community), where the culture of academic excellence and behavioral conformity were a systemic challenge to achieve.

The Work Context—Granger High School

Granger High is part of a midsized, urban school district in the northeast United States. It is considered a small school, averaging between 800 and 900 students yearly. While Granger might easily have been a community school—it is located in a predominantly residential area—the students, in fact, come from many areas of the city. Granger, and the surrounding areas from which its students come, are typical urban communities in that they are racially, culturally, and socioeconomically diverse. However, the students at Granger are predominantly Black and Hispanic and, on the whole, most of them come from poor or working class backgrounds.

The teaching staff is more racially heterogeneous; however, there are more White teachers, and more male teachers, than there are those of color. In the late 1990s, a new principal made a concerted effort to hire younger teachers of color, and while this effort has been slowly changing the face of the teaching staff, the school faculty is still primarily older, White, and male.

Very few of Granger's teachers live in the neighborhood or its surrounding communities. This reflects the history of White flight to the suburbs that began in the 1960s as Blacks moved into the city from the South. Additionally, while residence in the city is a prerequisite for many city jobs, this requirement does not apply to teachers, further compounding the problem that teachers do not live in their students' communities. Gordon (2000) notes that this absence of teachers in their students' communities has resulted in teachers' knowledge of their students, their families, churches, and communities being "limited to the narrow confines of the classroom" (p. 72) and that it has also resulted in little community identity or contact in most urban school districts.

Certainly, not all of the teachers of color reside in the immediate school communities either, although it is generally true that they live closer to these neighborhoods than do their White counterparts. Speaking of African American teachers, Gordon (2000) reports that the teachers of color she studied claimed their rights to enjoy the benefits of the middle-class, that is, to live in middle-income neighborhoods and send their children to those schools. She cautions that one cannot assume that "African American teachers can, or indeed want to, identify with the needs of inner city, low-income African American youth" (p. 72). Although the sharing of a common experience of racism in this country often overrides other salient aspects of individual identity, the historical, economic, cultural, and educational context of teachers' lives inevitably influences how they view themselves, their options, and their profession.

The prevailing ethos of the teachers of color at Granger High School is a similar one. While they certainly identify strongly with their students in terms of racial experience, their individual identities and lives are largely those of the middle class.

Because the school has a reputation of academic underperformance and an unruly learning environment, it has difficulty attracting and retaining teachers. Granger is known to house students who are poorly behaved, academically weak, and lack engagement with school. Likewise, the school is thought to have less well-qualified teachers than other district schools. Leadership also has a poor reputation because they struggle with the challenge of establishing an orderly school environment with strong learning outcomes. In an era of teacher accountability with effectiveness measured by student performance on standardized tests, many teachers attempt to secure placement at better performing district schools. And, as some teachers try to avoid or escape Granger, poorly performing teachers are often placed there. This occurs when principals have successfully worked around union regulations that make it difficult to expel tenured but ineffective teachers from their posts at thriving schools.

Like teachers, students do not often elect to attend Granger High School. Within this school district, students are free to select their top choices of secondary schools, some of which enjoy a reputation of academic excellence and a healthy social community. Most students and families who exercise choice request placement in those schools. In contrast, Granger High easily holds the reputation of the school that is least selected by students, leaving it with a large number of open slots that are filled throughout the year by students who face a number of academic and social challenges. For example, court-involved students who are released from juvenile detention facilities are often placed into the open slots at the school. Granger also absorbs students who come from migrant families that move into the community at various points throughout the school year. Additionally, the city has a history of attracting new immigrants to the United States, and during the academic year, Granger takes in large numbers of immigrant students. These students are sometimes English language learners or are academically weak due to interrupted schooling in their home countries, thus they need greater academic support. The school has difficulty meeting those needs.

Unsurprisingly, Granger faces serious teaching and learning challenges. While there are certainly some effective teachers and successful students at Granger, there are also many teachers and students that struggle to succeed. The reason most cited for this is an environment that is not conducive to teaching and learning. This condition is believed to be the result of insufficient curricular and professional development resources to help English language learners and academically weak students achieve their academic potential; high rates of staff and student absenteeism; elevated numbers of disciplinary issues; and teachers' belief that school leadership is ineffective and unsupportive of them, leading to strained relationships between these groups.

The school's reputation coupled with the challenging learning environment result in low morale at Granger High. There is a pervasive culture of blame, resentment, and frustration in the environment. These emotions generally point

in reciprocal directions and are centered on low academic achievement and an undisciplined school environment. The administration blames the teachers for a lack of commitment to their students and to teaching. In return, the teachers blame the administration for its inability to effectively run the school and provide inspirational leadership. The teachers then blame the students for being unruly, disrespectful, and shockingly uninterested in their schoolwork and futures. In exchange, the students blame the teachers for not knowing how to engage them in learning and maintain orderly classrooms and for not being morally committed to their students and their professions. The players in this cycle, however, at times depart from these analyses: Some students blame the school district and administration for not providing adequate curricular and disciplinary support to the teachers and some teachers and administrators point to their students' poverty and "troubled" home environments as the cause of poor academic achievement and behavior.

Such was the work context to which I brought my teaching self with end results that were less than stellar.

The Interplay of Biography and Work Context: Troubling Results

My biography, and the attendant factors of race, age, and gender, strongly influenced my teaching experience at Granger High School. As a young, Black woman who intended to teach English literature, I was told that I was in high demand in urban schools. Students needed role models that would help them envision success in school and the world beyond. My race, age, and gender suited me for this job. Additionally, it was assumed that I would be a racially and culturally sensitive teacher who identified with my students' cultures. I shared these sentiments. I came to teaching because I had always enjoyed being in school and had fantasized about being a teacher for many years. To use Lortie's (1975) expression, I had self-selected the profession. I came to Granger High School because it was a school in the community in which I had lived and had had some schooling and because I had a commitment to teaching others of my race in a country where being a person of color, and being poor, made success in society so much harder. I wanted to show my students that with education, they, like me, could succeed.

But while my students and I shared the same race, we were on the whole, culturally different. Additionally, the schooling context in which I had received my formative educational experiences was radically different from the one in which I was to teach. These key differences eventually became barriers to developing successful relationships with my students and effectively teaching them.

Beyond my race making me a good role model for my minority students and my age and gender making classroom management more difficult, I did not consider (either during my personal time or within my teacher preparation program)

how my biography might interact with the school context in which I was to teach and how I might reconstruct a teaching self to ensure successful teaching and learning experiences in my classroom. I did not know that my biography and work context, once mixed, would produce a particular set of experiences by which I would define the word teacher. I was to gain this knowledge only by becoming a teacher at Granger High School.

Contrary to my expectations, I generally experienced my race as a disadvantage at Granger High. I often felt that because I was Black, some of my Black students doubted my capability to teach them and believed that their White teachers were more capable of educating them than me. Gordon (2000) also identified this perception of the African American teachers she studied:

> Some informants [African Americans] actually believed that to be a black teacher in a black school was to their disadvantage. Differences in socio-economic class and age seemed to contribute to this view. Several cited examples where racism had been internalized to the extent that some black children and their parents believed black teachers were inferior to whites. Others extended this analysis to a supposition that because most blacks were victims of lower quality educational systems, black teachers were not as qualified and, therefore, less desirable in terms of educating the next generation. . . . The conundrum was illuminated in this conversation: "White kids won't listen to me because I'm Black. They assume I'm stupid and lack respect. And Black kids won't listen to me because I'm Black; it has to do with denigration and self-hate. They'll listen to a White teacher more because of higher status." (p. 71)

Indeed, I found my state-university education denigrated by many of my students who were also unimpressed that I had, for a time, attended another high school in the Granger community. And, as I had suspected, my youth and female-ness proved handicaps to establishing and maintaining classroom order.

Race, coupled with age and gender, also presented a challenge to my relationships with parents. Because I was young, my disciplinary hearings with Black parents, I felt, were tinged with the unstated concern that I had had little experience "handling" adolescents, and that it was somewhat understandable that a young, Black woman would have trouble establishing order in a class of other young, Black persons. These perceptions were sometimes challenged, however. There were several Black parents who openly chided their children for "giving a Black teacher a hard time" and who told them how lucky they were to have a Black teacher, something they wish they had had in their own schooling. And while there were times I perceived that some parents of color doubted my professional judgment—in matters academic and behavioral—there were also times when I experienced a surprised and quiet pride coming from other parents upon meeting their child's Black English teacher.

I did not teach many White students, however, I did feel the concern that Gordon's (2000) teachers cited that like their peers of color, they might feel I was not as qualified to teach them. I also worried that my White students might feel that I would be racially biased against them. As a result, I took great care to build trusting relationships with my students who were White.

Because I had few White students, I rarely interacted with a White parent. On those few occasions, I felt that our exchanges were conducted under the suspicious specter of race. I was acutely aware of our racial differences and wondered whether they trusted that I was a capable teacher and fair to their child. However, I experienced no overt expressions of distrust coming from either my White students or their parents.

My cultural difference from my students was also an important factor in the teaching experience. While I was also Black, I felt different, and was different, from my Black students. Gordon (2000) remarks that, "a teacher of 'minority' status is not necessarily equipped to teach other children of 'minority' status, especially if they have different ethnic, language, and cultural heritages" (p. 71). Clearly, I was not an ideal match in terms of cultural similarity to my students. While this did not mean that I was unable to teach or reach my students, it did mean that like my White colleagues, I needed to become a cultural boundary crosser. Bartolome (2002) describes such teachers as those who understand and appreciate their students' cultural backgrounds, use them as foundations for teaching and learning, and hold high academic and social expectations for them despite the factors that mitigated against their schooling success.

While cultural differences created barriers to understanding my students' responses to schooling, my social class background further alienated me from the work of educating them. This influence of teachers' social class background on their work has been receiving greater attention (Metz, 1990; Shepard, McMillan, & Tate, 1998; Vargas, 2002). These researchers have determined that teachers' social class backgrounds influence their attitudes toward work, selection of curricular materials, and their relationships with students. Metz examined in depth the interaction of teachers' social class with their work and found that teachers who come from low socioeconomic upbringings may share with their students an alienation to work attitude and consequently give up on, distance, or isolate their students who are disinvested in school. These teachers may also acutely resent their students' resistance of authority, a strongly antithetical working class value. She adds that this alienating behavior on the teacher's part is not helpful for those students from low socioeconomic backgrounds that need a push from the adults in their lives to achieve at higher levels. While Metz found that the women teachers and some of the Black teachers who had working class origins and now worked with working-class students were able to understand their students' alienation from school while working with them to change their cultural view, she nevertheless senses a "danger that can arise when a school hires a

teaching staff whose backgrounds resemble those of its alienated students" (p. 96). She adds, "to teach students outside the dominant upper-middle-class white group . . . biculturalism in teachers, not a simple match to students . . . seems to be needed" (p. 96). Without opportunities to develop this necessary biculturalism, the working class elements of my background resulted in a mismatch for the school in which I taught.

Neither my biographical experiences nor my teacher preparation had helped me develop this biculturalism. I expected my students to avail themselves of the educational opportunities I was there to provide so that they could achieve academic and socioeconomic success. My working class ethics determined that I understood teaching as a job I had to do; that job was helping students to learn. Whatever or whomever made this job difficult bore the full weight of my resentment. When my students openly resisted my continued efforts to teach them and engaged in behaviors I found disrespectful, I lacked the dispositions and tools to critically reflect on these circumstances as pedagogical dilemmas and instead experienced these occurrences as personal affronts to my teaching self. After a time, I began to treat my resistant students as they treated me and the education I was trying to provide. I resented them and turned away from them. Where I was from, and the values with which I had been raised, dictated that you took full advantage of educational opportunities. If you chose not to, then you were the only one to blame.

My unique biography interacted with the context of Granger High School to create an experience of teacher socialization that resulted in alienation from the profession. I became disillusioned with my work when faced with the teaching and learning challenges posed by the school environment. I experienced teaching to be an emotionally and physically exhausting job that gave back little rewards, a job that was steeped in pedagogical routines aimed at achieving classroom order. Lacking the stance of a critically reflective educator who has the ability to examine pedagogical dilemmas in an effort to effect change, I achieved limited success in this school context.

How might I, with my attendant biography, have been better prepared for the teaching profession? How can my experience serve to inform the preparation and socialization of pre-service and beginning teachers? I answer these questions by offering recommendations for teacher preparation and socialization into the profession.

Concluding Recommendations for
Teacher Preparation and Socialization

My recommendations for teacher education programs include developing a culture of self-reflection that is embedded in the curriculum, reorienting their missions toward equity and social justice, and establishing strong mentoring programs for new teachers in partnership with K–12 schools.

It is important that teacher education programs develop a culture of critical self-reflection. Dinkleman (2003) suggests that this theme of self-reflection be integrated into the teacher education curriculum with teacher educators modeling self-reflection to their students and engaging in critical inquiry with their colleagues. Similarly, McAninch (1993) advocates for using the case study method in teacher education, a model in which teachers learn to plan collaboratively and critically reflect on instruction.

This constant stance of inquiry must also include teacher educators helping pre-service and new teachers examine how their biographies shape their attitudes and beliefs about teaching and of themselves as teachers. Such an in-depth exploration as I have presented here in this paper is essential as prospective teachers begin to think about the type of teachers they want and need to be. This biographical inquiry can be achieved by beginning teachers writing their life histories to shed light on the biases and assumptions linked to past experiences that they bring to teaching that consequently shape their interpretation of the teaching experience (Bullough et al., 1991). Bullough et al. also recommend having teachers write classroom ethnographic journals that lead to a continuous state of awareness of self as teacher.

In addition to creating a culture of self-reflection, teacher education programs must develop and sustain an orientation toward equity and social justice. Constant analysis of the social and political contexts of education is vital to developing teachers who understand the relationship between schools and societies and who are committed to improving schooling experiences and outcomes for all students. For instance, Nieto (2004) recommends that teachers engage in critical analyses of schools as multicultural environments and lead change efforts to improve their work environments as needed.

Like schools of education, school leaders must also bear in mind that teachers who share the social class and race of their students are not automatically best matched to teach them. Therefore, boundary-crossing experiences must be built into teacher preparation and teachers' in-service professional development to help all teachers better understand and work with students who are different from themselves. A notable example of such boundary crossing experiences is related by Darling-Hammond et al. (2002). In their teacher preparation program, pre-service teachers write case studies of their students and the communities in which they live, leading to greater understandings of, and connections to, students' communities.

Finally, schools and universities should develop strong systems of mentoring, pairing new teachers with mentors and other colleagues who can help them develop the professional knowledge base, dispositions, and commitments that contribute to effective and healthy school cultures. Here, Raths (2001) makes the important distinction between teacher educators cultivating and strengthening observable teaching dispositions that support learning rather than attempting to change problematic (and intangible) belief systems. And Feiman-Nemser (2001)

speaks of well-supported mentoring systems that provide professional development for both mentors and mentees.

These recommendations are based on the belief that creating successful teaching and learning experiences in schools is the joint responsibility of teachers, teacher education programs, and the schools in which teachers eventually begin their service. At the core of teacher preparation, induction, and development is the continuous examination of biography and its interaction with work context. This constant stance of reflection is critical in effectively socializing teachers into the profession and, subsequently, curbing teacher attrition rates.

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