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ABSTRACT

This study, which examined the curricular decision making of student teachers, links research on the socialization of preservice teacher education with work focusing on socialization in the workplace. Interviews were conducted with four student teachers during their student teaching experience and 1 year after it. Curriculum materials used by the participants were examined, and some participants were observed teaching. The study found that: (1) the influence of particular institutional forces upon student teacher decision making is filtered through the cooperating teachers; (2) opportunities for significant student teacher curriculum decision making are severely limited; and (3) the school context discourages reflective approaches to teaching and incorporation of action research techniques. The study concludes that conception and execution of curriculum decisions are separated in practice for many student teachers. Therefore, student teachers do not experience important opportunities nor institutional pressures for personal decision making in the classroom. (Contains 22 references.) (JDD)

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EFFECTS OF INSTITUTIONAL FORCES ON NOVICE SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS' CURRICULAR DECISION-MAKING¹

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The commonly held view of the relationship between teachers and curriculum is that teachers serve as a conduit through which the curriculum is delivered to the student (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992; Parker, 1987). The logic of the distinction between curriculum and teaching is founded on the belief that decisions about aims or objects of teaching must be undertaken prior to decisions about how to teach. The distinction between curriculum and teaching, then, is fundamentally a separation of ends and means. This study focuses on the relationship between teachers and curriculum by exploring curricular decision-making of novice social studies teachers. The problem beginning teachers face has been described by Bullough (1992) in this way:

Not only must they implement a curriculum generally developed by others and with which they are unfamiliar but simultaneously they must negotiate a satisfying teaching role. At times the two demands are contradictory: The adopted curriculum prohibits establishing a satisfying role; and the desired role makes it difficult to implement the established curriculum. (p. 239)

Conceptual Framework

While the conduit metaphor dominates the curriculum literature and the

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language of teaching, it is clear that teachers do much more than select teaching techniques to implement formally adopted curricular goals. There are powerful cultural and institutional forces that work to shape the professional role and identity of teachers, however, we know that teachers are not merely passive recipients of the culture of schooling (and the ends-means distinction embedded within it). In fact, teachers are actively involved in shaping the culture of schooling. Recent studies have illustrated the interplay between individuals and institutional cultures and how constraints of institutional structures (e.g., isolated nature of teachers' work; end-means split in curriculum development and implementation) are mediated by collective and individual efforts (e.g., Cornett, et al., 1992; Parker & McDaniel, 1992; Ross, 1987, 1988, in press; Thornton, 1992)

The proper understanding of teachers actions and decision-making should not separate educational ends and means (Dewey, 1904/1964; 1916). "Teaching is practical work carried out in a socially constructed, complex and institutionalized world of schooling" (Sanders & McCutcheon, 1986, p. 50) and as such must be contextually as well as historically situated to understand why teachers do what they do. As Dewey asserted, the primary factor in education is the culture itself, and culture is not a self-conscious or self-critical medium.

We rarely recognize the extent in which our conscious estimates of what is worthwhile and what is not are due to standards of which we are not conscious at all. But in general it may be said that the things which we take for granted without inquiry or reflection are just the things which determine our conscious thinking and decide our conclusions. And these habitudes which lie below the level of reflection are just those which have been formed in the constant give and take of relationship with others (Dewey, 1916, p. 18).

Actions, then must be understood in terms of social relations as well as their

antecedents and consequences. The research on teacher socialization provides a useful conceptual framework for these purposes.

Studies of teacher socialization point out that the process of becoming a teacher is more complex than simply acquiring cultural knowledge about teaching (e.g., Adler, 1984; Jordell, 1977; Ross, 1987; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1985). The conception of teacher socialization that has emerged in recent years emphasizes the interplay between individuals and institutional cultures. This dialectical model provides a way of understanding the effects of institutional structures on novice teachers, while not overlooking the active role individuals play in the construction of their own professional identities (Ross, 1988b).

Teacher socialization research has investigated how teachers' come to hold particular theories of action--that is, sets of ideas and actions a person uses in dealing with problematic situations. These studies have illustrated the interactive relationships among a broad range of factors, including teachers' backgrounds (i.e., experiences, beliefs, and assumptions about teaching) as well as the contexts of the classroom and the school in which they teach. These studies have described the various ideological and material conditions within schools and society that serve to establish limits on the range of options available to teachers (e.g., how curriculum content is legitimated; influence of testing practices on classroom decisions; available resources; teacher evaluation processes). While teachers' background experiences are important in shaping initial conceptions of teaching, practice-generated theories of action have the greatest impact on how teachers make day-to-day curricular decisions (Jordell, 1987).

Su's (1992) study of the sources of influence in preservice teacher socialization, which was part of the national research project, *The Study of the Education of Educators*, examined the influence of three socializing experiences

on beginning teachers: (a) prior socialization experiences (e.g., experience as a student; family, relatives and friends); (b) socialization on the college/ university campus (e.g., course work, field experiences, faculty, peer group, etc.); and (c) socialization in practice schools (e.g., student teaching, cooperating teachers; other teachers in the practice school). Su's findings indicate that the most important source of socialization is the student teaching experience and cooperating teachers. This study focuses on socialization influences in the workplace, however, other areas of influence are also examined.

The body of research on teacher socialization generated in recent years describes how teachers influence and shape the culture and institutions into which they are being socialized and are simultaneously shaped by a variety of forces at different levels (Zeichner & Gore, 1990). Teachers' actions represent active and creative responses to the constraints, opportunities, and dilemmas posed by the immediate contexts of the classroom and the school, while it is through these immediate contexts that the wider structure of the community, the society, and the state have their impact on teachers.

The dialectical model of teacher socialization that has emerged in recent years connotes exchange, discourse, and change for both the individual and the social group (Ross, 1988a). As such, this view provides a more holistic view of the process of becoming a teacher. One implication of this research for teacher education is the need for a conception of reflective teaching that focuses on interactions between individuals and their particular institutional culture or community.

The Study

This study, which examines the curricular decision making of student teachers, links research on the socialization of preservice teacher education with work focusing on socialization in the workplace. For reflective teacher education

to significantly affect teaching practice in the schools, it must move beyond educating reflective (individual) practitioners and be concerned with developing critical reflective communities of teachers. How do we begin to address these concerns and reformulate our ideas about reflective teaching?

Promoting reflective approaches to teaching and curriculum work in schools requires us to consider how teacher education might change both individual and cultural actions. This demands methods that challenge: (a) the language used to describe, explain and justify actions: (b) the activities that constitute education as a form of social life: and (c) the patterns of social relationships that constitute education (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). A pedagogical knowledge base--whether generated from personal inquiry of teachers or discipline-based research--is not alone sufficient to accomplish these aims. What is required is a question-posing approach (Tom, 1987), such as action research, to stimulate reflection and guide thought and action about the commonplaces of schooling.

Participants included two women and two men, all were in a degree program leading to provisional teaching certification. Three of the participants were in the program as education masters students and one was an undergraduate history major completing a minor in education, which included the same professional semester block as masters students. Action research methods were introduced in the teaching methods course, which overlapped with the first seven weeks of their student teaching. Students were required to complete an action research project during their practice teaching. Prior to taking full responsibility for their cooperating teachers' classes, students began a self study of their teaching. Students were asked to identify personal theories of action that guided their teaching in clinical peer teaching exercises and initial teaching experiences in the field (Cornett, et al, 1992). After working through a

series of activities designed to promote reflection on their teaching goals and strategies for student teaching, each participant developed an action research plan to carry out during the final phase of their student teaching experience.

The findings reported in this paper are based upon a series of interviews that were conducted with the participants during and after their semester long field experience. Initial interviews were open-ended and tended to focus on descriptions of student teachers' practices and rationales underlying decision-making in the classroom and school contexts. Follow-up interviews were successively focused based upon data from previous interviews. All were in the same teacher education program. The initial interviews were conducted at the end of their student teaching experience in the winter of 1992. Subsequent interviews were conducted in the spring of 1992 and winter of 1993. Formal interviews were conducted in various settings (e.g., classrooms and conference rooms in schools and at the university as well as in the homes of participants). Formal interviews were taped and transcribed for analysis and ranged from one to over two hours in length. In addition to the formal interviews, there were numerous informal meetings and conversations among all those involved in the study.

Because groups of student teachers were placed in the same school context we were able to examine the decision making strategies and techniques employed by different individuals under what could be labeled as similar if not identical institutional structures. There were obvious individual differences in terms of biography, experience and personality that would impact on one's decision making as well as differences in cooperating teachers, subject matter and grade levels taught. It was felt that by using this method we could better focus in on those influences that could be attributed to institutional factors and those that could be more appropriately attributed to non institutional factors. It

was hoped that it would allow us to examine how different individuals react to and interact with influences of a similar nature in terms of their decision making in the classroom. How people construct different meanings from similar influences. One other major advantage of this technique should be brought to light. By looking at two or more student teachers working in the same department at the same time, we were able to discuss how they viewed each others decision making strategies and what they perceived to be the major influences impacting on the other student teacher. In essence we were able to either corroborate the student teachers own view of their decision making and/or see their decision making through the eyes of another student teacher experiencing similar issues. The four case studies are presented as pairs of two. Each set of cases is constructed from the initial interviews that focused primarily on participants student teaching experiences and follow-up interviews one year later. In addition to interviews, curriculum materials used by the participants were examined and some participants were observed teaching. The primary data source is the series of interviews.

Two Sets of Cases: Gloria and Bob/Sandy and Nelson

Gloria and Bob: Student Teaching

Bob and Gloria student taught at a suburban high school in the state of New York. The community in which this school was situated was an upper middle class community with a fairly homogeneous population. They student taught in the social studies department and had as cooperating teachers, males, who were two of the more experienced members of that department. They were both Master's Degree students receiving certification from one of the local State University system campuses. As part of the certification requirements they observed their cooperating teacher's classes for several weeks prior to the start of the student teaching experience.

Gloria's student teaching experience began in a rather unusual way. Her cooperating teacher was absent for a week and Gloria was called upon to teach all the classes with a paid substitute sitting in the back of the room. According to Gloria, her cooperating teacher left only a test that he wanted the students to take on Friday. Although she expressed that she didn't agree with his methods and the content he was teaching she felt that "the test was what they were going to have live up to so I had to do stuff his way." At this point Gloria felt that the classes were not hers and she was not sure in which order she was going to be picking them up. After the cooperating teacher returned, Gloria found out that she would initially work with four ninth grade sections of Global Studies and later pick up an eleventh grade AP American History course.

Bob's student teaching experience began in a much more traditional manner. Under close supervision from his cooperating teacher, who was also the department head, Bob gradually picked up three tenth grade Social Studies II classes with the primary focus being European History. Bob ended up with one section of regents level, one section of honors level, and one AP section. Bob initially followed the cooperating teacher's lead in terms of the structure and content in the courses taught.

For both Gloria and Bob the early curricular decisions were framed around the textbooks being used and the weekly quizzes that the cooperating teachers were insistent upon. For Gloria this meant assigning a few pages a night from the textbook with questions at the end of the section being the focus of the next days lesson. This was done Monday through Thursday with Friday being quiz day. The quizzes given had to be taken from a computerized test bank that the cooperating teacher compiled and reflected the factual material contained in the text. "He insisted that I give them the same test every Friday and those tests were very textbook directed." For Bob the structure was similar except that the

textbook used in the regent's level class happened to be written by the cooperating teacher. The quizzes that also had to be given on a weekly basis were factual type quizzes designed to reflect the material in the text and given in a format similar to that found in the regent's exams. The testing structure used in Bob's classes was based on his cooperating teacher's doctoral work on mastery learning. After each unit two quizzes were given one diagnostic and the other an alternate quiz. Bob felt that not only did these quizzes drive the curriculum and make his curricular decisions for him by default, but that also a great deal of class time was spent in a testing situation. "After the diagnostic quizzes came the alternate quizzes. The questions on those are from the regents supposedly, I had to gear what I was teaching to those things...they took up a lot of class time, actually." There is a great deal of evidence to suggest that both student teachers were well aware of the larger social and institutional pressures at work in regard to the issue of testing. This appeared to have a greater impact on Bob as he taught tenth grade and his students would be taking the regent's exam in the spring. Both Gloria and Bob commented on Bob's cooperating teacher's concern with covering all the material and still leaving time to "teach" to the regents. As with the weekly tests Bob was also concerned with the amount of time preparing for the regents takes. "That was the overriding factor, getting to finishing all of the tenth grade by May, having three weeks to review the ninth grade and then going over old regent's exams for a couple of weeks--sounded like five weeks of preparation for the test which is a big chunk of time." Bob also talked at length about the pressure he observed being brought to bear on a non tenured tenth grade teacher in regard to regent's test scores.

For both Bob and Gloria the textbooks and the weekly quizzes became the curriculum and everything they did in the early weeks of their student teaching experience revolved around them. It was obvious that the experience was

becoming frustrating for both of them as they searched for ways to bring more of their own ideas and a bit of themselves into the classroom. The different tactics they used to accomplish this and to still end up with what could be considered a "successful" student teaching experience is enlightening.

Gloria was having problems with her cooperating teacher from the beginning and made it known that she did not want him in the classroom when she was teaching. Initially it was because of her personal dislike of him but increasingly it stemmed more from the fact that she was deviating from his format and feared that he would stop her from doing what she wanted to do in the classroom. According to Gloria it was almost as if an agreement was struck up to keep him out of the classroom. "It was like a bargain was struck up, if you let me go and hang around in the faculty room and do my stuff then...it was like negotiations, I did all his work for him." This gave Gloria the freedom and opportunity to try out new things in the classroom. She quickly learned that if she gave his weekly quizzes and that her students did well on them then he would leave her alone. She also quickly learned that if she hit the students hard on Thursdays by intensely covering the material contained in the quizzes that she would have the rest of the week to do as she wanted. Gloria felt that doing this was not only necessary for her survival but also for the survival of the students. "The first week was like hell and on top of it I didn't believe in what I was doing. They hated it and I hated it too." Gloria looked primarily to her conscience and the needs of the students to direct her decision making.

Bob's situation was different his cooperating teacher continued to visit on a regular basis and Bob cleared his ideas before trying them out. Bob felt that in order to get a job he needed to focus primarily on what the cooperating teacher wanted. His cooperating teacher didn't tell him directly not try new things but found other more subtle ways to make his wishes known. Bob labored under the

restraints of leveled aspirations from the beginning. Although he occasionally pushed the boundaries a little he never deviated far from the program. "I knew what I could do so I didn't make up a hypothetical, I was too busy for that. I originally thought about student teaching as a time when you could really try new things, I kind of scaled down." As this statement suggests Bob was well aware that he was doing things and making curricular decisions contrary to the way he really felt. At one point he talks about the guilt he felt for letting the students down. In this regard Bob expressed admiration for Gloria and her ability to manipulate the situation to the benefit of herself and her students. Likewise, Gloria was aware of Bob's dilemma and felt that he and others were becoming bitter about their student teaching experience.

One of the clearest indications of the different approaches to curricular decision making on the part of Gloria and Bob is concerning simulations. Both expressed a desire to do a simulation in the classroom but knew that their cooperating teachers would not approve. They had learned about and experimented with simulations in their methods class and both had the opportunity to observe other members of the social studies department in which they were student teaching, successfully use them in their classrooms. Gloria started by designing her own simulation and then taking it to the other members of the department for comments and advice. She solicited their help not only in the design of the activity but also in its implementation in the classroom. Hence it became something of a department project by the time her cooperating teacher heard about it. It was too late for him to put a stop to it without insulting and alienating other members of the department. "I planned for it, plotted for it. Because I started it and showed the other teachers in the department and they started working on it. I kind of wanted a big department project on it so that he couldn't say no. I kind of trumped him, I really did." On the other hand Bob

went to his cooperating teacher first and was told that if he was going to do a simulation it had to be done quickly and that he could use the one simulation that the cooperating teacher had used in the past. "[It was] a store bought one that I ended up doing. He does that anyway, a token simulation... it doesn't really fit he just kind of threw it in there." Where Gloria sought out allies for her project and justified it by saying she was going to the experts in this and that we were told to take advantage of all the resources in the department, Bob confined himself to the more traditional student teacher and cooperating teacher arrangement.

By all concerned both were considered successful student teachers and received good recommendations. They used very distinct and opposing styles in solving the dilemmas they faced in making the curricular decisions within their realm. Bob operated from a position of leveled aspirations and felt that his freedom to chose was constrained by both the explicit and implicit direction of his cooperating teacher. He focused on pleasing the cooperating teacher, surviving and getting a good recommendation that would one day lead to a job. Gloria rather than focusing on the constraints to freedom, focused instead on the freedom and opportunities that existed within those constraints. She saw what was possible to do and went ahead and tried it. She focused on the needs on the students as she perceived them and looked to her conscience and other department members as her support. Both were concerned about the kind of behavioral patterns in regard to teaching that they might be setting for themselves and were struggling with the idea of never becoming the kind of teacher they wanted to become. Gloria summed up this feeling best. "The thing that really got me was hearing all these people say, well after student teaching I'm going to do what I want to do and then that first year teacher would say after tenure I'm going to do what I want to do. I felt that by the time I got my tenure

and finally got to do what I wanted to do I'd forget what I wanted to do."

Gloria and Bob Revisited. One year later.

In the fall Gloria received a full time teaching position in a small central New York high school. As the person she was replacing was leaving there was no transition or assistance in terms of curriculum. She was given a textbook that she used to chronologically organize the curriculum and began collecting outside articles to supplement the material. The only other source of information about what to teach came from colleagues who informed her as to what the administration wanted and expected. Basically she was informed that it didn't matter as long as the kids did well on the regent's exams. According to Gloria other teachers openly teach their courses from the regent's review books with one going so far as to require his students to buy it. Although it was communicated to her that the parents, students, and administration only care that the students do well on the regents, she resisted. Instead, Gloria devised the curriculum in such a way as to provide students with activities and a context that gave them a reason for wanting to do the reading in the basic texts. According to Gloria this was done over time and through a system "trial and error." Unlike her student teaching experience she didn't have the pressure of conforming to a single individual's expectations but did have other pressures that affected her curricular decisions.

The department in which she works is a small (six teachers) all white male department. The teachers are very isolated from one another with the social studies classrooms not even near each other. There is no social studies office as such and the department head is located in the junior high school that is housed in another building. Gloria expressed that she didn't even know the junior high faculty and didn't have a department meeting until November of the school year. She also said, "I feel that the isolation is intentional so that we as teachers cannot

talk to each other." After creating a situation for herself where there was collaboration with other teachers in her student teaching experience she finds herself working in a situation where there is no collaboration with other members of the department. Gloria expressed surprise at this lack of collaboration and expressed it in strong language. "I have much less respect for teachers now than I did before. When you have a group of oppressed people you'd think it would be easy to organize them but its not. They think that the administration is their friend and they negotiate individually for certain privileges."

The physical space at the school where she did her student teaching is organized differently and Gloria is convinced that that is important. "At the other school the rooms are adjacent to one another and the department has a room that they share as a prep room. That makes interaction with other staff members a fact of school life." Compare this with a comment that Gloria makes about her current situation. "I feel very isolated from the rest of the faculty and very unapproached as a first year teacher." This isolation among other things can lead to distrust, jealousy and misinterpretations of others intentions. An example of this is a story relayed to us by Gloria where she was called into the principal's office to meet with two other social studies teachers who had complaints about her. The complaints about her appeared to be gender issues concerning her assertiveness and aggressiveness in dealing with her male colleagues. It is interesting that the two teachers brought their complaint directly to the principal rather than to the department chair or to Gloria herself. According to Gloria the department chair only found out about the meeting at the last minute and was caught unaware. One of the two teachers who brought the complaint had made an inappropriate pass at Gloria on the day she was hired.

Gloria has already made up her mind that she is leaving the school and

has taken the attitude that she is "not going to knock herself out making friends." There is only one person at the school, a Spanish teacher, that she talks to on a regular basis. They carry on their conversations in Spanish as Gloria is also fluent in the language. The hassles with the other members of the department takes away from Gloria's prep time and is a drain on her emotionally. She views her classes as "her sanctuary" away from all the other things she has to deal with.

Gloria expresses a great awareness of teaching as a political activity and credits her method's instructor for that. She expresses it in the following way. "As a teacher you have choices but some choices are harder than others. Enlightenment can be a painful process. You can do something with the information or choose to ignore it." Gloria entered teaching with a political and social agenda and feels she made a mistake by moving to a place where she didn't know enough about what was going on. She still feels agency as a teacher and is willing to keep changing schools until she finds one that fits her. She sees herself as more political than other teachers and has certain principles she is not willing to compromise.

During this experience she feels she has sharpened her skills in terms of dealing with kids, and sees this as a result of time spent in the classroom and going through the trial and error experiences you don't really do as a student teacher. "I've learned to deal with kids, personalities, and the baggage they bring with them. I learned a lot about that and you can't really learn that in books."

Gloria gets her support from those outside the school. Her boyfriend is a social studies teacher in another town a couple of hours away but she views him as a colleague and a collaborative partner. There is a strong sense from her that she believes other teachers need to collaborate and engage in supportive networks. "The ethic that we are in this as individuals does not work and is based on a false sense of professionalism by which group rights are being eked

away."

Since completing his student teaching, Bob has been working in a local museum in upstate New York. What originally started as a part time job teaching classes in the morning has now expanded to include other duties connected with the operation of the museum. Bob's teaching duties focus on several programs offered at the museum that evolve around the exhibits. Usually each class is one and half hours long and involves groups from pre-K through sixth grade, with an occasional special needs adult group.

In terms of curriculum development the educational coordinator usually puts the exhibit together and then devises a basic outline the teachers are to use to develop their lesson. According to Bob there is a tremendous amount of leeway within that framework. There is a resource room with materials that the educators can use to develop their presentations. All three full time people giving classes at the museum are certified teachers as are many of the part time staff. Bob enjoys the freedom he has in putting together the curriculum and commented often on how different this was from his student teaching experience. "Student teaching was a more formal system where the cooperating teacher controlled the curriculum and material as opposed to the more constructivist approach I can take at the museum."

As Bob only saw each group for a short period of time he developed the ability to quickly assess the needs of the group and modify his delivery as a result. "You know very little about the group beforehand and there is little collaboration with the regular classroom teacher. The reaction of the group members effect both the pace and length of delivery." Although the adjustment to the younger age group was difficult at first, day to day experiences with the kids was helpful. He learned to pick up clues about what was going on with the students and the importance of catching their imagination. "Finding out their

interests as opposed to bowing to external goals or outcomes as during student teaching."

Although there is little collaboration with the classroom teacher there is a great deal of constant collaboration on the part of the museum employees. There are always opportunities to discuss activities with others both formally and informally. "Collaboration is part of the daily process, although you could do your own thing if you wanted to." For example, Bob and two other staff members collaborated on a program on the underground railroad. Bob sees that teaching does not have to be a competitive or comparative structure as it was during his student teaching. As he interviews for public school jobs he finds himself bringing up collaboration. He now values and wants that as a teacher. A negative example was given of two veteran teachers who haven't spoken to each other in fifteen years at the school where he student taught. The system there allows for that to happen. Bob feels that that would not be possible in the setting in which he currently works because collaboration is a way of life. "Movement from no collaboration to collaboration is one of the things I enjoy most about the job."

Bob realizes that the museum is a resource rich environment and that makes a big difference. Also groups coming to the museum usually are excited about being there and are motivated to learn. According to Bob this helps him to concentrate on what he wants to do and where he wants to go with the lesson. The subject matter mismatch between Bob's training in the social studies and what he is required to teach at the museum does not bother him much as he faced a similar problem when student teaching. "In some ways it is easier for me to learn the material at the museum. It will stay with me longer and will hold my interest." His role or purpose in the two settings is also different. At the museum he is learning and growing himself. "In student teaching it was a matter

of getting through rather than learning anything new." But Bob realizes that some teachers do reach the type of education provided in the museum setting although this was not his experience while student teaching. Scores on the regent's test were the important outcome there. The museum experience has given him a different outlook on his role as a teacher and on the students' roles as students. "The goal is to turn students on to something that they might not have the opportunity to experience elsewhere. To get them thinking about these things. I'm looking for engagement not test results."

Sandy and Nelson: Student Teaching

Sandy and Nelson did their student teaching in a large comprehensive high school in upstate New York. Sandy taught two classes of regent's level 11th grade American history and three economics classes. The American History classes were a good match with her college classwork but economics was something that she had no course background in. Fortunately for Sandy she started by picking up the American history classes and only had to teach economics for a couple of weeks near the end of the experience.

Nelson, on the other hand, was involved in two team-taught World Cultures classes that were actually four periods back to back, and on opposite days, remedial classes for Global Studies competency and American history competency. Nelson picked up the remedial classes first and only had an opportunity to teach the team taught classes for the last couple of week's of the experience. Both worked with male cooperating teachers that were two of the more experienced members of the department.

Sandy was given an opportunity to teach in the American history classes prior to the actual beginning of the student teaching phase of her program, but this was done under close supervision of her cooperating teacher. "American history went pretty well though because he structured me, he kind of stood over

me and watched everything I did and made lots of suggestions during the pre student teaching. I did have the opportunity to teach during the observation period but they were pretty much his lessons." Nelson also had an opportunity to teach during the pre student teaching phase of the program but only in the remedial classes. He was left alone to figure things out for himself as his cooperating teacher was really more interested in the World Cultures program that he helped to establish. "Based on that he [cooperating teacher] felt most comfortable giving me the remedial classes almost immediately. He let me structure them as I saw fit, follow up on paper work etc. to the point where the first couple of weeks he wasn't even in the room much."

Before it came time for Sandy to begin her student teaching, her cooperating teacher told where she would be beginning and to start developing lesson plans. Even though she had seen that his lessons closely followed the textbook she decided to look for primary source material to teach from. As she put it, "I went to the next chapter and saw that it all covered social history. I like social history so I went into the bookroom and got a whole lot of materials from original documents to diaries, letters and correspondence...I did not even open the text or anything to do with the regent's." Throughout this two week unit her cooperating teacher was very helpful sitting in the back of the room critiquing every class and providing additional material.

Nelson on the other hand was left to his own devices to develop lessons for the remedial classes. He used old regent's test questions and workbooks to organize the material. The purpose of these classes was viewed in the instrumental terms of getting these students through the regent's exams. This view appeared to be shared by everyone concerned, even the students. As Nelson explains, "I tried to use other material to vary it a little bit with audio visual and review games but the students resisted, they'd rather go back to the

worksheets." Although Nelson was left alone in these two classes he felt that this allowed him to develop his own relationship with the students and to feel confident in what he was doing before being observed. He compared his early experience favorably against that of Sandy's. "It served a great purpose. It was a great strategy on his part... the familiarization with the class and their getting familiar with me, and it really helped out I think...there was another student teacher there, Sandy and she expressed how that process was for her and really hindered her teaching." Nelson would find that this situation would change for him also once he began working in the World Cultures program.

After Sandy completed that first unit and was feeling good about how things went, the cooperating teacher became more directive. He suggested for the next unit that Sandy use about five or six regent's review books that he had given her to develop the lesson plans. Sandy quickly figured out that she was given the freedom to create a unit not heavily connected with the regent's but when those areas that the cooperating teacher knew were included in the test came up, her freedom rapidly dissipated.

"I took the time to teach something that was not in the regents but that was okay because there weren't any questions from that time period in the test. However when the next section came up which was the 1850's, that's when he got a little more involved with my lesson planning and came up with the different review books. So that by the time I got into my second unit he had intervened and wanted to make sure that for the rest of my stay there that I did cover those things that would be on the regent's exam."

The cooperating teacher did allow Sandy to experiment with methods as long as she was teaching the appropriate content. Sandy was becoming disillusioned and felt that both she and the students were bored by the factual content being

taught and the manner in which she had to teach it.

Nelson during this time was beginning to teach individual classes in the World Cultures program. Not being from New York originally, he is not too familiar with the regent's and competency systems. Even though this World Cultures program was considered progressive and individual lessons were not tied directly to regent's topics, the impact of the regent's was still being felt. "The course is designed to end in late April or early May we then get the regent's review books out. They may be on the cutting edge of learning but they are still very much aware that the kids must pass the regent's." Although the team structure led to a natural collaborative entity, Nelson found that the curriculum was tightly structured and already set in place. Nelson was given the curriculum during the spring before student teaching and was contacted during the summer to see how he was progressing with it. There is little doubt that this curriculum framed much of what Nelson was able to do. In Nelson's case there was little questioning of the appropriateness of the basic goals of the program and as a result he didn't deviate much from the set curriculum.

"As far as the objectives we both agreed what the state curriculum required and what I needed to get across. No matter what it was as long as I covered it and I was able to show him some kind of lesson plan, he felt comfortable with it."

As Nelson talked little about the students and really focused on the needs of his cooperating teacher and the course structure, particularly in the World Cultures program, Sandy was becoming increasingly concerned about the impact she was having on both the students and herself. As she adapted her lessons to meet the requirements of her cooperating teacher and the ever looming regent's exam she noticed a change in both her and the students' attitude.

"They started losing interest so I had to come up with some pretty exciting

lessons for the last section....Maybe it was even me I found that my lessons were less exciting. When you are given a certain amount of material you know you have to cover it. I just sensed that they were getting bored, maybe they were getting bored with my lessons. I think I was starting to get bored. All of a sudden I was getting into the routine of coming in and doing the question giving notes, etc. By the end even I was saying I don't want to do this ever again not the way I had to do it."

As the cooperating teacher gained confidence in Sandy he began leaving the classroom more frequently and for longer periods of time. This provided Sandy with the cracks she needed to do some of her own thing and remain sane. But even in these rare moments of freedom to experiment and go outside the lines, Sandy was aware of what she was expected to do.

"I always tried to keep him happy. I'm dependent on him for a recommendation, isn't that horrible but its reality. If he hadn't let me do my own thing when student teaching started I probably would have become more vocal."

Sandy and Nelson Revisited: One Year Later

After leaving student teaching Sandy did some substitute work in local school districts, while completing her degree program and pursuing coaching certification for the state of New York. As a result of contacts made during coaching school she received a job teaching summer school as well as a full time job in a local high school for the fall. The job she was offered for the fall was teaching five sections of tenth grade Global Studies, an area where admittedly Sandy had little background both from college course work and her student teaching experience. Fortunately for Sandy her teaching assignment for the summer was also Global Studies and this afforded her the opportunity to get an early jump on things.

The school in which Sandy was hired to teach is a small school in an old mill town in central New York. It also happens to be in the school district in which she lives and which her own children attend. The social studies department is white male dominated with Sandy being the only one of seven that doesn't fit that bill. Also according to Sandy's description it is very traditional and structured. "It is a very structured department with little change since the sixties. They all conform with each other in terms of grading and curriculum." But due to a strange turn of events that structure is less oppressive in the tenth grade curriculum than in the other courses. There was a major imbroglio involving last year's tenth grade global studies and as a result one teacher was transferred and the other was let go. Two new people, both first year teachers were hired at the same time for the tenth grade program. Because of past problems with this program and the uproar created last year there was more academic freedom given to the two new teachers than would ordinarily be the case.

This academic freedom didn't translate immediately into changes in the curriculum and/or methods of teaching. Although both new teachers were given the same room it was predominantly Geoff's, while Sandy had to travel three periods a day. Sandy describes their early relationship this way. "We were both given the same room although it is predominantly his. We both put our desks in there and did our separate thing for the first month. Gradually with repeated contact we began to share ideas and materials." This collaborative effort appeared to grow out of both necessity and the close proximity of work space in which the teachers were housed. As in the case of Bob at the museum close physical contact helped to facilitate collaboration and cooperation. Sandy now describes their relationship in the following manner. "We have grown very close and are now real good friends that's what working side by side does." Sandy

and Geoff now develop their lessons together and use each other for collaboration, support and reflection.

That this collaboration exists within what is still a traditional hierarchically structured department is intriguing. The department head still expresses the view that there is no reason to try anything new because he has tried it all in the past, but doesn't force this view on Sandy and Geoff. But because of past history and years of influence the other department members according to Sandy are his clones. The school administration, that is relatively new, is progressive in their outlook and Sandy and Geoff look to them for support, although not openly. Sandy recognizes that she is still constrained by the uniformity of the department in terms of grading structure and the two required long range assignments given each semester. She feels that this is a small price to pay and "that freedom with the curriculum is more important." Other restrictions are placed on them by administrative decree and concerns about the regent's exam. For example they must periodically hand in their planbooks and mark where they are in terms of the state curriculum. Also the supervisory evaluation forms used to evaluate teachers use Hunter type criteria to assess performance, and "it is real clear what is expected of you when being observed." As Sandy puts it "you still have to bite your lip a lot and smile. I am well aware of the political reality of tenure."

Sandy is also well aware of the uniqueness of her relationship with Geoff and what a different experience it would be working at a different grade level or with another teacher. "Working with someone who wasn't also a new teacher, with a pre-established curriculum would have been a problem for me." Sandy is making efforts to keep this collaboration going by trying to help Nelson get a position at the school in the ninth grade Global Studies program. This is a relationship that started in their method's class, blossomed during student

teaching and still exists today even though they work over an hour away from each other.

Sandy talks about wanting to be the type of teacher that kids feel comfortable coming to. She felt that she was a little stiff at first and excessively concerned with subject matter. But this is changing partly as a result of contact with students both inside and outside of the classroom. She is currently coaching volleyball and is tenth grade class advisor. Next year she plans on becoming student council advisor as well. Sandy tries to make herself accessible to students and be a good listener to their concerns and problems. "I'm not what I want to be yet, I hope to be that next year. I want an open and free atmosphere based on mutual interest and mutual respect."

Sandy is well aware that what has started as a collaboratively developed curriculum could evolve into a stale, hand me down program not too dissimilar from others existing in the department. As a result she is trying with Geoff to create other changes in the curriculum for both ninth and tenth grade. Part of this plan has already been approved by the department but more is in the works.

"We are trying to create further changes in the curriculum that will allow teachers to specialize in certain areas and teach all the kids in those particular topics. We plan to alter our program every year, keeping what works and changing what doesn't."

Nelson is currently substituting on a daily basis sometimes at the school where he did his student teaching and other times at elementary and secondary schools in the geographical area where he lives. He is also tutoring high school students at night who have been removed from school for disciplinary reasons. Since completing his student teaching Nelson has also acquired his elementary certification. Although originally not relishing the thought of substituting, Nelson is glad that he took this route rather than working outside of education.

"I have seen a variety of schools at a variety of levels and now know that there is not only one or two ways of operating." This experience has also made Nelson focus more on the control aspect of teaching than he might otherwise do. "I feel now that one has to establish respect and discipline, that has to come first. There is a connection between control and getting things done."

Nelson does get some opportunities to develop curriculum but usually follows the teacher's lesson plan if one exists. When there is not a lesson plan or the one left is inadequate Nelson begins to pull on his personal knowledge and current events. "I usually carry a bag of tricks with me. I do things with polling kids and always carry magazines with me." Nelson realizes that often substituting is done with a siege mentality. It is geared to getting through and getting through as much of the teacher's plan as possible. He uses humor a great deal and has developed the ability to take things in stride that he would "never settle for as a full time teacher".

He contrasts his view of subbing with what he feels would be the case as a classroom teacher.

"As a teacher your goals and expectations are clearly stated and pursued. My authority would come from my position as a teacher sanctioned by those who hired me as the best possible person for the job at this time. I would then move to developing personal power as a result of my actions in the school. This legitimacy is missing for substitutes."

While Nelson talked about the type of teacher he hoped to become he stressed the need to make connections and form partnerships with others both inside and outside the school setting. He feels that communication and collaboration is vital for success and support of one's efforts. He deplores what he sees as the "individualist mentality on the part of teachers even those under siege." He views himself not just as a teacher in the classroom but a member of a

faculty and a school. Nelson explains that part of this comes from his military experience. "It comes partially from my military experience this sense of dependency on others to accomplish common and group goals. I'm looking to further the group's goal rather than my individual goal." The collaborative experience that he desires and that he briefly shared with Sandy during student teaching is not happening for him as a substitute. What support Nelson does get is through contacts outside of schools.

Nelson is somewhat pessimistic about the possibility of change in our schools and the way they are structured. He feels that there is constant pressure to produce quick results in a form that is externally determined, and that those results are usually short term. "Pressure for quick results comes from parents and society and this really effects the possibility of change. The type of results we are looking for in education are really long term but no one is willing to wait." Part of this according to Nelson is based on the lack of trust and communication concerning what is taking place in schools. He sees a we versus them attitude at many levels which is often expressed in terms of an I versus them attitude. He feels that teachers need to organize and carry the debate outside of the school and that there is a political role for teachers and others who have a stake in education. The kind of political movement he is looking for is not a union generated one. "The political movement needs to be more grassroots than it currently is, neighborhood seminars, coffee klatches, etc. are needed." Although Nelson sees teaching from a collective viewpoint he also believes the agency of the individual is primary. "The importance of teaching is how I present myself to others, modeling what is the good life. I am my moral values , this is me , this is the way I live."

Discussion

There are a number of emergent issues that may prove to be significant

factors in understanding the affects of institutional contexts on novice teacher decision making.

(1) We have found Pollard's (1982) conceptual model of classroom coping strategies a useful heuristic in analyzing findings to this point. Pollard's model attempts to link the macro- (e.g., cultural and institutional) and micro-factors that influence classroom interaction (e.g., role of pupils, ecology of the classroom). According to Pollard, teachers' actions represent active and creative responses to the constraints, opportunities, and dilemmas posed by the immediate contexts of the classroom and the school, and it is through these immediate contexts that the wider structure of the community, the society, and the state have their impact on teachers.

As suggested in Pollard's model, socializing forces are mediated at various levels. In the cases described above, the influence of particular institutional forces upon student teacher decision making is filtered through the cooperating teachers. For example, Gloria, Bob, Sandy and Nelson all completed their student teaching in the fall term, therefore, they did not directly experience the pressure of preparing students to take regents examinations. However, their cooperating teachers' conceptions of the importance of these examinations and the resultant tailoring of the curriculum to prepare students to perform well on them was transferred to the student teachers. This situation illustrates the type of role conflicts and dilemmas that exist within the teaching culture. To fully understand how factors such as high stakes testing influences curriculum decision making of student teachers in this study, we need to understand how it affects cooperating teachers' curriculum decision making. Then we can better understand how these pressures are mediated by the cooperating teacher for the student teacher.

(2) Opportunities for significant student teacher curriculum decision

making is severely limited. In these cases, cooperating teachers insisted that student teachers retain certain routines of practice that placed limits upon their decision making. For example, using weekly quizzes derived directly from textbook materials set limits on the parameters in which independent curricular decision making could be undertaken. This is, of course, related to the first hypothesis in that most quizzes were designed to help prepare students for question formats and content areas included in state examinations.

As suggested by Robert Bullough (1992) cooperating teachers play a major role in impacting how novice teachers think about teaching and hence about which curriculum decisions are within their realm to make. They reinforce the distinction between curriculum and instruction, that as suggested by Ross (in press), is a distinction between means and ends that permeates the language of schooling. If one accepts this distinction then student teachers are given some latitude about how to teach but very little latitude about what to teach. In the preceding cases we found that student teachers had difficulty separating the two in actual practice and that they were well aware that the confines of what to teach had a definite impact on how they could teach it. This is best exemplified in the case of Sandy who, while student teaching, was allowed to determine how to teach as long as the content of what she was teaching followed the dictates laid out for her by her cooperating teacher. Sandy found this suffocating for both her and the students to the point where she seriously questioned whether or not she wanted to do this ever again particularly not the way she had to do it.

(3) These tentative findings illustrate obstacles to promoting reflective teaching practices in the schools. Although the teacher preparation program emphasizes reflective approaches to teaching and provides encouragement and support for student teachers to incorporate action research techniques in learning

to teach, these efforts were discouraged in the school context. All four students had expressed enthusiasm about "experimenting" during their student teaching, however, they discovered they were expected to implement curricula without involvement in its conception and with little room for adaptation.

Su (1992) found that student teaching was considered by both faculty and students as the most important source of influence on the socialization of teachers. Su also found, in the same study, that student teaching was the least controlled and the most disconnected part of the teacher education experience. Perhaps because of both the heavy influence of student teaching and its disconnectedness from previous teacher education experiences, students felt that there was no support and encouragement for reflective practice and action research techniques. Nowhere in any of these cases does anyone discuss support from University supervisors for the activities they were engaging in. Whatever support the student teachers did get came from each other, as in the case of Sandy and Nelson, or came from a calculated and deliberate attempt to foster support for a project, as in the case of Gloria. The students in this case study did feel that what they learned in their method's course was important and meaningful but that those ideas were not supported in the context of the schools in which they were student teaching. This may help us to understand why many student teachers view teacher education courses as useless when asked how they feel such courses prepared them for their student teaching experiences. This may speak more to a mismatch among the experiences and the primacy of survival as student teachers, than to any fundamental flaws in the teacher education courses themselves.

In most institutions student teachers are counseled to go along with their cooperating teachers and to do basically what other teachers in that school do (Su, 1992). Although this advice may not come from education faculty directly, it

is often the advice from the student teaching placement offices. According to both the Student Teacher Handbook and the Cooperating Teacher Handbook, the University from which these students were placed gives similar advice. This coupled with cooperating teachers and cooperating schools resistance to change and maintenance of the status quo, creates dilemmas for the student teachers. Although not discussed directly in the case studies included in this text, Gloria had a difficult time adapting to the requirements of her cooperating teacher and was on the verge of quitting. She felt that she was getting no support from the school, her cooperating teacher, the University supervisor or the University itself. Gloria was feeling very isolated and alone and only through the efforts of her method's course instructor was she able to pull it together and successfully complete her student teaching.

Su found in her study that there was very little contact between student teachers and other teachers in the school, other than the cooperating teacher. Teaching is viewed as an individualistic undertaking and student teachers are rapidly socialized into this culture both through prior experiences with schools and by their cooperating teachers. In our cases, we have found evidence to suggest that that isolation is partly due to the physical structure and layout of the institution itself. In both Bob and Sandy's situations, a change from an institution that physically isolated teachers to one that placed teachers in close and continuous contact with one another, had an impact on the amount and type of collaborative activities. On the other hand the case of Gloria suggests that movement to an environment that both discourages and makes more difficult collegial interaction, diminishes its likelihood even by someone who sought out collaborative relationships in the past. There are a lot of other factors at work here, that call for further study and discussion, that may help increase our understanding of how collaborative relationships can be encouraged and formed.

Su suggests that the impact of families, friends and relatives on teacher socialization is somewhat limited and only of moderate influence. Her discussion of these influences is limited primarily to the category of prior socialization and is separated from peer group influence which is considered part of on campus preservice socialization. In our study we have found these influences to be difficult to separate out and the boundaries between categories and arenas fuzzy. There is evidence to suggest that the influence of family, friends and relatives is an ongoing influence and that they are as much a part of the socialization experience on campus and in practice schools as they are in terms of prior experiences. Prior socialization experiences of all four participants in this study are what latter socialization experiences are mediated through and as such are difficult to view as discrete experiences. This goes back to Dewey's (1931) notion of the serial nature of behavior. Sandy and Nelson who could be considered both friends and peers developed a relationship in their method's course that lasted through student teaching and beyond to the point where today, Sandy is trying to get Nelson a job at the school where she is currently employed. Gloria and her boyfriend, who is also a social studies teacher, influence each other a great deal in terms of how and what they teach. Even the researchers have developed relationships with the participants which are ongoing and are impacting all the parties involved in ways which are difficult to discern. Although Su's study is informative in terms of trying to investigate the impact of different sources of teacher socialization, the cases in this study reconfirm the interconnectedness and complexity that is missed in doing so.

Conclusion

The literature illustrates the importance of active engagement in practice for learning how to teach. An important and significant part of teaching practice

is making curricular decisions and carrying them out in the classroom. This process involves creating a body of personal practical knowledge about teaching which is used to guide future practice. Based upon the findings in this study, conception and execution of curriculum decisions are separated in practice for many student teachers. Therefore, student teachers do not experience important opportunities nor institutional pressures on their personal decision making in the classroom. As a result, the discourse (through self reflection or with others) about teaching that takes place is either superficial or constricted in a variety of ways.

The placement of students in school settings where curricular decision making is both possible and encouraged is vital if students are to gain experience in making these kinds of decisions. Student efforts in this regard must be supported by the University Teacher Education Program, in terms of contact with supervisors and method's course instructors, as well as supported by the cooperating teacher and the cooperating school. The collaborative action research approach can and does work in institutional settings that allow and/or encourage it to happen. Students placed in settings where the conception and implementation of teaching decisions are joined can become critically reflective practitioners and curriculum decision makers in the true spirit of that term.

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