



5-2001

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Recommended Citation

Rothermel, Dan (2001) "Journeys Of Preservice Teachers: They All Don't Want To Save The World," *Teaching and Learning: The Journal of Natural Inquiry & Reflective Practice*: Vol. 15: Iss. 1, Article 4. Available at: <https://commons.und.edu/tl-nirp-journal/vol15/iss1/4>

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Journeys of Preservice Teachers: They All Don't Want to Save the World

by

Dan Rothermel

As a budding teacher educator, I assumed that the preservice teachers in my introductory course, *Exploring Teaching*, were in one very fundamental way like me. As a child of the '60s, I wanted to make a difference in the lives of others as a member of a generation that would like to think we looked beyond ourselves to make the world a better place. Many of us did, as we became social workers, health care professionals, and teachers. Now, a full generation later, I am a teacher educator looking to examine my original assumptions and asking the question, *when students enrolled in Exploring Teaching, what were they actually exploring?*

Teaching, certainly, but was there more to it than that? Some preservice teachers hold a clear and strong image of themselves as teachers while others have great role ambiguity when it comes to actually seeing themselves as teachers (Hawkey, 1996). My research found that students approached this course in two primary but not dichotomous ways: (1) they looked inwardly to examine their own motivations to teach, or (2) they looked outwardly to see how the teaching life in classrooms could help them make a difference in the lives of others.

The *Exploring Teaching* Course

The *Exploring Teaching* course is the first step in the five-year preservice teacher education program at the University of New Hampshire (UNH). The foundation of Teacher Education at UNH is the focus on developing a "community of inquiry" and "community of support" (Oja, Diller, Corcoran, & Andrew, 1992). At its best, such a supportive learning community becomes a *safe space* where class members assume some responsibility for each other's well being as well as the success of the group as a whole. Students bring their partial perspective to respond to the common inquiries of the entire class. Something of value, be it social, personal, intellectual, and/or ethical, is created by the written and oral interaction of classmates.

Central to our vision is the teacher as reflective decision maker. Teacher decisions are called for across the range of classroom activity. Teacher decisions usually have value components. They are often moral decisions. When teachers own the decision making process, they work from their own philosophical constructs. They move beyond blind implementation of packages and prescriptions. They make informed choices that direct practice (Oja et al., 1992, p. 6).

One implication of this philosophy of communities of support and inquiry is the structuring of *Exploring Teaching* to foster such community building. Regular writing of Dear Classmates Letters fosters the opportunity for *Exploring Teaching* students to share their fieldwork experiences, their doubts, their questions, and/or their reflections that they produce. Learning of both classmates' struggles and successes through writing provides insights into one's own experiences in the classroom. In addition, small and large group discussions about the substance of their letters allow students' stories to be acknowledged, accepted, and often affirmed. Since students spend at least 65 hours in a public school classroom as a teacher assistant with a cooperating teacher as mentor, they do not have the planning and instructional demands of student teaching.

In their fieldwork in *Exploring Teaching*, students observe middle school students and teachers in classrooms, hallways, lunchrooms, and playgrounds. In the classrooms, *Exploring Teaching* students work with middle school students one-to-one or with small groups to support the teacher, grade papers, go on field trips, or visit other classrooms and schools to be better informed about the teaching life. If *Exploring Teaching* students feel confident and willing, some teach their own lessons to full classes of students.

The Students of *Exploring Teaching*

The class of 14 students was similar in size to the other 12 sections of *Exploring Teaching* at the University of New Hampshire. Of the nine females and five males, all were Caucasian except one female who was a native of Central America. Since undergraduate students do not major in education at the University of New Hampshire, but work towards graduation with a bachelor's degree in an academic major, these students were drawn from a variety of departments across campus including English, Mathematics, Foreign Languages, Family Studies, and History. Twelve undergraduate students (one of whom was non-traditional as he had had a 20-year career in the military) took the course as an elective, while the two graduate students enrolled in the course to fill a department requirement to complete this course before they were officially accepted into the fifth year Masters program. One student declined to participate in this study.

Theories of Stage Development of Preservice Teachers

As preservice teachers were in the process of becoming teachers, research suggested that they passed through various developmental stages. Through examination of some 300, mostly quantitative studies, Fuller and Bown (1975) identified four stages of development: (1) preteaching with no concerns, (2) concerns about self, (3) concerns of being a teacher, and (4) concerns with students. These "stages" could be thought of as clusters of concerns of preservice teachers which, when understood, could be a helpful way to describe the experience of learning to teach. More recently, other stage development of preservice teachers theorists (Caruso, 1977; Drake, 1992; Reven, Cartwright, & Munday, 1997; Yarger & Mertons, 1980; Zulich, Bean, & Herrick, 1991) have added their variations to support Fuller and Bown's original theme.

Looking Inward

The inward journey of students had various manifestations that were first revealed in the first Dear Classmates Letters that students wrote to each other. Locating themselves in the present, they wanted to make their exploration personally relevant. With the anticipation of the real world after graduation of 8-to-4 jobs, rent payments, and the awareness that they were inexorably crossing into the adult world, they came with the fear of the unknown and sought answers to see if the teaching life might hold promise for them. In attempts to gain some self-understanding, these particular students focused on their own personal growth as they confronted their fears, doubts, and lack of self-confidence in facing the world of the classroom. These were journeys for students to determine whether they were up to the challenge of teaching and, if so, if they would find it personally satisfying. Would teaching provide them with the self-actualization that Maslow (Lowry, 1973) identified as necessary for self-fulfillment? Would their basic human needs of survival, power, love, fun, and freedom (Glasser, 1990) be fulfilled? Their focus was themselves, and, clearly, that is what these students needed to attend to as they explored teaching.

Looking Outward

On the other hand, the students taking an outward journey were ones who came in knowing that the teaching life was what they wanted. These students were drawn to teaching to improve society by making a difference in the lives of public school students. With a primary focus on learning the specifics of the teaching life in the classroom to help students learn, they wanted to plan interesting lessons, manage the classroom effectively, and have students be active in their own education.

Margaret: On An Inward Journey

By focusing on herself, Margaret was an instructive example of the inward journey, where her focus for *Exploring Teaching* was to make sense of the place of teaching in her own life. Making a priority of self-understanding, she believed that her exploration would help her find preliminary answers to learn if teaching would satisfy her human basic needs (Glasser, 1990). In her opening Dear Classmates Letter she described a writing workshop with her own fifth grade teacher who praised her writing abilities and was impressed with her creativity. Margaret wrote, *It was the first time I can remember feeling that I was good at something, that I had a talent.* In the second paragraph of her letter to her classmates, Margaret revealed the self-doubts that needed addressing before she was ready to make any decisions about whether teaching was for her.

I wonder if I will ever feel that confident in my abilities again. A large part of my insecurity regarding this class stems from the fact that I am treading on foreign territory. My competency in a classroom situation as an authority figure has never been tested, and I have no clue whether or not I'll be good at it. That, however, is precisely why I'm taking this course. I need to know if this is the right career for me, and if I'm right for it. I've had enough bad teachers to feel that it is very necessary to examine your aptitude as an educator before you enter the field. My educational experiences have led me to believe that teaching is complex and challenging, yet tremendously rewarding, because it has such an impact on so many lives. And therein lies another of my anxieties about this course. I will have the potential to affect young lives in a very real way and, quite frankly, that scares me. I don't think that I will damage them for life or anything along those lines, but that amount of responsibility is a bit daunting. But I hope to learn to deal with that also, and I am looking forward to this semester despite my fears.

Margaret

Until she was more personally settled, Margaret understood she could not be the teacher public school students needed. It was important to note that hers were the anxieties and fears of a student who was an example of a “success” (i.e., she had matriculated at a competitive major state university) of the American public school system. Certainly such doubts are indeed factors in the lives of “successful” people, but Margaret was aware that such uncertainty in her own competence needed her full attention. Reflecting in writing on her own autobiography was a necessary preliminary step in determining if who she was would eventually lead her to teaching.

In her second letter to classmates describing her goals, it was quite apparent that Margaret's search for meaning began with who she was and what she valued. For Margaret, questions of how to make good lesson plans or what to say to a small group of kids doing a science lab experiment would have to wait. Her self-examination compelled Margaret to face the challenge of finding a career that would match her personality, talents, and interests.

My first goal is to learn and master the art of reflection. I have realized a need in my life for some serious thinking about the things I do. I could gain so much by reflection on my actions and experiences instead of simply doing something ... I can't grow or learn from anything if I don't stop and reflect on it. This involves thinking about the reasons it happened, what new knowledge I can acquire from it, and how it applies to other areas of my life (whatever "it" is) ...

The second of my goals is to take account of what really matters in my life and make the important things priorities. Right now the things I consider truly important are my education, my family, and my friends (not necessarily in that order). By recognizing these things (and a few others) as priorities, I can make sure I focus my energy on them and try not to let other, less important things take over.

Margaret

Her self-knowledge gave her a more accurate assessment of what future goals to pursue. Her enrollment in *Exploring Teaching* coincided with her need to take stock and reflect on her priorities. By sorting out who she was and what she valued, Margaret used writing in *Exploring Teaching* to explore herself. Using writing to develop her intrapersonal intelligence (Gardner, 1993), she identified her own strengths and weaknesses. By acknowledging her current status, Margaret focused on the truths of her life as she saw them. The inward journey she was taking demanded her attention.

A family outing to Scottish Highland Games where she and her family had begun to explore their heritage was the focus of her portfolio reflection. By watching and listening to pipe and drum bands, shopping among Scottish vendors, seeing athletic competitions, and meeting interesting people, Margaret felt *Scottish for a day*. She concluded in writing,

I can't say that I have ever felt any identity with a group, religion, or nationality before so this was a new experience for me. It was the first time I felt connected to my heritage, which is a good feeling to have. My family has become an increasingly important part of my life, and I think it helps in every aspect of your life to have a strong base, a connection to family, and a feeling of belonging somewhere. The whole experience of exploring my heritage has strengthened the ties I have to my family and given me a stronger sense of self, aside from being educational and enjoyable.

Her reflection on her past gave her an understanding of herself, a first step for her need for affiliation and love (Lowry, 1973; Ross, 1988; Glasser, 1990). Margaret took care of her personal questions about herself in order to learn if teaching was right for her. Her exploration of teaching thrust her forward inexorably to greater self-understanding.

In her next Dear Classmates Letter, Margaret opened with a quote that illuminated some of her key beliefs about being "successful."

"Bloom where you are planted."

- Mary Engelbreit

This quote has a lot of meaning to me. I have always believed that you should make the best of what you have and not waste time wondering why others have it better or worse than you. This does not mean that you can't escape bad circumstances or try to overcome obstacles. But there are certain aspects of your life and self that are

inescapable, and you should learn to acknowledge and accept them and make them work for you ...

I hope in my teaching career I can help children realize this. They are not bound to the life they were born into, but they should make the best of what they do have. They have to learn from mistakes and develop and grow, and they can't be held back by wondering what life would be like if they only had more of something or less of something else.

Margaret

As she elaborated on her personal philosophy and then connected those beliefs to the lives of students in the classroom, she began the movement of taking her exploration to the needs of her students. Given a half semester opportunity to reflect and write about her personal priorities, Margaret was ready to explore teaching in its relation to her own middle school students' needs for self-fulfillment. As she wrote, Margaret acknowledged her belief and desire to take control over the experiences of her own life (e.g., being more involved in her fieldwork with her students and cooperating teacher) rather than just remain focused on her.

In her mid-semester self-evaluation, she listed her goals that reflected an evolution in her purposes for her exploration of teaching.

My goals are to:

- ...become part of the classroom community.*
- ...learn to "read" the class and respond to them effectively.*
- ...always listen, think, and then act.*
- ...take advantage of every learning opportunity I possibly can.*
- ...become part of the school community.*
- ...make time to reflect on my experiences.*

updates:

- ...write in my journal consistently.*
- ...make my portfolio a priority.*
- ...seek more feedback (from my cooperating teacher, students, seminar leader, and classmates).*

Understandably, her inward journey used her experiences in her fifth grade classroom to extend her own thinking about herself and any future role of teaching in her life. She was off and running by focusing on the lives of students and teachers in the classroom. Nearly two months into this semester, Margaret wrote a Dear Classmates Letter that focused on the role of the teacher, highlighted by a quote from Haim Ginott.

As a teacher you have the potential to do so much. This quotation [below] demonstrates quite nicely how much impact a teacher can have:

"I am the decisive element in the classroom. It is my personal approach that creates the climate. It is my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher I possess tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated, and a child humanized or dehumanized."

- Haim G. Ginott

This is a profound statement, and it is quite true. Teachers make a difference, and it can be positive or negative depending on the decisions he or she makes. Each day a teacher makes choices and the outcome can affect lives. This career that we are all interested in is an important one and the responsibilities that we have to accept can't be taken lightly. We will be very influential people.

Margaret

Her evolution continued from a focus on her own needs to a focus on the role of a teacher in a classroom with students. Though she might have overestimated the role of teachers to the exclusion of other key players in American education (e.g., administrators, quality of facilities, community involvement), her writing was new evidence of the personal truths that were evolving in her understanding of the classroom life. Significantly, as she began developing an outward journey, Margaret found that the classroom was an arena where she as a teacher could profoundly affect the individual journeys that public school students themselves were taking; very much similar to her own meaning making.

Throughout the semester, Margaret remained true to her desire to be reflective. But now her reflections were based in the organization of learning and the roles of students and teachers. She personalized her goals to fit the learning that she needed to do first. As the semester ended, Margaret wrote to her classmates in her final letter about the learning she had done thanks to her cooperating teacher and her fifth graders. Interesting, though, was her attention to personal priorities that harkened back to the beginning of the semester.

I am beginning to realize the importance of having free time in my life. I have gained so much from my experiences this semester but I am starting to overload myself and it is having an impact on all aspects of my life. I have started working about 30 hours a week, on top of five classes (two of which have labs), and my fieldwork. So my question is what do I do about it? I believe I have to prioritize. I need to figure out what my energy should be focused on and cut out the things that are a waste of time. What I'm discovering is that my fieldwork is at the top of my priorities list. I feel that the experience I am gaining through this is invaluable. I couldn't learn half as much sitting in a lecture as I have from teaching and observing in a classroom.

Margaret

Her original inward journey was not over for Margaret as her questions and wondering about her personal motivations continued to be by her side. The recursive nature of moving from addressing her own needs to that of her role as teacher continued her self-understanding as she explored teaching. Writing focused her thinking and made her evolving and complex beliefs about herself known. In her end of the semester self-assessment, Margaret wrote:

I have just begun to participate in the Education program at the University of New Hampshire, but I have been learning my whole life. I have discovered that the best teachers are those that are truly and completely committed to the students and their learning. If there is one thing that I want always to remember it is that each and every student deserves the best that I can give them. Teachers that really cared about my education are the ones who made a difference, and I want to be one of those teachers. This involves paying careful attention to students' progress and knowing who each student is as a person. It is impossible to manage or monitor learning if one is unaware of who the students are, what learning style suits them best, and what they need from you.

Through her reflective writing, Margaret's commitment to learning her own motivations to teach became a bridge to her commitment to her own future students who had similar wonderings about their motivations and future directions. Given another opportunity to be immersed in the classroom of teachers and students, Margaret would be in a position to commit to teaching or choose another career path.

Lynn: On An Outward Journey

In contrast to Margaret's self-reflective inward journey to explore teaching, Lynn was quite clear from the outset that teaching was for her. She spent little time thinking whether teaching was the career path for her. Rather, Lynn looked to get immediately involved in the classroom with students to learn the ways of successful teachers. Her unsatisfactory history in schooling drove her to look to the needs of students to make a difference by being a teacher who made learning engaging and meaningful. She included in her first Dear Classmates Letter some of that history.

There was almost nothing that one could call inspirational about anything that was taught in my high school English classes. We read the book, the teacher told us what to think, we wrote a paper, and moved on. No one attempted to make these novels real, to get us excited about them, they just wanted us to read and report. Looking back now, I realize that it would have been a simple task to get me interested. All I needed was an opportunity to make the literature my own. Any creative project, or involvement with the curriculum, could have sparked my interest. Instead, the teachers I had seemed to have a knack for ruining every story, every plot, and every character...

English isn't just reading books, it's learning how to be articulate, it's artistic, and there is something for everyone. I can't wait to try my hand at making it interesting, challenging, and inspirational.

Lynn

Fueled by the fire of past personal injustices in education, Lynn was on a mission. At the outset of *Exploring Teaching*, her mission was to right past wrongs, and they understandably centered on the key role she could play in making learning interesting and meaningful. As she saw it, the teacher was primary to successful student learning. While the students on the inward journey had elements that matched up with Fuller and Bown's (1975) stage two of development of preservice teachers (concerns about self), students on the outward journey were a better match for placement in stage three (concerns about the role of teachers).

In her next Dear Classmates Letter, Lynn's goals were consistent for someone who wanted to be immersed in the classroom life of teachers and students. They were: (1) *becoming as involved as possible with the students and what they are learning*, (2) *discovering effective methods of teaching*, and (3) *learn from students what is important to them*. By involving students as she teaches, Lynn was determined to be the teacher she didn't have in high school. Her last paragraph of her second Dear Classmates Letter revealed that she hadn't wasted any time getting started in making a difference.

My first two classroom visits have already provided me with opportunities to begin achieving my goals. I have volunteered to lead a gifted and talented book group, and this Thursday I will be reading a section aloud to the classes and doing a short activity. I must admit, I am a little nervous about taking the reins in the classroom, because what I

read and do is completely up to me (with approval of course). I truly hope that I can capture their attention and allow them to enjoy learning. I imagine that after a few experiences like this, I will become more aware of the interests of this sixth grade group.

Lynn

Fueling her passion to learn the ways of teachers and make schooling meaningful for her students, Lynn's autobiography revealed her past schooling history and included a quote from a woman's author she studied and later introduced to her sixth graders. Lynn indeed was driven to teach in ways far different than how she was taught.

"They will not know I have gone away to come back. For the ones I left behind. For the ones who cannot get out."

Sandra Cisneros [in *The House on Mango Street*]

I picked this quote up recently while studying this particular writer. She writes stories about a young girl who grows up in poor, Hispanic neighborhoods. I compare her experiences with my disappointment in my high school English education. Though I am glad that I have escaped that system, it still shapes who I am as a future teacher. Like the character in Cisneros's writing, I have "gone away to come back." I'm hoping that I can use my bad experiences to my advantage, and to that of my students.

Lynn

Though her focus was on effective teaching methods, in her next Dear Classmates Letter she progressed as a preservice teacher into focusing on the needs of students. Lynn's central tendency of focus on the role of the teacher still dominated, but she was maturing as a preservice teacher. In her letter just before the mid-semester conferences, Lynn wrote of her full immersion into the teaching life.

*The first day I taught, I taught four different classes. In two of them, I read aloud and had the kids play roles in the story and pantomime as I was reading. They loved that, and many of them have asked if I will do another lesson with pantomime. In the other two classes I read aloud from Sandra Cisneros's *The House on Mango Street* and followed it with some discussion and a few short writing assignments. My first experience was really successful, and the kids were great ...*

*Last week I started a Shakespeare unit with them. One class voted to read *Hamlet* and another class voted on *The Tempest*. After I finish reading the stories aloud to them, I'm going to have them get in small groups and write scenes from the play that they will perform. I hope to allow some of the students who asked to do some drawing create some scenery for the plays. I plan on having two or three small groups in each class. Each group will be responsible for writing and acting a particular portion of the play.*

Lynn

Again, it was her vision that the teacher mattered greatly, and it was her immersion into the teaching role that propelled her to learn and seek more answers. Consistent in her thinking that the key to learning was held by the teacher, she frequently used the first person singular in her letters to reveal the responsibility she felt was hers as teacher, and that she embraced. Driven by her autobiography, Lynn's initial assumptions about the primacy of teachers were understandably emphasized as her exploration of teaching began quite naturally with the act of teaching.

In her mid-semester self-evaluation, Lynn was accurately aware that she was meeting her *Exploring Teaching* goals and doing all that she could to eventually complete her long-term goal of teaching full-time in public schools.

I feel that I have taken great strides to achieve goal number one (becoming as involved as possible). I taught my first lessons on my third classroom visit, and have continued to make my own lessons and teach them to two or three classes each week in my language arts classroom. I have also observed and then taught a math class for sixth graders, and substituted for an eighth grade math class. This week, I also start my To Kill A Mockingbird book group for gifted and talented seventh and eighth graders. I feel that I've done a really good job of diving in and getting my feet wet.

Observing the two language arts teachers on my "cooperating team" has given me an opportunity to observe two very different teaching styles. I attempt to learn from the way these teachers deal with the students and apply it to my own methods.

Lynn

Focused and directed, she boldly included two teaching ideas in her next Dear Classmates Letter that would be useful to a first year teacher. Though this might seem presumptuous for a novice educator, it was understandable given her outward journey that focused on the role of the teacher. She was expanding her vision of herself as teacher to encompass colleague and contributing member of the school's learning community. Keeping a card file of good ideas she had seen during her fieldwork experience and deciding, when she taught full-time, that she would require reader responses from her students on a daily basis were just the practical techniques that could make teaching days flow successfully and were indicative of her outward journey.

In this same Dear Classmates Letter, she wrote metaphorically about teachers to make greater sense of her evolving definition of what a teacher should be.

I think that choosing a metaphor is very difficult. Teaching is a profession that stands alone. Certain aspects of teaching could be compared to other things, but doing so seems to reduce what teaching is. I was thinking that teaching was like a spiritual leader. The spiritual leader guides his or her followers to a certain emotional and intellectual destination. The leader provides guidance but ultimately the journey must be made by each of the followers. This notion reduces teaching in the sense that there is a desired destination that the spiritual leader pulls the followers toward ... A good teacher attempts to take the student's focus and broaden it, to encompass many different ideas. The teacher doesn't attempt to make the students move in one particular direction; rather, he or she encourages them to examine all directions and choose the one that fits the individual student.

Lynn

Her analysis two months into the semester was thoughtfully aware of the complex relationship between teaching and learning with an emphasis on her concerns about her role as teacher. Her next Dear Classmates Letter hid none of the excitement she felt as she taught sixth graders.

Just a little update on the Shakespeare unit I'm doing with my sixth graders. I wrote to you a little while ago about my plan and explained my goals. I've finally finished reading the Shakespeare stories to them and last week I gave them a mini-lesson in drama.

We talked about what tools are needed to write a play. We discussed plot, characterization, dialogue, staging, theme, and format. After the lesson, I explained the assignment, and they all got into groups. They were so enthusiastic and excited ... Hopefully, on Tuesday when I come to class, I can pick up the drafts and review them. That way when I go in on Thursday, I'll have already targeted what I want them to work on. I can't wait to see how they come out.

Lynn

Lynn's outward journey, with its focus on the role of the teacher, continued late into the semester and seemed quite reasonable as her learning began with finding her place in the classroom learning community. With additional experience and success, she has the drive and intelligence to become a teacher who actively engages students in making choices about their own learning.

In her last Dear Classmates Letter, she returned again to describing her active teaching classroom life and the continued focus on the teacher in student learning.

An update from my fieldwork:

Last Tuesday, I got the students' first drafts of their plays. It was such fun to read over them and comment. Rather than writing on their drafts, I used small, colorful post-its and stuck them on as needed ... Most of my comments required them to go back to the text of the story and review the details to make the information more accurate. I also made lots of suggestions about adding dialogue to help with characterizations ... On this Tuesday, I will be able to get their second drafts and make more comments for their final drafts. I can't wait to see what they've done.

Lynn

Throughout the semester Lynn continued to write about the prime responsibility for student learning that teachers had. Her attention to the details of teaching by her use of post-its to remind herself of successful teaching ideas and techniques was evidence that Lynn had immersed herself into the teaching life and could benefit from many more experiences in the classroom. Though her graduate teaching internship was still two years away, Lynn fortunately had a class in the English Department that placed her weekly in a local public school the following semester so she could dig deeper into her exploration of teaching.

Clear of vision and purpose, Lynn focused on the act of teaching in her final self-assessment

My basic teaching philosophy includes five words: intrigue, engage, inspire, challenge, and listen ...

As teachers, we must know our students, not just their names but where they are coming from, and where they're headed. We have to understand their needs, and their strengths and weaknesses. Knowing the students well requires a lot of extra work on the teacher's part, but it is mandatory for an effective education ...

I've learned that teaching truly is a journey, rather than a destination. A teacher must be prepared to travel with his or her students, being a consultant along the way. I want to be the kind of teacher who measures my students by how far they've traveled, not just where they end up.

Each of her five words in the first paragraph restated the primacy of the role of teachers in students' learning, consistent with one on an outward journey: as a first timer to the classroom as a teacher, that focus was both understandable and appropriate. *Exploring Teaching* gave her a setting to try out her beliefs and get involved. In this one semester, she had already begun to have her pedagogical thinking recycle between a teacher focus and a student focus again and again.

Implications for Teacher Education

1. Periodic Individual Conferences for Teacher Educators to Better Understand the Motivations of Preservice Teachers. Since nearly half (6 of 13) of my students came to *Exploring Teaching* on an inward journey exploring their motivations and inclinations to teach, teacher educators should be aware that they, too, will likely have such students in their preservice courses. These students are focusing on personal growth of learning who they are and what they value as well as trying to discover if teaching will be personally satisfying. In their writing, they address their fears, doubts, and insecurities to help them understand their journey. Rather than pushing such students to participate in the classroom too quickly, teacher educators need to first encourage preservice students to observe the classroom dynamics and focus on journal keeping to connect their experiences with their individual questions. In time, I would nudge and prod such students to get more involved with students in the classroom to experience the electricity that comes with dealing with students in public schools.

Since other *Exploring Teaching* students came with an outward journey focusing on learning the details of the teaching life, teacher educators need to be aware that these students are interested in the specifics of how to teach, what to teach, and how to have students pay attention and learn. As they come committed to making a difference in the lives of public school students as a way to improve society, they seek out many opportunities to deal with students in small and large groups. Being aware at the outset of the semester of the purposes of such directed and confident students as Lynn, teacher educators can challenge them to go beyond a focus on the act of teaching to an emphasis on the learning of students. These outward journeys, too, are not stages, but explorations that are recursive and overlap as students reflect on their individual needs for personal satisfaction and growth as well as attending to the needs of students, their learning, and the various roles of teachers in the classroom.

For teacher educators to access this information and maintain dialogues with students, regular individual conferences at the beginning and middle of the semester are needed. Knowing the varied journeys students take, teacher educators can learn in fifteen to twenty minute conferences about their students and tailor their counsel accordingly to meet their individual needs. This constructivist approach (Brooks & Brooks, 1993) reinforces and models a student-centered approach to learning that will serve the *Exploring Teaching* students well when they deal with their own students. To have such interactions, class sizes need to be no greater than twenty given the time demands of full-time university instructors and professors.

2. Weekly Reflective Writing. Knowing the kinds of journeys on which preservice students are initially embarking, teacher educators need to give them opportunities to write so that they can document and make sense of those preliminary steps in their journey. These initial steps may take a week, a month, or more, but they need the students' full attention so they are better able to understand their own experiences in the classroom, their insights into the teaching, the experiences of classmates, and their possible role in the world of schooling. In addition to the face to face

conferences with students, teacher educators can learn from the reflective writing of students to help students clarify and understand their motivations to teach and to help themselves see the weekly growth and change in the journeys and perspectives about teaching of their students. From time to time, student writing can tune teachers into the need for individual intervention with students who see the teaching life as chasms and roadblocks, not opportunities and challenges. Weekly writing enables teacher educators to match their mentoring with the individual concerns of their students. This recommendation, too, requires reasonable class size and teaching load for university teachers.

Given the current crises in finding effective teachers to replace the legions of teachers retiring as the twenty-first century begins, successful counseling by teacher educators and problem-solving with their students are essential so that highly qualified future teachers are not dissuaded from teaching because of unexamined self-doubts and fears. When state and national high stakes pencil and paper tests are reducing the jobs of many teachers to that of mere test preparers, preservice teachers need teacher educators to give them weekly opportunities to write, to sort out their reasons to teach, to hold fast to their core beliefs about teaching, and to ask many, many questions about the classroom lives of teachers.

3. Establishing Professional Development School Relationships to Create a Cadre of Informed Cooperating Teachers. In light of this information about students' motivations and orientations, teacher educators have a responsibility to use their knowledge to inform and communicate with cooperating teachers on these matters. The lack of understanding and experience in supervision of *Exploring Teaching* students compromises the cooperating teachers' ability to meet the needs of their students whom they are mentoring. By providing the information whether students are on inward or outward journeys to cooperating teachers, teacher education at the university improves the quality of the entire experience for all students. Understanding the individual needs of students allows the classroom mentors the opportunity to make the classroom a place where students can succeed, feel satisfaction, and discover if teaching has a place in their future.

To ensure that the mentoring experience is not hit or miss, universities need to take the lead by establishing Professional Development School partnerships in order to nurture, educate, and learn from an enlightened and vibrant cadre of cooperating teacher mentors. When the public school teachers become partners with their university brethren to coordinate the teacher education of university students, the next generation of students wins.

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