Education Policy Analysis Archives

The Possibility of Reform:
Micropolitics in Higher Education

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Abstract
The purpose of this case study was to examine the restructuring of an institution of higher education's teacher preparation program and to assess the possibility for systemic reform. Although teacher education represents a vital link in not only the educational system but in curricular reform, the increased expectations for educational reform made this institution unavoidably more political. These conditions meant that the study of micropolitics was critical to understanding how organizations change or fail to initiate change. Any effort to reform an organization requires examination of the reform effort's underlying assumptions, social and historical context for the reform, and how reform is congruent

with the values, ideologies, and goals of the constituents. This case will serve those critiquing reform and also takes the extant K-12 micropolitical research into the heretofore unstudied realm of higher education therefore impacting reform at the post secondary level. Schools are vulnerable to a host of powerful external and internal forces. They exist in a vortex of government mandates, social and economic pressures, and conflicting ideologies associated with administrators, faculty, and students. Efforts to reform school are confounded by competing political agendas. At the very least, reform is an opportunity for political action by people in power. While literature regarding effective schools touts strong leadership and shared values, accomplishing school reform continues to remain problematic. Despite the widespread interest and infusion of resources for restructuring teacher education, the history of educational reform shows that initiatives have often failed. The study began with the micropolitical hypothesis that the educational system comprises diverse constituencies with differing ideologies regarding schooling. Qualitative methodology was employed to portray intra-organizational processes, to provide concrete depiction of detail, and to study social change. Micropolitics and symbolic interactionism, the theoretical frameworks for the study, influenced the design and production of research and functioned as the interpretive focus. The study followed a multi method approach to understand meanings in context and to interpret these patterns in light of broader contexts. We employed the following multiple methods to generate a credible account of constituent ideologies: 23 semi-structured interviews, document review, and observational data. Data reveal fundamental differences in the images of five constituencies in these areas: curriculum, teachers, pupils, and teacher education and support the micropolitical assertion that systemic reform is unobtainable.

The systemic reform movement rests on several related ideas about the nature of public education and its relation to policy. First, it views school organization as a complex whole, in that it is made up of many connecting parts, for example, teacher training, professional development, state curriculum frameworks, district organization, and so on. The movement views the system as hierarchical, in that the flow of authority and communication is from the top to the bottom and fairly standard throughout its various levels and parts. It views the dynamics of the system as more or less rational. All the parts must work together toward the same ends for change to occur (O'Day & Smith, 1993; Salamon & Thompson, 1973). Policies issued from legitimate authority are transmitted through the system to those who implement them in relatively predictable and ordered ways. When experience contradicts this hypothesis, one can appeal to the existence of organizational forms, rules, traditions, and contradictory policies in the system. For example, state policies that mean to change instruction toward constructivism by mandating performance assessments rather than standardized tests may run into certification rules that mandate instruction in phonics. If the state could only clear up the formal incoherence, it could more easily succeed in its efforts to reform schools, according to this theory.

The theory of micropolitics views the educational enterprise and efforts to change it in

quite different ways. Rather than assuming a rational, ordered, and unitary system, micropolitics assumes that any complex organization comprises several constituencies that contend with each other over resources, power, interests, and alternative definitions of the situation, such as interpretations about goals, means, and even institutional identities (Ball, 1987; Blase, 1991, 1997; Hoyle, 1999; and Scribner & Layton, 1995). Conflict and competition are more likely to characterize educational organizations than shared visions and collaboration because schools are vulnerable to a host of powerful external and internal forces. They exist in a vortex of government mandates, social and economic pressures, and conflicting ideologies associated with administrators, faculty, and students. Political organization is possible in "loosely coupled" organizations like schools because they are arenas of struggle between a mandated singular way of doing things and new initiatives designed to fix the old ways (Cohen & March, 1974; Noblit, Berry & Dempsey, 1991). At the very least, reform is a political process and an opportunity for political action by people in power. While literature regarding effective schools touts strong leadership and shared values, accomplishing school reform remains problematic.

According to Ball (1987), policy researchers must attend to the constituencies, their interests, and the dynamics among them, to understand how organizations change or fail to change. Efforts to reform organizations must be examined in terms of underlying assumptions, social and historical contexts, and the values, ideologies, and goals of vested constituent groups.

Micropolitical reform addresses the divergent interests of participants involved in change and recognizes ideological disputes, loss and gain, coalition building, and coordinated opposition. Reform is a cultural phenomenon and subject to the constraints of power distribution; change is not something done to people and organizations, but is an expected byproduct in social systems fragmented by diverse ideologies (Ball, 1987). Micropolitics takes seriously the responses of the players in the organization and places reform within the interactive, political arena. In contrast, systemic reform starts with the behavior of the institutional actors without acknowledging their interpretation of change.

The Present Study

This present study examines competing views of institutions and their reform by the empirical study of a single case, the efforts of a College of Education (COE) to reform its undergraduate teacher preparation program. This case of local reform at a large urban university takes place within a broader context of nation-wide reform and restructuring. Teacher education is a primary concern in current restructuring efforts because it is a vital link in the educational system. However, despite the widespread interest and infusion of resources for restructuring teacher education, the history of educational reform shows that initiatives have often failed. Though administrators have often interpreted poor outcomes as evidence that individuals (i.e., teachers) fail to comply with reform agendas, evidence from this and earlier cases suggests that intra-organizational processes reflect micropolitical phenomena, not a lack of teachers' professional integrity (Ball, 1987; Blase, 1991; Noblit, Berry, & Dempsey, 1991). The major focus of this study is the impact of micropolitics on the possibility and success of the reform initiative in higher education. From the micropolitical perspective, reformers and researchers alike must examine internal processes that facilitate or impede change. Thus, our primary goal was to achieve a deeper understanding of the ideologies, goals, and values of each major teacher education constituency in regard to curriculum, teachers, pupils,

and teacher education.

The Case

Why this case? We used this case because teacher preparation is an essential link in the educational system and reform, yet the COE Teacher Preparation program was in crisis due to reform efforts. The increased expectations for reform rendered this institution and its communities more political (West, 1999). Through the lens of micropolitics, we examine these conflicting views of institutions and their reform in order to understand how organizations change. To accomplish this goal, we focus primarily on the culture within the COE, that is, on intra-organizational processes.

As Ragin (1992) pointed out, "It is impossible to do research in a conceptual vacuum because the empirical world is limitless in detail and complexity. We make sense of its infinity by limiting it with our ideas" (p. 217). Evidence and ideas are mutually dependent; we transform evidence into results with the aid of ideas and make sense of theoretical ideas by linking them to empirical evidence. Cases are not empirical units of theoretical categories, but are the products of basic research operations. A case provides texture to the space between theory and empirical evidence. This case study employs an interpretive approach to qualitative methodology using micropolitics and symbolic interactionism as conceptual frameworks.

To address research issues, we examined the efforts of a major university's College of Education to reform its Teacher Preparation Program (TP, for short). The first year of the TP program was designed to enable students to plan, implement, and evaluate instructional activities in a variety of disciplines. TP students spent at least four hours a week in a school environment the first semester and six hours a week during the second and third semesters. Students enrolled in methods classes specialized in elementary, early childhood, secondary, special, or bilingual education during the third semester. They participated in a required field experience each semester of the program prior to student teaching, which was completed during the fourth semester of the program. The teacher education program graduated approximately 500 students a year, each with a certification in elementary, secondary, and special education.

The study originated during the attempted restructuring of the teacher preparation program in the College of Education. Efforts to reinvent teacher education began by involving external and internal communities. The dean scheduled meetings, focus groups, and retreats to identify discrepancies between current teacher preparation and desired practices. He called for efforts to strengthen preservice teachers' pedagogical knowledge, to increase collaboration between the university and local schools, and to educate preservice teachers to better serve the needs of an increasingly culturally diverse student population.

During COE meetings, faculty, staff, and students associated with teacher education were invited to participate in the creation of a shared vision. Faculty and staff were involved in the process to discuss concerns and to propose reform efforts; however, different levels of interest in the reform efforts were evident. While some faculty members talked of incremental improvement of the existing program, others imagined a more radical restructuring and still others acted on that idea by developing and implementing an alternative teacher preparation program. During a faculty and administrative retreat focusing on reform, we discovered political activity among

participants and noticed diverse emotions and levels of interest (e.g., resistance, apathy, curiosity, and confusion) when asked to generate a common vision of the college.

Data Collection

This case study follows Erickson's (1986) interpretive approach and endorses concepts of reality and knowledge consistent with his view. He argues that conceptions of reality cannot be meaningfully separated from the social environment in which they occur. In this sense, qualitative research is holistic and based on the notion of context sensitivity. A basic assumption in interpretive theory is that the formal and informal social systems operate simultaneously. Individuals in everyday life interpret actions in terms of both official and unofficial definitions of status and role. The task for the researcher then, is to try to understand the way participants constitute environments for each other in their interactions and to document the social and cultural organization of the observed events.

To accomplish this task, we conducted the research as participant observers. During the initial phase of the study, we attended and observed restructuring efforts in the College of Education for two years. Previous surveys administered to COE alumni, course syllabi, and other relevant COE documents were also examined. One author held dual roles in the College of Education: a graduate student and the Associate Dean's research assistant. As part of her role, she participated in restructuring meetings, worked with COE administrators to determine an effective evaluation design, and conducted faculty and alumni interviews. The graduate student's dissertation chair was also involved in this study and functioned as a principal investigator.

During the second phase of the study, we identified the following five major constituencies that have interests in the teacher education program in the College of Education: (a) Teacher Preparation (TP) faculty in the COE; (b) faculty in the alternative teacher preparation program (ATP) in the COE; (c) the Department of Education (DOE); (d) the Holmes Group; and (e) principals of schools in which graduates of TP are placed.

It was generally accepted that faculty were responsible for the development and delivery of the curriculum in higher education. The College of Education faculty (TP) therefore comprised the first constituency. Although the TP faculty had constituted the single, dominant teacher preparation program within the college for a number of years, an alternative program broke out for the first time in 1993. Faculty who shared a constructivist perspective and similar beliefs about learning, teaching, and child development (different from the beliefs of the traditional program), began a discussion group to explore alternative approaches to teacher preparation. Enabled by a grant, this group established a pilot alternative teacher preparation track. College faculty from the alternative teacher education program (ATP) comprised the second constituency.

The state Department of Education (DOE) comprised the third constituency. As the primary agent certifying teachers, the DOE purported to influence teacher preparation programs in state universities. In order to have university institutional recommendations for certification recognized by the state, the university must conform to DOE requirements. The DOE identified the proficiencies that a beginning teacher must meet and expected the colleges and universities in the state to develop programs to instill those proficiencies in prospective teachers. We chose the Holmes Group, a voluntary association of teacher preparation programs in research universities, as the

fourth constituency in the study. Founded by a group of education deans from such universities, the Holmes Group documents (e.g., *Tomorrow's teachers: A report of the Holmes Groups*, 1986) and guidelines for teacher preparation influenced the thinking and discussion of administration of faculty of the college. Unlike many colleges of education, this COE did not participate in the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the primary accrediting agency. Thus, the Holmes group functions as the principal voice of the profession of teacher preparation. District principals, the fifth constituency, are the primary employers of teacher preparation graduates. In their role as evaluators of new teachers, they were judges of the college's finished product.

Having established the five constituencies, we designed a study, which became phase three. Following Erickson's (1986) advice, we employed multiple methods and generated rich descriptions in order to provide a credible, internally consistent account of constituent ideologies. We conducted formal and informal interviews, took detailed notes of participant interactions and activities, and examined archival data and artifacts.

Interviews

We conducted 23 semi-structured interviews during a one-year period with representatives from the five constituent groups. The interviews were distributed as follows: five interviews each with the TP, ATP, Department of Education, and district principals and three interviews from the Holmes group. We chose a semi-structured format, the intent of which was to reveal the multiple perspectives of members of diverse constituent groups. Through the course of the interviews, we raised questions that would reveal the informants' images of schooling, curriculum development, teacher training, and instructional practice.

The following are representative of questions we developed for individual and group interviews:

1. Describe the type of classroom you believe graduates of teacher preparation programs should be able to organize.
2. Describe the type of classroom management philosophy you believe graduates of teacher preparation programs should be able to implement.
3. Describe the type of classroom materials you believe graduates of teacher preparation programs should be able to select and use.
4. Describe the type of knowledge you believe graduates should have about the community served by the school.
5. Describe the kind of knowledge you believe graduates should have about working with pupils from different language and ethnic groups.
6. Describe the kind of knowledge you believe graduates of teacher preparation programs should have about the socio-political nature of teaching.
7. Describe the type of ideology you believe graduates of teacher preparation programs should have about teaching and learning.

Although the list framed the questions, we avoided interfering or directing participant answers. Because we allowed interviewees to discuss issues off the list, we relied on a discovery-oriented, inductive approach to interviewing (Bernard, 1994).

In addition to individual interviews, we participated in four different focus groups

conducted as a part of the Dean's reform initiative. The institution's graduates now teaching, district principals, and faculty from the traditional and alternative teacher preparation programs attended the group interviews. Transcripts from those interviews formed an alternative data source to the individual interviews. The focus group involved the systematic questioning of several individuals in a formal setting (Drever, 1995; Merton, Fiske, & Kendall, 1956).

Documents
Although the interviews were the heart of the data collection, we also collected documents and archival records to provide an alternative perspective on the research question. Marshall and Rossman (1989) argue that the unobtrusive nature of document and archival record collection provide a rich data source without disrupting the site. Included in the data were such documents as the state's Department of Education's Language Arts Essential Skills," the Holmes group publications, and the COE teacher preparation course syllabi.

Observational Data
One of the authors attended all COE faculty restructuring meetings; prepared faculty fora on teacher preparation; and conducted focus groups with school principals, teacher preparation program alumni, faculty, and cooperating and supervising teachers. During this phase of data collection we gathered important background knowledge for the study that would have otherwise been considered confidential and unavailable for student use. Although we chose not to tape every meeting, these "brainstorming" sessions with faculty members provided additional insight for the phenomena under study.

Analysis of Data

We began the study with the idea that the educational system comprises many constituent groups and the micropolitical hypothesis that diverse constituencies have different ideologies regarding schooling (e.g., images of curriculum, teachers and teaching, pupils, and teacher preparation). We collected data that might reveal images of schooling and test the research hypothesis.

Because of the emphasis placed on induction and intuition, we allowed meanings and definitions to emerge. All final categories and assertions were grounded in interview transcripts, observations, and document data. This method allowed for some discovery in data generation and analysis and helped guard against confirmatory bias. Notes were worked over after all observations and interviews were completed, thus allowing for a full picture of what occurred and providing a greater opportunity to encounter disconfirming evidence.

Padilla's (1991) concept modeling methodology was used as a strategy for organizing and displaying the data. According to Padilla, one way to explain a situation is to identify various assumptions contained in the data and organize them into a coherent whole. In the concept modeling method, assertions contained in the data were fundamental elements for analysis. First, we created a matrix in which to arrange the concepts, namely, images of curriculum, teachers, pupils, and the like. Next, we reduced long statements from interview transcripts and excerpts from documents to short paraphrases, and entered these data into appropriate cells of the matrix. After we observed how data were arrayed across the constituent groups, we highlighted areas of convergence and

divergence among constituent images.

Images and Evidence

On the basis of the concept model we find that fundamental differences exist in the five constituencies in the images of the curriculum (i.e., purpose, origin, organization, and content), teacher, pupils, and teacher education. Table 1 and Table 2 show the concept matrix with paraphrases inductively derived from data excerpts, illustrative samples of which are then presented and interpreted. Table 1 and Table 2 are organized as a matrix of five constituencies by the four topics.

Images of Curriculum

The data from this study suggest divisions in regard to curriculum content, purpose, and subject areas for curriculum development. Among constituencies, image of the curriculum differed along four dimensions: purpose, origin, organization, and content. Furthermore, the purpose of curriculum affected the other three dimensions. That is, notions of purpose corresponded with notions of appropriate curriculum content and how and where curriculum should be developed.

Table 1
Images of Curriculum

	Teacher Preparation (TP)	Department of Education (DOE)	Principals	Holmes	Alternative Teacher Preparation (ATP)
K-12 Curriculum Purpose	*Competency* Essential skills define what pupils ought to know. The districts use those skills for curriculum alignment.	*Competency* State Essential Skills dictate the standardized skills and competencies all students should learn.	*Competency* The curriculum is determined in every district and is a statement of goals. Every district really has the same goals.	*Inquiry* Curriculum should emphasize collaborative learning, reflection, and dissemination of new and changing knowledge about teaching & learning (Holmes, 1992).	*Inquiry* Students explore critical, reflective thinking and engage in the examination of what is considered valuable knowledge in schools. Students study curriculum from many perspectives.
Origin	*Centralized* Without curriculum	*Centralized* Curriculum standards are	*Centralized* Standardized curriculum is	*Context dependent* Real	*Context dependent* Teachers

	Teacher Preparation (TP)	Department of Education (DOE)	Principals	Holmes	Alternative Teacher Preparation (ATP)
	guidelines it is too easy for novice teachers to make independent decisions about what they prefer to teach.	viewed as good.	preferred, one that results in a collection of measurable skills; curriculum is all prescribed.	knowledge is purpose-built, site-built and infused with the learners' sense of purpose. Knowledge is imaginatively constructed, not passively acquired (Holmes, 1990).	should negotiate with the student a set of activities relevant and meaningful but also challenging. They design a curriculum rather than latching on to a standardized one.
Organization	*Molecular* Content curriculum is dealt with in departments, with strict divisions among content areas.	*Molecular* Essential Skills specify content and skills for each grade level. General skill areas are within the disciplines	*Molecular* There is a need for practical learning, instead of the holistic orientation not implemented in the public schools.	*Integrated* The basics are not just facts but also concepts and relationships. Concepts and facts merely make up a related background and foreground (Holmes, 1990).	*Integrated* Curriculum is holistic where all learning emanates from pupils' interests.
Content	*Technical* Curriculum must be politically and religiously neutral. Values can be eliminated from the curriculum. Values should not be taught in school.	*Technical* Values should not be taught in school. They should be taught in the church.	*Technical* Pupils have to determine what's right and wrong. The concepts should be taught in the home, not by the teachers.	*Social* In transmitting knowledge, you give students more than math and science. You're transferring a whole value system that is ingrained in the literacy system (Holmes, 1990).	*Social* Included in the content is the hidden curriculum and a social and political curriculum. Political and ethical agendas are inherent in school instruction as evidenced by what is included or

	Teacher Preparation (TP)	Department of Education (DOE)	Principals	Holmes	Alternative Teacher Preparation (ATP)
					excluded.

We identified two recurrent, diverse perceptions regarding the purpose of curriculum: "competency based" and "inquiry based." Those who held a competency-based perspective felt pupils should learn a predetermined set of content-independent cognitive skills applicable in a variety of situations. Advocates primarily focus on refining intellectual operations or understanding the processes by which learning occurs in the classroom. The competency based conception of curriculum highlights the intellectual processes rather than educative context and content. In contrast, those with an "inquiry based" perspective believed instruction should force pupils to critically analyze what they learn. Additionally, proponents believe that instructional content and the learning context are interdependent. They often define curriculum in process terms such as creative or critical thinking, metacognition, and experimentation (ATP interview).

We discovered further dichotomies within the other three dimensions (i.e., origin, organization, and content): 1) standardized versus local curriculum development; 2) fragmentation versus integration of subject areas; and 3) exclusion versus inclusion of political issues. However, curriculum purpose was a common thread, if not a dominant theme, among other dimensions. Those with a competency-based image saw curriculum as officially constructed (origin), organizationally fragmented (organization), and politically neutral (content).

Standardized versus local curriculum development. Advocates of the "competency" stance assumed that the purpose of curriculum was to teach students a clearly defined set of competencies dictated and determined by official governmental standards. Constituents viewed curriculum as a hierarchical set of basic skills, which students must learn. Advocates assume district officials find, define, and dictate this knowledge to practitioners, and that the prescribed facts and guidelines constitute the best curriculum model.

Conversely, those who held an "inquiry based" stance questioned the existence of a unique body of knowledge and challenged the assumption that individuals external to the classroom possess more relevant expertise than teachers. They believed that teachers were capable of identifying knowledge and, more significantly, that knowledge was inherent in the learning context. Thus, curriculum ceased to be static, predefined set of skills and outcomes, but rather functioned as a dynamic, evolving system unique to each classroom environment.

Fragmentation versus integration. The fluid nature of an evolving system required a cohesive organizational approach to curriculum knowledge. Constituent groups recognized contrasting strategies to arrange and teach school content. The molecular-holistic dichotomy, which represents the dilemma between the fragmentation and integration of content, surfaced in all data sources. A molecular conception reflects an assumption of strong classification among content areas and the holistic conception assumes weak boundaries (Ginsburg, 1986).

Exclusion versus inclusion of social issues. Another recurring dichotomy was the "technical" versus "social" dilemma, which represented contrasting preferences in curriculum content. Those who espoused the "technical" view avoided what they felt were value-laden issues opting instead to assume a neutral position devoid of specific social issues. Constituents who embraced the "social" perspective assumed a connection between the order of society and what the curriculum of schools in that order contained.

ATP faculty argued that depicting schooling and curriculum as neutral and apolitical systems masks the bias in content selection and provides a facade of objectivity and fairness. To foster a balanced perspective, curricular content and classroom experiences should include political, social, and ethical issues. Moreover, they felt these constructs were inherent in schooling because, at some point, someone determined which facts were relevant.

Images of Teachers

What social expectations should apply to those who hold teaching positions? Most concede that teaching is a complex, multifaceted act that requires numerous activities, behaviors, and decision-making abilities (Barnes, 1989; Spring, 1985). Although teaching requires knowledge of content and the ability to apply that knowledge in diverse settings there is room for differences in emphasis in this general description, even contradiction and controversy.

The five constituencies held alternative images for what teachers do and what they should know. Moreover, we found a series of metaphors for what constitutes teachers' work. These emerging metaphors were so robust that we chose to use them as a device to organize, analyze, and present the data.

We uncovered two dominant, conflicting images of teachers, specifically "teacher as technician" and "teacher as inquirer." Constituents advocating a competency-based conception of curriculum saw teachers as "technicians" who assume all responsibility for classroom learning and management. Therefore, teachers, serving as diagnosticians and transmitters of knowledge, manipulate forces to produce predictable ends (Combs, 1991).

In contrast, proponents of an "inquiry based" curriculum view teachers as facilitators in the learning environment. Curriculum goals are broad and context-dependent, and all participants in the classroom share the responsibility for student outcomes. That is, teachers and pupils collectively engage in decision-making processes, and as a result, the shared responsibility relieves the teacher's management burden. Rather than functioning as managers, teachers function as consultants in the students' evolving learning processes.

Table 2
Images of Teachers, Pupils, and Teacher Preparation

	Teacher Preparation (TP)	Department of Education (DOE)	Principals	Holmes	Alternative Teacher Preparation

					(ATP)
Teachers	*Technicians* Teachers should have a backpack of methods to deliver material. Content is presented to meet the needs of diverse students. Evaluator - Teachers effectively evaluate learners.	*Technicians* Experts - Teachers should be multifaceted but certainly they must be experts in their content area. Evaluator – Teachers evaluate what pupils have done to assess mastery.	*Transmitters* Diagnostician - Teachers need to diagnose the correct level of difficulty each student needs in relation to curriculum standards.	*Inquirers* Teaching should include inquiry, reflection, documentation, and dissemination of new and changing knowledge (Holmes, 1992).	*Inquirers* Teachers are inquirers. They must question what's going on in the lives of students and society. Facilitator - Teachers act like coaches in the learning environment. Their role is to enable learners to construct their own knowledge.
Pupils	*Deficient* Pupils are empty bank accounts when they come to class.	*Deficient* Pupils fall short because of the baggage they carry with them. At-risk students are those that have extra baggage, whether it's their parents or the community.	*Deficient* Skills are arranged hierarchically so that higher order thinking or problem solving is pursued once basic skills are mastered.	*Resource Centers* Learning is an active process in which children construct and reconstruct knowledge. Knowledge is imaginatively constructed, not passively acquired (Holmes, 1990).	*Resource Centers* Pupils bring a variety of experiences and abilities with them, which must be considered in curriculum design. Pupils must think critically and differently from others.
Teacher Preparation	*Competency* The model is based on expanding an individual repertoire of well-defined, classroom practices. After graduates are armed with the best foundation we send them into the field.	*Competency* District and governmental guidelines are set up which determine what university students should experience in teacher education.	*Competency* Teaching must conform to district curriculum competencies and standards. Preparation programs should diagnose district patterns and translate them into the curriculum.	*Inquiry* Investigation, critical reflection, and inquiry are central features of teacher education (Holmes, 1990).	*Inquiry* The purpose of teacher education is to prepare teachers to be inquirers in the classroom. Teachers should challenge student beliefs and ideologies to make them critical thinkers.

Teacher as technician. Principals, DOE officials, and TP perceive teachers primarily as expert technicians, who diagnose the learning situation, select techniques needed to reach goals, transmit content by sequencing and fragmenting chunks of information, and evaluate the outcome to determine if objectives were achieved. This image assumes: 1) a top-down organization in which teachers teach a set of competencies dictated and determined by official standards; 2) teachers possess content knowledge and are solely responsible for transmitting knowledge to students; and 3) learning is the development of competence as evidenced by learning standardized skills. Teachers, rarely in the business of creating new knowledge and others, such as universities and scientists, for example, are knowledge producers.

Teacher as inquirers. ATP and the Holmes Group viewed teachers as "inquirers" assisting and consulting students in an on-going process of exploration and discovery and placing more emphasis on participation and joint responsibility in the learning process. In this capacity teachers promote inquiry and function as facilitators in the classroom. In addition, a teacher's expertise lies in the promotion of practices that create the conditions for social change. Constituents who view "teachers as inquirers" assume teachers are active in their pursuit of professional growth and reform and in their construction of and orientation to curriculum (ATP interview). This image assumes a bottom up organization in which curriculum is developed by the teacher to fit the needs of students in a specific context. Advocates of this image assume teachers are autonomous and are professionals who need to exercise more influence over their work rather than conforming to arbitrarily assigned tasks.

Images of Pupils

Images of pupils were compatible with constituent images of teachers. For example, those who viewed "teachers as technicians" assumed pupils were passive recipients and dependent learners in the classroom. Practitioners also assume that students must first master a set of competencies before they attempt critical thinking. Therefore, students rarely engage in decision-making processes or employ discovery methods. In contrast, constituents who viewed "teachers as inquirers" thereby allowed pupils to assume more responsibility for creating their own knowledge. Because teachers and pupils are involved in explorations, more solutions are possible. The ATP learning context emphasizes problem solving and abstract thinking rather than prescribed solutions. Teachers incorporate student diversity (e.g., gender, ethnic, language, and academic) into the curriculum, which is thematic and negotiated. Thus, preservice teachers are more able to serve a culturally diverse population.

Images of Teacher Preparation

Is there one best way of preparing teachers? Should all preservice teachers receive the same body of knowledge and have the same experiences? We attempted to answer these questions by interviewing individuals involved in the day-to-day operation of schools and programs of teacher preparation within the study site.

Images of teacher preparation were distilled across constituent views of curriculum, teachers, pupils, and schools. The first image reflected the belief that official, governmental experts determine what skills and abilities a new teacher should possess.

These competencies, which are consistent with established policies and the state curriculum developed by DOE administrators, should be learned in university classroom settings and field experiences. Teacher preparation for competency's framework is found in behavioral psychology and practitioners are expected to control stimuli to produce predetermined outcomes (Combs, 1991). Subsequently, responsibility for direction is in the hands of teachers, which dictates a passive, conditioned role for the learner.

Conversely, constituents with an inquiry-based perspective saw teacher preparation as a process-oriented framework to encourage critical thinking, responsibility, and responsiveness toward a diverse student population using broadly defined subject matter and goals. Therefore, faculty concentrate on creating optimal conditions suitable for exploring (Combs, 1991).

We found a list of competing interests, needs, and ideologies among Teacher Preparation Program constituents. Many of these discrepant views coalesce around the issue of what we assess as relevant and what balances we strike among academic knowledge, technical competence, and critical inquiry. Whereas advocates of technical competence have always prided themselves on its direct relevance to the workplace, others have valued a broader education including the exploration of disciplinary knowledge and the development of higher order skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, communication, and research skills (Clancy and Ballard, 1995). Yet, universities and teacher preparation programs remain under pressure to be more accountable to the workplace and to principals who hire graduates.

To make a more concise argument we chose to epitomize basic competing ideologies in two idealized, hypothetical classrooms. In Classroom A, which is representative of TP, COE, and principals' perceptions, teacher preparation instructors use a knowledge-based curriculum for prospective teachers. The syllabus delineates course objectives, goals, and assignments and grades are determined by content competency predetermined by the instructor. Students are taught from a behaviorist approach, which assumes knowledge is fixed, technical, and generated from an external source. In Classroom A, teachers, as consumers and transmitters of knowledge, are primarily responsible for student learning.

In Classroom B, which represents The Holmes Group and ATP ideologies, teacher preparation students make decisions about course design and content, identify an independent ethnographic research project relevant to their needs, and study the whole language method. Using a thematic approach, they design lesson plans that may include history, literature, and art. The instructor argues that a standardized curriculum is ineffective because of the unique nature of each teaching and learning context. From this perspective, teachers function as constructors and facilitators of knowledge, while pupils assume more responsibility for their learning (i.e., are also inquirers). Teachers emphasize the constructivist assumption that learning is social behavior; therefore, classroom activities must include interactive processes that promote broad conceptual understanding. Teachers value knowledge as problematic, holistic, negotiated, and socially relevant. This constituency highlighted the interpretive value of experiential knowing.

The existence of these two diverse perspectives within a common teacher education program highlights intra-organizational activity and supports micropolitical theory that assumes that any complex organization, such as an institution of higher education, comprises several constituencies that contend with each other over resources, interests,

and definitions of schooling. As we examined this teacher preparation program, we saw one coalition develop (ATP), due to common ideologies, and break away from the traditional program (TP). Although faculty ideologies within the ATP were unitary, their educational vision was different from the traditional program. In fact, ATP faculty believed that their vision was "Not for everyone" and did not intend to market their program as the model for systemic reform in the College.

While we interviewed and observed TP faculty, we uncovered a main voice, which reflected common ideologies within that constituency. We later presented this dominant voice in the matrices and text. However, there were additional, divergent voices within that constituency. For example, some TP faculty shared common views with the ATP program; however, they chose not to break away. Other responses were considered rare and were perhaps anomalies within the TP. Based upon further splintering of ideologies, we could have divided the TP into several other subcategories.

Conclusions

Systemic reform aims to restructure the entire educational system, a process requiring the organization of all facets of schooling. To facilitate dynamic educational change, the process must involve all intersecting components of the system. However, if one of these components contradicts the others, change in the remainder of the system is subverted or distorted. According to systemic reform, solutions must come through the development of shared and negotiated meanings (Fullan, 1991) as the Dean of the College of Education had desired in attempting to institute his unitary vision of teacher preparation reform.

Edelman (1995) argued that reform that enforces a central, standard vision of an organization is likely to have only symbolic, rather than instrumental effects if one assumes that individuals act (e.g., teachers) toward objects (e.g., courses) according to the meanings and definitions of the situation that those objects have for them (Blumer, 1969). Then the imposition of a unified vision or central reform will only provoke resistance, increase teachers' political action, drive ideological differences underground (Benveniste, 1989), or result in a splintering of subprograms that are internally consistent but contradictory across subprograms.

The present study of a single case, the efforts of a COE to reform its teacher preparation program, revealed several of the organizational processes above and highlighted the fact that systemic reform is unobtainable. Through noncompliance, instructors will openly resist or dramatically revise policy with which they are ideologically opposed (Blase, 1997; White & Wehlage, 1995) and reform will be "subverted by the complex interplay of human transactions that do not happen to fit the printed scenario" (Benveniste, 1989, p. 329).

Reform can disrupt the status quo because the increased expectations make schools and their communities unavoidably more political. Political actors (e.g., teachers) rush in to take advantage of openings, grabbing control of agendas and resources in the temporary vacuum created by reform. When individuals form groups, they validate their ideologies and strengthen their position. As a consequence of reform, teachers may realize increased political power.

An intra-organizational process in the present case study linked this micropolitical

assumption with empirical evidence. Although the development of a common vision within the college or systemic reform was not achieved, one coalition successfully implemented a reformed teacher preparation program based upon their shared images of schooling. The ATP group, which separated from the traditional TP track, enjoyed increased political power and developed a teacher education program that reflected components of the dean's restructuring vision and the national reform agenda. For example, ATP increased active learning environments, promoted collaboration between the university and local schools, and educated preservice teachers to better serve the needs of a culturally and linguistically diverse student population. The Holmes Group (1992), the Carnegie Task Force, and the National Commission for Excellence have underscored the importance of educating teachers to understand and serve the needs of a diverse population and have identified this as an important goal in teacher education reform.

To what other institutions can one generalize these findings? Their consistency with other research suggests the case is not unique (Ball, 1987; Blase, 1991, 1997; Blase and Anderson, 1995; Hoyle, 1999; Lindle, 1999; Malen, 1994; Mawhinney, 1999; Noblit et al., 1991; Scribner et al., 1995; and West, 1999). Yet, what is generalized from case studies is not the empirical features of this particular college of education. Instead, as Ragin and Becker (1992) pointed out, what is generalized is the theoretical process discovered here. That is, the existence of constituencies within institutions and the conflicting and discrepant ideologies across constituencies create program and policy incoherence, and this intra-organizational process may occur in other institutions as well.

From a micropolitical perspective, is change possible? Change occurs in organizations because of internal processes, practices, and conflict. Conflict and contrasting views of schooling in this case prompted and enabled change. Reform in one track of teacher education (ATP) was an expected by-product in this social system comprising competing ideologies. Combs (1991) pointed out that organizational reform stems from changes in the beliefs of the people at the street level (e.g., teachers) and because educational reform concerns individuals in a culture we must create a system specifically designed for the "human problem" (p. 148). He suggested a move from a closed to an open system. In the open system, for teachers, the basic shift entails movement toward a student-centered view of learning (Levin, 1994) while administrators function as facilitators rather than managers.

Recognizing and addressing the human problem in reform requires changes not only in the structure and administration of, but also in how we perceive the organization. Ball (1987) added that the focus on organizational matters should be augmented by a parallel focus on the content of policy and decision-making in schools since a large portion of the content is ideological. Even when goals are clearly delineated, different educational and political ideologies may lead educators to approach their tasks from diverse directions. As Ball pointed out, it is "possible to find enormous differences between subject departments within the same school and even between teachers in the same department." (p 14)

The increased expectations and political activity associated with education reform make the study of micropolitics absolutely crucial for school administrators and reform advocates (Lindle, 1999; Mawhinney, 1999; West, 1999). The empirical evidence presented in this case, which is consistent with prior work in the field, supports the assertion that all organizations are composed of coalitions and individuals with

competing ideologies; as Barr-Greenfield (1975, p. 65) so poignantly stated, that "is the organization." In other words, reformers have to acknowledge and work with the limitations and opportunities inherent in the processes of such a structure. Micropolitical advocates such as Bacharach (1996) argued that current theories of organizational change fail to pay adequate attention to how organizations move from one stable state to another. Therefore, a model of the organizational transformation process or intra-organizational practices must also be examined for those considering reform in education.

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