The Devil's Bargain:
Educational Research and the Teacher

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"There are moments when many of us sense an odd distance between the ethos of teacher education and lived lives of the publics to whom we hope the schools can respond. There are moments when I feel a similar gap between ourselves and many of the teachers in those schools. I have some of our normatives in mind, our styles of explanations, our ways of putting things." (Greene, 1991, p. 541).

Abstract:

The concern of this paper is to explore why it is that so much educational research has tended to be manifestly irrelevant to the teacher. A secondary question is how that irrelevance has been structured and maintained over the years. There are I think three particularly acute problems. Firstly the role of the older foundational disciplines in studying education. Secondly, the role of faculties of education generally. Thirdly, related to the decline of foundational disciplines and the crisis in the faculties of education, the dangers implicit in too hasty an embrace of the panacea of more practical study of education.

The decline of modernism makes this an interesting time because of the associated decline and in some cases collapse of the disciplinary canons on which much of educational research has been built. The disciplinary study of education (i.e. history of education, philosophy of education, sociology of education and so on) has always had a shaky purview within the realms of practitional lore. Long before postmodernism, there was a commonsense view among practitioners that the disciplinary study of education was irrelevant to their concerns. This problem of the older disciplines arises in many cases because the scholars working in disciplinary

modes often develop their first allegiance to their home discipline--say history or philosophy. Whilst this is not intrinsically or inevitably a problem it has the effect over time of divorcing such scholars from the world of schooling. This problem is often exacerbated by the fact that foundational disciplines adopt a hands-off posture with regard to schools; added to which, all too often, these scholars have no previous experience of teaching in schools.

Whilst none of this adds up to a conclusive proof of irrelevance one can see I think why practitioners in the school would over time come to view this group as irrelevant.

Here I am at one with what Schwab said about curriculum research and I think it applies to educational research generally. He said the field of curriculum was "moribund." "It is unable, by its present methods and principles, to continue its work and contribute significantly to the advancement of education. It requires new principles which will generate a new view of the character and variety of its problems. It requires new methods appropriate to the new budget of problems." (Schwab, 1978, p. 287)

There are just too many points at which credibility is strained--the manifest allegiance to the host discipline and not to the educational endeavour; the distance, occasionally disdain, in relationship to school and teachers; the absence of any experience of teaching school. None of these is in itself an insurmountable obstacle to communication: put together it amounts to a collapse of credibility. But it is time to re-work the terrain and for foundational scholars to re-work their loyalties. This is a tragedy for the faculties of education not least because so many good proponents of the theoretical mission are located within foundational disciplines. In my own faculty this potentially invigorating and rejuvenating project is well under way with the support of many foundational members.

Schwab's diagnosis of the problems with curriculum research should be read alongside Veblen's and Clifford and Guthries' strictures about the relationships between university schools of education and schooling. Veblen wrote:

> ...the difference between the modern university and the lower schools is broad and simple; not so much a difference of degree as of kind." (1962, p. 15)

This distinctiveness of purpose and mission:

> "...unavoidably leads them to court a specious appearance of scholarship and so to invest their technological discipline with a degree of pedantry and sophistication whereby it is hoped to give these schools and their work some scientific and scholarly prestige." (p. 23)

The resonance of Veblen's strictures has been confirmed in Clifford and Guthries' recent work:

> "Our thesis is that schools of education, particularly those located on the campuses of prestigious research universities, have become ensnared improvidently in the academic and political cultures of their institutions and have neglected their professional allegiances. They are like marginal men, aliens in their own worlds. They have seldom succeeded in satisfying the scholarly norms of their campus letters and science colleagues, and they are simultaneously estranged from their practising professional peers. The more forcefully they have rowed toward the shores of scholarly research, the more distant they have become from the public schools they are duty bound to serve. Conversely, systematic efforts at addressing the applied problems of public schools have placed schools of education at risk on their own campuses." (1988, pp. 3-4)

In short, the schools of education entered into a devil's bargain when they entered the university milieu. The result was their mission changed from being primarily concerned with matters central to the practice of schooling towards issues of status passage through more conventional university scholarship. The resulting dominance of conventional "disciplinary" modes has had a disastrous impact on educational research.

The devil's bargain on the part of education was an especially pernicious form of a more general displacement of discourse and debate which surrounded the evolution of university knowledge production. University knowledge evolved as separate and distinct from public knowledge for as Mills noted:

> "Men of knowledge do not orient themselves exclusively toward the total society, but to special segments of that society with special demands, criteria of validity, of significant knowledge, of pertinent problems, etc. It is through integration of these demands and expectations of particular audiences which can be effectively located in the social structure, that men of knowledge organize their own work, define their data, seize upon their problems." (Mills, 1979, p. 613)

In Mills' view, such a structural location of "men of knowledge" (sic) in the university could have profound implications for public discourse and debate. Mills believed this would happen if the knowledge produced in this way did not have public relevance, particularly if it was not related to public and practical concerns:

> "Only where publics and leaders are responsive and responsible, are human affairs in democratic order, and only when knowledge has public relevance is this order possible. Only when mind has an autonomous basis, independent of power, but powerfully related to it, can it exert its force in the shaping of human affairs. Such a position is democratically possible only when there exists a free and knowledgeable public, to which men of knowledge may address themselves, and to which men of power are truly responsible. Such a public and such men, either of power or of knowledge, do not now prevail, and accordingly, knowledge does not now have democratic relevance in America." (ibid.)

The dilemma facing men of knowledge which Mills describes is acute when that knowledge relates to schooling. In the schools knowledge is transmitted to future generations. If our knowledge of such knowledge transmission is flawed, we are doubly imperilled: schooling is so intimately related to the social order that if either our knowledge of schooling is inadequate or it has no public relevance, then major aspects of social and political life are obscured. In a real way, the future of democracy in any meaningful sense is called in to question.

Hence the question "whither educational research?", is one of great importance. Mills, I think, comes close to the nature of our dilemma and spells out the implications of the devil's bargain when he talks of the way "men of knowledge" orient themselves to "special segments of society". This has been the fate of much educational and curriculum theory and the effect has been that, as Mills put it, different groups "talk past each other". With few exceptions I would argue this is precisely the relationship between faculties of education and school practitioners: they constitute a model of how to talk past each other.

The problems of faculties of education are particularly worrisome because of the political climate in which we currently operate. Hence, I should make it clear that my mission in seeking to reconceptualize educational research is to revive and reconstitute one of the important missions, so often neglected, inside faculties of education. Hence, what I am seeking is a relationship between faculties of education and practitioners which is meaningful, vivid and vital. It is my view that unless this relationship is rapidly explored and reinforced, new agendas will

begin to work. The New Right is actively reconstituting educational patterns throughout the western world. In particular, it is moving towards more practical "classroom based work", funding direct training of teachers, and generally marginalizing faculties of education or restructuring their mission to exclusively practical and professional development concerns. Just to substantiate these points, let me quote from a recent article by Paul Hirst, that established advocate of foundational disciplines:

> "Are the curricula of teacher education programs being sufficiently informed by research conducted under the new policies and practices? The answer is "certainly not". Initial teacher education programmes are now subject to a set of criteria promulgated by the Secretary of State for Education and require considerable practical preparation. There has, therefore, been an inevitable decrease in the attention to theoretical matters in these programmes..." (1989, p. 272)

He added:

> "Inservice teacher education is now concentrating severely on the practical demands of new legislation... research has had little influence. Advanced study of a systematic kind is now much reduced." (p. 272)

Amongst his conclusions and relevant to the argument deployed here is this statement:

> "...it is only in the closest collaboration with teachers and acting on their initiatives, that we can hope to maintain many of the areas of research that interest us, and most of that may have to be done in spare time and without significant resources "(Hirst, 1989, p. 272).

Hirst, in short, is saying, and I agree with him, that the old foundational disciplines are no longer politically sustainable and that faculties of education will need at long last to collaborate intimately with teachers. The problem is how to maintain a balance between theory, critique and practical matters. If we cannot strike such a balance I think the main mission and the over-arching rationale for faculties of education will begin to collapse.

The particular problem that I want to focus on in the rest of this paper is how to maintain, revive and establish a theoretical mission within this new terrain and in so doing bring new strength and vigour to faculties of education in their work with teachers. I believe this means looking closely at the potential collaboration between teachers and externally located researchers in faculties of education. I think the best mechanism for improving practice is if teachers, in an ongoing way, research and reflect upon their own practice. This may not seem as self-evident as I've stated it: many great teachers would say "why the hell should I need research, I can teach already". They are right at one level, but let me deconstruct this statement because I suspect many teachers would go along with it.

Firstly, when they say research is irrelevant in this statement, they mean the kind of gobbledegook written by one professor for another, which has been all too regrettably common. If we had proper collaborative research, teachers would not be able to make this kind of statement. Secondly, let me look closely at the "great teacher" notion. I have studied a lot of them over the years. They all have one thing in common: whilst they may say they are uninterested in research, in their own lives and in their teaching they constantly reflect upon and refine their practice. They try new things, work at what is not working well, and generally think through the problems that face them. In a word, in an ongoing way, they research their own practice. Now you might say that since they do this and are great teachers, obviously there is no place for externally- located researchers to aid their ongoing research. And you might well be right. But

even if you were, it still leaves the 95% of us who are not great teachers looking for help. For us, I believe a collaborative relationship which focuses on researching our own "life and work" is the most hopeful avenue for enhanced professional development.

So what I'm trying to do is to define what the collaborative relationship would look like between teachers and externally-located researchers in faculties of education. I want to argue that a narrow focus on "practice" in collaborating on research, a panacea that is politically popular at the moment and very much on the provincial agenda in Ontario, will not take us too far. This is for two reasons:

1- Practice is a good deal more than the technical things we do in classrooms; it relates to who we are, to our whole approach to life. Here I might quote C.Wright Mills talking about scholars but it's as relevant to any member of the community. He said "the most admirable thinkers within the scholarly community... do not split their work from their lives. They seem to take both too seriously to allow such disassociation and they want to use each for the enrichment of others". So I would want to argue for a form of research which links the analysis of the teacher's life and work together.

2- The interactive practices of our classrooms are subject to constant change. Often in the form of new government guidelines, new initiatives such as in Ontario at the moment, destreaming, these initiatives outside the classroom, what I call preactive actions, set crucial parameters for interactive classroom practice. Preactive action affects interactive possibilities. In their collaborative research, teachers as researchers and external researchers need to focus on both the preactive and the interactive. What this means in short is that we need to look at the full context in which teachers' practice is negotiated, not just at the technical implementation of certain phenomena within the classroom. If we stay with the latter definition then our research is inevitably going to involve the mere implementation of initiatives which are generated elsewhere. That in itself is a form of political quietism and as such, I think, has to be deplored.

Whilst the value position of this paper is that the teacher should become a researcher or an intellectual (not necessarily of the transformative kind but certainly formative), I have some problems with phraseology.

The "teacher as researcher" slogan seems to me to carry a number of problems. Firstly in implying that the teacher becomes the researcher of his or her own practice, it frees the researchers/intellectuals in the academy from clear responsibility in this process. On the contrary, I think such people have a primary, and much neglected, responsibility for sponsoring and sustaining the teacher as researcher.

Associated with this, I am against the notion that the focus of the teacher as researcher should be mainly upon practice. This is because the parameters to practice, whether they be biographical or political, range over a very wide terrain. To narrow the focus to "practice as defined" is to make the focus of research a victim of historical circumstances, particularly political tendencies. At the moment, the New Right is seeking to turn the teacher's practice into that of a technician, a routinized and trivialised deliverer of predesigned packages. To accept those definitions and to focus on "practice" so defined is to play into their hands.

Now of course the teacher as researcher of practice will ideally seek to critique and transcend such definitions of practice. But that is not my point. By focusing on practice in this way, the initiative for defining our starting point passes to politicians and bureaucrats. It would, I think, sponsor more autonomous and critical research if we adopted a wider lens of inquiry for the teacher as researcher.

The lens of inquiry I want to sketch out would focus on the teacher's work and practice in the full context of the teacher's life.

Some time ago, I became convinced that the study of teachers' lives was central to the study of curriculum and schooling. In reflecting on the development of my conviction two

episodes stand out. Were this merely a reminiscence of personal conversion it would be of little interest, but the two episodes do speak to a number of salient issues in the argument for greatly extended study of teachers' lives.

The first episode took place in the year of post- graduate certification when I was training to be a teacher. I returned to spend the day with a teacher at my secondary school who had been a major inspiration to me, a mentor. He was a radical Welshman. Academically brilliant, he had a B.Sc. in Economics and a Ph.D. in History. He was open, humorous, engaging, stimulating--a superb and popular teacher.

But he faced me with a paradox because when the school changed from a grammar school to a comprehensive, it was he who opposed all the curriculum reforms which sought to broaden the educational appeal of the school to wider social groups. He was implacably conservative and traditionalist on this, and so far as I know only this, issue. But he, it should be remembered, was a man who had personally visited the factory to which I had gone after leaving school early at fifteen. He had implored me to return to school. He had spoken then of his commitment to public schooling as an avenue to working class emancipation. He no doubt saw me, a badly- behaved working-class pupil, as some sort of test case. I knew personally then that he was very deeply concerned to keep working-class pupils in school. So why did he oppose all those curriculum reforms which had that objective?

During the day back visiting my old school, I continually probed him on this issue. At first he stonewalled, giving a series of essentially non- committal responses, but at the end of the day, in the pub, over a beer, he opened up. Yes, of course he was mainly concerned with disadvantaged pupils; yes, of course that's why he'd come to the factory to drag me back to school. Yes, he was politically radical and yes, he had always voted Labour. But, and here I quote:

> "You don't understand my relationship to the school and to teaching. My centre of gravity is not here at all. It's in the community, in the home--that's where I exist, that's where I put my effort now. For me the school is nine to five, I go through the motions."

In short, in the school he sought to minimise his commitment, he opposed any reform which dragged him into more work. His centre of gravity was elsewhere.

The point I'm making is that to understand teacher development and curriculum development and to tailor it accordingly we need to know a great deal more about teachers' priorities. We need in short to know more about teachers' lives.

The second episode began in the late 1970s. I was interested in some work on folk music being conducted at the University of Leeds. At the same time, I was exploring some themes for an ethnography conference that was coming up at the St. Hilda's in Oxford. The work of a folklorist Pegg suddenly opened up again the line of argument which I had been pondering since 1970. Pegg wrote:

> "The right to select lies not with the folklorist ("Sorry old chap, can't have that--it's not a folk song"), but with the singer. Today's collector must have no preconceptions. His job is to record a people's music, whether it is a traditional ballad or a hymn or a musical song or last week's pop hit!"

With this basic attitude comes another revelation:

> "I began to realise that, for me, the people who sang the songs were more important than the songs themselves. The song is only a small part of the singer's life and the life was usually very fascinating. There was no way I felt I could understand the

songs without knowing something about the life of the singer, which does not seem to apply in the case of most folklorists. They are quite happy to find material which fits into a preconceived canon and leave it at that. I had to know what people thought about the songs, what part they played in their lives and in the lives of the community." (Goodson & Walker, 1991, p. 138)

A similar point is made by the folksong collector Robin Morton:

"The opinion grew in me that it was in the singer that the song becomes relevant. Analyzing it in terms of motif, or rhyming structure, or minute variation becomes, in my view, sterile if the one who carries the particular song is forgotten. We have all met the scholar who can talk for hours in a very learned fashion about folksongs and folklore in general, without once mentioning the singer. Bad enough to forget the social context, but to ignore the individual context castrates the song. As I got to know the singers, so I got to know and understand their songs more fully." (Goodson & Walker, 1991, p. 139)

The preoccupation with "the singer, not the song" needs to be seriously tested in our studies of curriculum and schooling. What Pegg and Morton say about folklorists and implicitly about the way their research is received by those they research, could be said also about most educational research.

The project I am recommending is essentially one of reconceptualising educational research so as to assure that "the teacher's voice" is heard, heard loudly, heard articulately. In this respect the most hopeful way forward is, I think, to build upon notions of the "self-monitoring teacher", "the teacher as researcher", the teacher as "extended professional". For instance, in the early 1970's at The Centre for Applied Research in Education at the University of East Anglia in England, a good deal of work was conducted into how to operationalise this concept. Perhaps the most interesting developments were within the Ford Teaching Project conducted by John Elliott and Clem Adelman in the period 1973-75. They sought to rehabilitate the "action-research" mode pioneered by Kurt Lewin in the post-war period. In the interim period educational action research had fallen into decline. Carr and Kemmis, who have done a good deal to extend and popularise the concept, give a number of reasons for the resurgence of action-research:

"First, there was the demand from within an increasingly professionalised teacher force for a research role, based on the notion of the extended professional investigating his or her own practice. Second, there was the perceived irrelevance to the concerns of these practitioners of much contemporary educational research. Third, there had been a revival of interest in "the practical" in curriculum, following the work of Schwab (1969, pp. 1-24) and others on "practical deliberation". Fourth, action research was assisted by the rise of the "new wave" methods in educational research and evaluation with their emphasis on participants' perspectives and categories in shaping educational practices and situations. These methods place the practitioners at centre stage in the educational research process and recognize the crucial significance of actors' understandings in shaping educational action. From the role of critical informant helping an "outsider" researcher, it is but a short step for the practitioner to become a self-critical researcher into her or his own practice. Fifth, the accountability movement galvanized and politicized practitioners. In response to the accountability movement, practitioners have adopted the self-monitoring role as a proper means of justifying practice and generating sensitive critiques of the working conditions in which their practice is conducted. Sixth, there was increasing solidarity in the teaching profession in response to the public

criticism which has accompanied the post-expansion educational politics of the 1970s and 1980s; this, too, has prompted the organization of support net- works of concerned professionals interested in the continuing developments of education even though the expansionist tide has turned. And, finally, there is the increased awareness of action research itself, which is perceived as providing an understandable and workable approach to the improvement of practice through critical self- reflection." (Carr & Kemmis, 1986, pp. 166-7)

The focus of action-research has however tended to be very practice-oriented. In introducing a survey of action-research for instance Carr and Kemmis note:

"A range of practices have been studied by educational action-researchers and some examples may suffice to show how they have used action research to improve their practices, their understandings of these practices, and the situations in which they work." (ibid.)

Not surprisingly with the notion of an extended professional in mind workers have "used action-research to improve their practice". Other developments in teacher education have similarly focused on practice. The work of Clandinin and of Connelly has argued in innovative and interesting ways that would seek to understand teachers' personal practical knowledge. The addition of the personal aspect in this formulation is a welcome move forward, hinting as it does at the importance of biographical perspectives. But again the personal is being linked irrevocably to practice. It is as if the teacher is his or her practice. For teacher educators, such specificity of focus is understandable, but I wish to argue that a broader perspective will achieve more: not solely in terms of our understandings but ultimately in ways that feed back into changes in practical knowledge.

In short what I am saying is that it does not follow logically or psychologically that to improve practice we must initially and immediately focus on practice. Indeed I shall argue the opposite point of view.

Taking the "teacher as researcher" and "action- research" as expressing defensible value positions and viable starting points, I want to argue for a broadened sense of purpose. In particular I am worried about a collaborative mode of research which seeks to give full equality and stature to the teacher but which employs as its initial and predominant focus the practice of the teacher. It is, I believe, a profoundly unpromising point of entry from which to promote a collaborative enterprise. For the university researcher, aspiring to collaborative and equalitarian partnership, it may seem quite unproblematic, for the teacher it might seem far less so. In fact it may seem to the teacher that the starting point for collaboration focuses on the maximum point of vulnerability.

We must, I think, constantly remind ourselves how deeply uncertain and anxious most of us are about our work as teachers whether in classrooms or in (far less contested) lecture halls. These are often the arenas of greatest anxiety and insecurity-- as well as, occasionally, achievement. Hence I wish to argue that to place the teachers' classroom practice at the centre of the action for action-researchers is to put the most exposed and problematic aspect of the teachers' world at the centre of scrutiny and negotiation. In terms of strategy, both personally and politically, I think it is a mistake to do this. I say it is a mistake to do this-- and this may seem a paradox-- particularly if the wish is to ultimately seek reflection about and change in the teachers' practice.

A more valuable and less vulnerable entry point would be to examine teachers' work in the context of the teacher's life. Much of the emerging study in this area indicates that this focus allows a rich flow of dialogue and data. Moreover, the focus may (and I stress may) allow teachers greater authority and control in collaborative research than has often appeared to be the

case with practice-oriented study. What I am asserting here is that, particularly in the world of teacher development, the central ingredient so far missing is the teacher's voice. Primarily the focus has been on the teacher's practice, almost the teacher as practice. What is needed is a focus that listens above all to the person at whom "development" is aimed. This means strategies should be developed which facilitate, maximize and in a real sense legislate the capturing of the teacher's voice.

The Teacher's Life and Work

Bringing substance and strategy together points us in a new direction for reconceptualising educational research and development. In the first section, I provided two somewhat episodic arguments for seeking to understand teachers' lives as part of the educational research and development enterprise. In the second section, I argued that the "teacher as researcher" and "action research" modes were productive and generative ways forward but that the initial and immediate focus on practice was overstated and undesirable. Strategically a broader focus on life and work is hereby recommended. Hence for substantive and strategic reasons I would argue for a broadening of focus to allow detailed scrutiny of the teacher's life and work.

Broadening Our Data Base for
Studying Teaching

So far I have argued in somewhat anecdotal fashion that data on teachers' lives is an important factor for our educational research studies. I have argued that strategically this is desirable; so as to involve teachers as researchers and to develop a collaborative mode. But there is also a substantive reason. The primary reason is that in my experience when talking to teachers about issues of curriculum development, subject teaching, school governance and general school organisation, they constantly import data on their own lives into the discussion. This I take to be prima facie evidence that teachers themselves judge such issues to be of major importance. One of the reasons that these data have not been much used however is that researchers edit out such data viewing it as too "personal", "idiosyncratic" or "soft". It is, in short, yet another example of the selective use of the "teacher's voice". The researcher only hears what he/she wants to hear and knows will sound good when replayed to the research community.

There may of course be perfectly valid reasons for not employing data on teachers' lives in our educational research studies. But this would require a sequence of reasoning to show why such data were irrelevant or of no importance. The normal research strategy is however to simply purge such data. I have not come across any accounts which give reasoned explanations as to why such data are not employed. The most common-sensical explanation seems to be that data on teachers' lives simply do not fit in with existing research paradigms. If this is the case then it is the paradigms that are at fault, not the value and quality of this kind of data.

The arguments for employing data on teachers' lives are substantial, but given the predominance of existing paradigms should be spelt out:

1- In the research on schools in which I have been involved-- covering a wide range of different research foci and conceptual matrixes-- the consistency of teachers talking about their own lives in the process of explaining their policy and practice has been striking. Were this only a personal observation it would be worthless but again and again in talking to other researchers they have echoed their point. To give one example: David Hargreaves in researching for Deviance in Classrooms noted in talking about the book that again and again teachers had imported autobiographical comments into their explanations. He was much concerned in retrospect by the speed with which such data had been excised when writing up the research. The

assumption, very much the conventional wisdom, was that such data were too "personal", too "idiosyncratic", too "soft" for a fully-fledged piece of social science research.

Of course in the first instance (and some cases the last instance) it is true that personal data can be irrelevant, eccentric and essentially redundant. But the point that needs to be grasped is that these features are not the inevitable corollary of that which is personal. Moreover that which is personal at the point of collection may not remain personal. After all a good deal of social science is concerned with the collection of a range of often personal insights and events and the elucidation of more collective and generalizable profferings and processes.

The respect for the autobiographical, for "the life", is but one side of a concern to elicit the teacher's voice. In some senses, like anthropology, this school of qualitative educational research is concerned to listen to what the teacher says, and to respect and deal seriously with those data which the teacher imports into accounts. This is to invert the balance of proof. Conventionally those data which do not serve the researcher's interests and foci are junked. In this model the data the teacher provides have a more sacred property and are only dispensed with after painstaking proof of irrelevance and redundancy.

Listening to the teacher's voice should teach us that the autobiographical, "the life", is of substantial concern when teachers talk of their work. And at a commonsensical level I find this essentially unsurprising. What I do find surprising, if not frankly unconscionable, is that for so long researchers have ruled this part of the teachers' account out as irrelevant data.

2- Life experiences and background are obviously key ingredients of the person that we are, of our sense of self. To the degree that we invest our "self" in our teaching, experience and background therefore shape our practice. A common feature in many teachers' accounts of their background is the appearance of a favourite teacher who substantially influenced the person as a young school pupil. They often report that "it was this person who first sold me on teaching"; "it was sitting in her classroom when I first decided I wanted to be a teacher". In short such people provide a "role model" and in addition they most probably influence the subsequent vision of desirable pedagogy as well as possibly choice of subject specialism.

Many other ingredients of background are important in the teacher's life and practice. An upbringing in a working-class environment may for instance provide valuable insights and experience when teaching pupils from a similar background. I once observed a teacher with a working-class background teach a class of comprehensive pupils in a school in the East End of London. He taught using the local cockney vernacular and his affinity was a quite startling aspect of his success as a teacher. In my interview I spoke about his affinity and he noted that it was "coz I come from round 'ere don't I?". Background and life experience were then a major aspect of his practice. But so they would be in the case of middle-class teachers teaching children from the working-class or teachers of working-class origins teaching middle-class children. Background is an important ingredient in the dynamic of practice (See Lortie, 1976).

Of course class is just one aspect, as are gender or ethnicity. Teachers' backgrounds and life experiences are idiosyncratic and unique and must be explored therefore in their full complexity. Treatment of gender issues has often been inadequate (Sikes, Measor & Woods, 1985). Recent work is more encouraging --see Nelson (forthcoming) and Casey (forthcoming).

3- The teacher's life style both in and outside school, his/her latent identities and cultures, impact on views of teaching and on practice. Becker and Geer's (1971) work on latent identities and cultures provide a valuable theoretical basis. Life style is of course often a characteristic element in certain cohorts; for instance, work on the generation of sixties teachers would be of great value. In a recent study of one teacher focusing on his life style Walker and myself stated:

"...the connections between Youth Culture and the curriculum reform movement of the sixties is more complex than we first thought. For Ron Fisher there definitely is a

connection, he identifies strongly with youth culture and feels that to be important in his teaching. But despite his attraction to rock music and teenage life styles it is the school he has become committed to, almost against his own sense of direction. Involvement in innovation, for Ron at least, is not simply a question of technical involvement, but touches significant facets of is personal identity. This raises the question for the curriculum developer, what would a project look like if it explicitly set out to change the teachers rather than the curriculum? How would you design a project to appeal to the teacher-as-person rather than to the teacher-as-educator? What would be the effects and consequences of implementing such a design?" (Goodson & Walker, 1991)

This I think shows how work in this area begins to force a reconceptualization of models of teacher development. We move in short from the teacher-as-practice to the teacher-as-person as our starting point for development.

4- Focus on the life cycle will generate insights therefore into the unique elements of teaching. Indeed so unique a characteristic would seem an obvious starting point for reflection about the teachers' world. Yet our research paradigms face so frankly in other directions that there has been little work to date in this area.

Fortunately work in other areas provides a very valuable framework. Some of Gail Sheehy's (1976, 1981) somewhat populist work in "Passages" and "Pathfinders" is I think important. So also is the research work on which some of her publications are based carried out by Levinson. His work, whilst regrettably focused only on men, does provide some very generative insights into how our perspectives at particular stages in our life crucially affect our professional work.

Take for instance the case study of John Barnes, a university biologist. Levinson is writing about his "dream" of himself as a front-rank prize-winning biological researcher:

"Barnes's Dream assumed greater urgency as he approached 40. He believed that most creative work in science is done before then. A conversation with his father's lifelong friend around this time made a lasting impression on him. The older man confided that he had by now accepted his failure to become a "legal star" and was content to be a competent and respected tax lawyer. He had decided that stardom is not synonymous with the good life; it was "perfectly all right to be second best." At the time, however, Barnes was not ready to scale down his own ambition. Instead, he decided to give up the chairmanship and devote himself fully to his research.

He stepped down from the chairmanship as he approached 41, and his project moved into its final phase. This was a crucial time for him, the culmination of years of striving. For several months, one distraction after another claimed his attention and heightened the suspense. He became the father of a little boy, and that same week was offered a prestigious chair at Yale. Flattered and excited, he felt that this was his "last chance for a big offer." But in the end Barnes said no. He found that he could not make a change at this stage of his work. Also, their ties to family and friends, and their love of place, were now of much greater importance to him and Ann. She said: "The kudos almost got him, but now we are both glad we stayed." (Levinson, 1979, p. 267)

This quotation I think shows how definitions of our professional location and of our career direction can only be arrived at by detailed understanding of people's lives.

5- Likewise, career stages and career decisions can be analyzed in their own right. Work

on teachers' lives and careers is increasingly commanding attention in professional development workshops and courses. For instance, The Open University in England now uses our Teachers Lives and Careers book (Ball & Goodson, 1992) as one of its course set books. This is symptomatic of important changes in the way that professional courses are being reorganised to allow concentration on the perspective of teachers careers.

Besides the range of career studies in Teachers Lives and Careers, a range of new research is beginning to examine this neglected aspect of teachers' professional lives. The work of Sikes, Measor and Woods (1985) has provided valuable new insights into how teachers construct and view their careers in teaching, as has the work of Michael Huberman.

6- Moreover, the new work on teachers' careers points to the fact that there are critical incidents in teachers lives and specifically in their work which may crucially affect perception and practice. Certainly work on beginning teachers has pointed to the importance of certain incidents in molding teachers' styles and practices. Lacey's work has pointed to the effects on teachers' strategies and the work of Woods, Pollard, Hargreaves and Knowles (forthcoming) has further elucidated the relationship to evolving teacher strategies.

Other work on critical incidents in teachers' lives can confront important themes contextualised within a full life perspective. For instance, Kathleen Casey (1988) has employed "life history narratives" to understand the phenomenon of teacher drop-out, specifically female and activist teacher drop-out. Her work is exceptionally illuminating of this phenomenon which is currently receiving a great deal of essentially uncritical attention given the problem of teacher shortages. Yet few of the countries at the hard edge of teacher shortages have bothered to fund serious study of teachers' lives to examine and extend our understanding of the phenomenon of teacher drop-outs. I would argue that only such an approach affords the possibility of extending our understanding.

Likewise with many other major themes in teachers' work. The question of teacher stress and burn-out would, I believe, be best studied through life-history perspectives. Similarly the issue of effective teaching and the question of the take-up of innovations and new managerial initiatives could profit from this approach. Above all, in the study of teachers' working conditions this approach has a great deal to offer.

7- Studies of teachers' lives might allow us to see the individual in relation to the history of his or her time allowing us to view the intersection of the life history with the history of society thus illuminating the choices, contingencies and options open to the individual. "Life histories" of schools, subjects and the teaching profession would provide vital contextual background. The initial focus on the teachers' lives therefore would reconceptualise our studies of schooling and curriculum in quite basic ways.

Essentially, collaborative study of teachers' lives at the levels mentioned constitutes a new way of viewing teacher development; a way which should re-direct the power relations underpinning teachers' lives in significant and generative ways.

Collaboration and Teacher Development

Strategically I have argued that to promote the notion of teachers as researchers and to develop an action- research modality where collaboration with externally situated researchers was fostered, we need to avoid an immediate and predominant focus on practice. I have further argued that this focus on practice should, at least partially, be replaced by a focus on the teacher's life.

What is at issue here seems to me almost anthropological: we are looking for a point for teachers (as researchers) and externally located researchers to "trade". Practice promises

maximum vulnerability as the "trading point". This is a deeply unequal situation in which to begin to "trade," for it could be argued that the teacher may already feel vulnerable and inferior in the face of a university researcher.

Talking about his/her own life the teacher is, in this specific sense, in a less immediately exposed situation; and the "exposure" can be more carefully, consciously and personally controlled. (This is not, it should be noted, to argue that once again "exploitation" might not take place, nor that there are no longer major ethical questions to do with exposure.) But I think this starting point has substantive as well as strategic advantages. Some have already been listed, however, in terms of the "trade" between teacher/researcher and external researcher, this focus seems to me to provide advantages.

Much of the work that is emerging on teachers' lives throw up structural insights which locate the teacher's life within the deeply structured and embedded environment of schooling (Goodson, forthcoming). This provides a prime "trading point" for the external researcher. For one of the valuable characteristics of a collaboration between teachers as researchers and external researchers is that it is a collaboration between two parties that are differentially located in structural terms. Each see the world through a different prism of practice and thought. This valuable difference may provide the external researcher with a possibility to offer back goods in "the trade". The teacher/researcher offers data and insights; the external researcher, in pursuing glimpses of structure in different ways, may now also bring data and insights. The terms of trade, in short, look favourable. In such conditions collaboration may at last begin.

I noted earlier that this possible route to collaboration does not suspend issues of ethics and exploitation. This is above all because the collaboration between teacher/researcher and external researcher takes place in an occupational terrain which is itself inequitably structured. In terms of power, the external researcher still holds many advantages. Moreover the conditions of university careers positively exhort researchers to exploit research data: the requirements of publications and peer review have their own dynamics.

So whatever the favourable aspects of a focus on teachers' lives we must remain deeply watchful. For if the teacher's practice was a vulnerable focus, the teacher's life is a deeply intimate, indeed intensive, focus. More than ever procedural guidelines are necessary over questions relating to the ownership and publication of the data. These issues themselves must be conceived of in terms of a collaboration in which each party has clear rights and in this case the teacher's power of veto should be agreed on early and implemented, where necessary, late.

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