

**Exploring the Teacher's
Professional Knowledge:
Constructing Identity
and Community**

By Ivor F. Goodson and Ardra L. Cole

But the self, whatever its age, is subject to the usual laws of optics. However peripheral we may be in the lives of others, each of us is always a central point round which the entire world whirls in radiating perspectives. (Alison Lurie, *Foreign Affairs*, 1984.)

A starting point for this article is a belief that if we are to develop valued models of teacher development, we first need to listen closely to the teacher's voice. We

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need to continue, almost obsessively, that act of listening. Hence, it is judged that the best way to develop sensitive models of professional development is first of all to listen to the professionals at whom the development is aimed. This process of sensitive listening has been advocated at a number of levels recently. For instance, an emerging body of work has suggestively recommended the development of collaborative case studies, life stories, and narratives that seek to elicit the teacher's "personal practical knowledge" (e.g., Connelly & Clandinin

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1988, 1990) or the teacher's "pedagogical content knowledge" (Shulman 1986, 1987; Grossman, 1990; Gudmundsdottir, 1990).

It is the view advanced in this article that whilst these approaches make a valuable start in sensitizing us to the teacher's voice, they may encourage too partial a view of teachers' knowledge. The research reported herein implies that personal practical knowledge or pedagogical content knowledge is only a part of teachers' "**professional knowledge.**" This professional knowledge moves well beyond the personal, practical, and pedagogical. To confine it there is to speak in a voice of empowerment whilst ultimately disempowering. To define teachers' knowledge in terms of its location within the confines of the classroom is to set limits on its potential and use.

Our work points to a range of levels at which teachers' professional knowledge can be discerned. It is certainly true that there is a range of practical and pedagogical knowledge that is of vital import in understanding the teacher's conduct in classrooms. But alongside that, we have found, there is a range of knowledge of great importance that deals with the micro-political and contextual realities of school life. Such knowledge is critically important, not least because these micro-political and contextual factors affect the lives and arenas in which personal practical and pedagogical knowledge are utilized.

Background and Context

Our study of teachers' professional knowledge and development involved seven full-time instructors newly hired to a community college in southwestern Ontario, Canada. The community college system in Canada began during the 1960s and 1970s to meet the growing demands for skilled and technical workers, and to respond to the post-war population explosion. These community colleges are loosely defined as post-secondary, non-degree granting institutions. They are governed by a board of representatives from the local community, and offer programs reflecting the concerns of the region. The largest college system in Canada is found in Ontario, where there are 23 community colleges serving over 100,000 full-time post-secondary students, with part-time enrolments of more than 700,000.

There are approximately 6,000 full-time faculty employed in the community college system. As a group, college teachers are unique. Almost without exception, teaching is not their first career. Most are hired because of their practical work experience and move into the community college setting from some area of business, industry, technology, trades, or the professions. They receive no formal preparation for their teaching roles; yet they are expected to carry out all the roles and responsibilities associated with being a teacher.

In order to gain a fuller understanding of what it means to become a teacher in a community college, we (Goodson and Cole, along with Fliesser, a curriculum

consultant at the College) invited a small group of newly hired full-time community college teachers to join us in a two-year exploration of their experiences, development, and socialization as community college instructors. Like most community college teachers, they joined the faculty “fresh from the field.” For each, teaching in a community college represented both a career change and a change in professional venue.

The Teachers

Bill is a chef teaching in the Department of Applied Arts. Catherine and Ann are early childhood educators with several years experience in that field, Ann as a director of Day Care Services and Catherine as a creative performing artist. Brian is an architectural technologist; Karen a television production technician; Jim an industrial engineer; and Nadia a chemical engineer. Linda’s background was in social work and she joined the college to teach in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences. (Unfortunately, for reasons unrelated to the project, Linda was not able to participate in the project for the full two years.)

Studying the socialization and development of the instructors was particularly interesting because they had not been through any conventional teacher preparation program; hence, we were able to observe their “on the job” responses to the new educational workplace. As we followed them through their first two years of teaching, we saw the teachers struggle to define their new role(s) and contexts and to understand themselves as teachers in the community college setting. Although not always articulated explicitly, they seemed to spend much of their induction period searching for answers to questions such as: What does it mean to be a teacher? What does it mean to be part of a new professional community? How do I define the boundaries of my new professional community? How do I become part of that community? To develop an understanding of their answers to these questions and to ground it in a fuller context for each person we employed the life history method and particularly the life history interview (for a full discussion of life history work see, e.g., Goodson, 1980).

Teacher Development, Teachers’ Lives

Teacher development has been characterized in a variety of ways. Fuller and Bown (1975), for example, propose that new teachers progress through a series of concerns-based developmental stages beginning with actions based on self-centered concerns about survival through to actions based on concerns about students and curricular issues. Ryan (1986) suggests that beginning teachers move through stages of “fantasy,” “survival,” “mastery,” and “impact.” Burke, Fessler, and Christensen (1984) characterize teacher development in a model of career cycles. Huberman (1989) reflects our own and others’ dissatisfaction with such generalized characterizations when he states:

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Modal trends such as these are suspect. Put together, they would probably describe no single individual in [a] sample, and only pieces of subgroups. They are, in fact, normative constructs enabling us to keep analytic order in our minds until we can handle more differentiation and complexity. (p. 53)

A more recent focus on teachers' lives and personal biographies consequently has led to conceptualizations of teacher development rooted in the "personal" (e.g., Bullough, Knowles, & Crow, 1991; Butt & Raymond, 1987; Clandinin, 1986; Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Knowles, 1992; Knowles & Holt-Reynolds, 1991). Other studies have argued for a personal mode linked to broader contextual parameters (e.g., Apple, 1986; Ball & Goodson, 1985; Britzman, 1986; Cole, 1990, 1991; Goodson, 1980, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991; Zeichner & Grant, 1981; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1985). This article seeks to extend this latter view.

Toward a Broadened Perspective in Teacher Development

Our concept of teacher development is rooted both in the personal and professional. We consider teachers as persons and professionals whose lives and work are influenced and made meaningful by factors and conditions inside and outside the classroom and school. Events and experiences, both past and present, that take place at home, school, and in the broader social sphere help to shape teachers' lives and careers. How teachers construe their professional realities and how they carry out their lives in classrooms is an ongoing process of personal and contextual interpretation. In this paper, we further develop this concept. We move beyond the primarily personal, practical, and pedagogical notions to define a broader conception of professional knowledge and teacher development, one that places teachers in the broader micro-political and contextual realities of school life.

In our study of the development and socialization of seven new community college teachers, a pattern of teacher development emerged that clearly reflects a transitional quality to the teachers' perceptions of their experiences. We characterize the personal aspect of their development as a struggle to establish professional identity; the context we characterize in terms of defining boundaries of professional community. Personal/professional development within that personally-defined context we describe in terms of belonging.

Two interlinked analytic foci are employed as we examine these issues of professional development:

1. Constructing Professional Identities.
2. Constructing Professional Communities.

A Note on Method. To illustrate our conception of professional knowledge and teacher development, we rely on thoughts, ideas, and observations the teachers provided us throughout the two-year period. In particular, we draw on information collected in a series of life history interviews with each teacher and bi-weekly group discussions that took place throughout the period of the study. These group sessions

were the major collective milieux for the teachers to voice their views and concerns and express their developing perspectives. Because of our commitment to sponsoring the teacher's voice and learning from what teachers have to say, much of what follows is excerpts from interviews with and discussions among the teachers. We have tried to keep our commentary to a minimum. Not all of the teachers' voices are heard individually in this paper, however. (For a more extensive life history account of each teacher, see Goodson, Cole, & Fliesser, manuscript in preparation.) We selected excerpts from the life history interviews and group discussions that seemed particularly illustrative of the ideas we advance here. Because the entire group was involved in the bi-weekly discussions, all seven teachers (eight, when Linda was still part of the project) are, in fact, represented although frequently as a collective voice.

Articulating the Link between Identity and Community

To rehearse the interlinked nature of our two analytic themes, we begin with a lengthy passage from an interview with Karen, who, at the time of the interview, had recently left her job in technical production at a national television station and joined the community college faculty to teach in her area of practical expertise. We quote at length to capture the essence of the link between conceptions of professional identity and professional community.

Karen: I started [at the television station] in '78, and later was married. [My husband and I] were friends first because we ran in a crew. He was an editor. Everybody on that crew I knew on a first name basis. I was the one supplying them with the tapes—the gopher. And we would go for lunch together, all of us, so I got to know all of these guys.

Ivor: You were the only female there at the time?

Karen: Yeah, except for the service secretaries who worked in the scheduling office and who would schedule the shows in the different suites. During the evening shifts we'd go for lunch and then for a beer after the shifts were over at 11:00. [The crew members] became my friends. Some of them had girlfriends, and we sort of got a group going. I started dating Jim. We were married in '82 and bought our house in '83. We had our daughter in '84.

Right after we got married, I switched from videotape to production. I applied to the woman who was in charge of production services, said I would be happy in videotape but I wanted to learn something else and that I would like to get into production. I think I wanted to use more creativity. The videotape was creative but you were also pushing the buttons for somebody beside you. They would assign a producer to come in who would say, "Okay, cut this item and edit this item." He/she would sit beside you and say, "Edit there. Let's put this music on." It was a little frustrating. So I thought, "Well I'll go to [the production] side and see what that's like for awhile. Since I know the editing it might help." So I went into production and was offered a job.

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First of all you have to go through another training, first as a script assistant and then a production assistant. The script assistant is in the control room timing the shows. It tended to be a little more clerical than I would have liked. I'm not a clerical type of person but I certainly learned how to time a show—I did [two news programs]—and I certainly know the feeling of going live with a new show. It is very exciting.

Everything is [trade] unions [at the station] so everything is classified at union scale. Going from videotape to production was essentially a lateral move but since there are just three [job classification] groups in production, I just moved up to the third group.

Ardra: So you were in the top group?

Karen: Yeah, the top of the script assistant group. And then, I worked on [an afternoon news and information show] where I became what they call a service producer. Because of budget cuts you didn't get any extra money for it but the job function was still there and they still trained people for it. I liked doing it so I didn't really care about the money.

I was kind of a producer who oversees the videotape department. It was a perfect setting for me because it was production; yet, I was in the videotape department with all the old guys, the gang. My job was basically organizing and coordinating the whole videotape department for that whole particular show. You were there in the morning until it was off-air and then you go back and prepare for the next day. And that's where I was when we left in June '88.

Ardra: Where was Jim?

Karen: Jim was an editor, one of the top editors. Then he started with [a national prime-time news show]. When we got married in '82, I went to production. At the same time he went to [the news show] which was, at that time, quite a separate section of videotape. Supposedly, the "elite" editors went to work on that show because it was a new show with new equipment. They had to do a lot more work and they became more production editors/directors doing a lot more than straight editing. He stayed with [that show] until we left. He was there for seven years.

It was the winter of '87 when we started thinking about leaving. I was getting sick of [the afternoon show] but there wasn't a job to go to next. It was like the ladder was chopped off, and there wasn't anything I could see to go to. I could have gone into a producer's job but the work was not any more challenging. And it wasn't a move up either. It wasn't any more money. It wasn't any more prestige. It was just another job. It didn't interest me. Management was the only other area and, since managers are a dime a dozen there, there just wasn't any little niche that I could see that I wanted to go into.

So work was getting a little depressing and we were getting just a little stagnated there. Although my husband was happy on [the news show]—the people were good, he loved the show, loved the equipment—his boss was from the old department and there was a rivalry going between him and the supervisor of the other department. So there were a lot of morale problems, back-stabbing, and some terrible things that went on that just ruined it for some of the people there.

It was just a time when Jim was getting frustrated with the politics of the corporation—mostly the politics, not anything else. And I was getting sick and tired because there wasn't anything else to go into. There weren't any new shows then. I mean a new show would have been great 'cause I would have been starting all over again. (Interview, August, 1989)

As is illustrated in the above case with Karen, the teachers entered the community college setting with already well-developed concepts both of professional community and professional identity—antecedents to the new notions of professional context and identity they would develop. After 10 years, Karen, for example, left the community of visual broadcasting. While there she had developed strong personal and professional ties, gained considerable knowledge of the political workings of the corporation, and acquired experience and expertise in her area of work. Beginning at the bottom rung, she had worked her way up the corporate ladder until it “was chopped off.” In her reading of her work context, she did not see further possibilities for the kind of creative expression and professional autonomy she needed. And so, yearning for a new challenge, Karen opted for a change and to become part of a new professional community of community college teachers.

Changing professional roles/career and moving into a new professional community initiated a process of redefinition. In a period of transition and adjustment, Karen and the others had to reconstruct their notions of professional self-identity and develop new understandings about their new workplace community. As we followed them through this process, trying to make sense of the personal/professional reconstruction that took place, an image of expanding concentric circles presented itself to us. As we listened to and talked with the teachers we picked up a clear sense of outward movement, both conceptually in terms of how they defined their new role(s) within the new work context, and physically, as they became more involved in activities outside their own classrooms. They seemed to keep pushing back the boundaries of their thinking about what it means to be a teacher in a community college, as well as the boundaries that defined their work community.

The boundaries that initially defined the teachers' personal conceptions of community were narrow and tight. In the beginning, the professional milieu was the classroom. Over time, this notion was broadened to encompass an increasing amount of territory outside the classroom, until finally the teachers' concept of community included the community college venue in a broad sense. Similarly, the process of redefining professional self-identity first involved a gradual shift from seeing oneself as primarily defined by the previous occupation to seeing oneself as a teacher. And within the new conceptual frame, the teachers gradually expanded their ideas about what it means to be a teacher. For the remainder of the paper we deal separately with these two analytic foci.

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Constructing Professional Identities

With each teacher, qualitative shifts in self-perception occurred over time. They entered the community college not thinking of themselves as teachers. Each had an antecedent professional identity rooted in a previous professional context. A progressive change both in breadth and depth was evidenced in the individual interviews and in the group discussions as the teachers came to define and redefine their roles and see themselves as teachers. Excerpts from two of the life history interviews provide examples of how the teachers began teaching not yet “feeling like teachers,” not thinking about themselves as teachers. These interviews took place prior to or very early in the first term of the first year.

Karen: The thought of teaching [at the time of a first career decision] was “Teaching what? What do I teach?” Teaching students, standing up in front of the class. I mean I just didn’t see it as the job I wanted to do.

I can’t think like a teacher yet. I can’t look at a calendar and say: “Mid-terms are worth this percentage; 25 per cent have to be of written marks; and, when am I going to write a test?” I haven’t put together tests yet or projects or figured out how many weeks [I have to work with]. I mean, I keep looking at the calendar and going, “How many weeks are in this semester?” I haven’t thought yet in that thought process as a teacher as far as long-term planning of curriculum...I think obviously after one year I’ll be able to say, “Well, that didn’t work. I’m throwing that out next year and I’m going to add this and shorten this and lengthen that and maybe spend more time doing this.” Then I’ll know, but right now it’s... (Interview, August, 1989)

Brian: [When I started] I thought I felt like a teacher—a teacher of architectural technology—because I had learned [the content of] what I had to teach. I’d been in the industry for a number of years so I felt I had something. I felt confident in my position. I’m not saying I felt like a teacher yet. But I felt confident in my position [with regard to content expertise]. (Interview, September, 1989)

Initially, the teachers seemed to be striving towards goals of improved practice based on a narrow and technical view of teaching, their implicit assumption being “I have the content knowledge so I will be a teacher once I master certain technical skills for its delivery.” In the early group discussions, facilitated by the curriculum consultant at the college, the teachers focused their conversations on the technical aspects of teaching. Excerpts from our field notes illustrate.

The group explored possible ways of handling difficult students. There was further discussion on how to handle missed assignments. Brian raised a question about the appropriate use of overhead transparencies, a topic which precipitated much discussion. This led to further talk about the use of hand-outs and other teaching aids. (Field Notes, September, 1989)

There was almost a unanimous concern about time and organization. Lecture preparation and text construction were seen as especially time consuming.... Karen

expressed concern about how to coordinate groups within the classroom. She is also trying to individualize instruction but is having trouble figuring out what she needs to teach them by a given time. (Field Notes, October, 1989)

Qualitative shifts in thinking, however, occurred over time. As the following two passages indicate, changes in the nature and content of the group discussions indicated an ongoing redefinition of the teachers' ideas on what it means to teach. We can interpret a shift to a focus on curricular issues, the teaching-learning process, and discussions of different teaching philosophies as the teachers beginning to see themselves as pedagogues rather than as mere technicians. These field notes were taken during two group discussions held in the first year, one at the end of the first term and the other at the beginning of the second term.

Ann offered to share a bit about what was going on in her class. The students were doing presentations which, she said, were going very well. But she wanted to know how to take the presentations one step further so that all the students could build on them. In other words, how could the presentations be used as a teaching-learning tool? "How can I teach **with** [the students] rather than **to** them?" (Field Notes December, 1989)

The subject shifted to evaluating students in cooperative learning situations. Brian offered to share some of his ideas about using peer evaluation as a team-building activity. A lot of suggestions about using group work and cooperative learning were made. Then Ann posed a question about the role of the teacher in an independent learning situation. The discussion turned to the issue of the image of the teacher—as director, teller, facilitator. They all seem to be struggling with their image of what a teacher is, what their classrooms should be, and what their role is in the classroom. Brian offered his perspective that in spite of the initial tendency to want to "teach," it's okay to "guide." (Field Notes, January, 1990)

The following passages from an interview with Karen mid-way through her first year are particularly illustrative of the re-identification process. She reflects on how her thinking about teaching has changed, articulates some of her developing conceptions about her role, and looks forward to further change and role expansion over time.

Karen: I thought I was teaching because I was knowledgeable about television and that's what I was teaching. Whenever I'd say the word "teaching," in the back of my head I'd still think "me teaching?" Friends would say "You're a teacher?" Everybody thinks back to their teachers in high school or elementary or university. And that would throw me for a while. But then after a while I thought "Yeah, I'm here because I know what I'm talking about."

When I was hired I was excited. I got a job teaching in a college. [I thought] "This is the career of a lifetime." It's something I never imagined doing. And it was perfect. It was exactly what I needed to do or wanted to do. I never thought of it like, "Yes, I wanted to be a college teacher some day." Yet, it was the accumulation of my television background....

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I'm a people person. And I like to move and talk and generate ideas, and to get people going. I just like the whole atmosphere [of teaching and learning]. You see a product at the end. I like working hard but I also like to see something completely accomplished at the end. And this was the perfect job where that all would come to be. When I started it was, "I'm a teacher! I'm a teacher! I'm a teacher! I can't believe it!" My husband and everybody would joke about it. It was like, "I can't believe that I got this job. It's the chance of a lifetime!"

Now, [the idea of being a teacher] is not important to me any more. It's important that [the students] are learning something from me. And that it's fun and it's encouraging. Maybe I'll [change my mind later on] but at this point every day is different. So to me that's the ideal job.

That's what most people complain about. They come home after awhile and their job is mundane. Nothing changes. [Teaching] is something in which you see the accomplishment at the end of the day. Some days you come home and you're a little frustrated. It didn't go the way you want. The next day it's either a different group of faces or the same faces but a different situation. And one person comes up to you and says, "Yeah, I got that. I'm going to do this and this." You think, "I got to that person. I really got to that person and it meant something."

I want these students to come back after a couple of years when they get jobs and say, "You know you really helped me." I hope they will say that, "I had a good time at college and I really learned a lot. You were encouraging." So, I think that's more important now to me than it was the first couple of months. The first months I was still on that cloud about what I was doing—a little nervous, but now I'm not nervous any more.

I don't think [some of the older, more experienced teachers] get to know the students. I think they get to a point where they have a curriculum to follow and they teach to a class, not to individuals. By not getting to know the individuals—and I don't mean really personally, I just mean getting to know their irks and how they're motivated or how they're not motivated—you don't see the ones who don't think highly of themselves and that you have to give a little extra pat on the back or whatever. By not focusing on those individuals the classroom becomes "cattle going in, cattle going out."

I'm changing. I should say changing the program but I don't want to make it sound that large scale. I mean changing things that I see haven't worked. I've been through that course [as a student at the same college] and it hasn't changed and now I'm saying, "Okay, can we up-date it a little bit?" And [the other instructors] are very receptive which is something I never imagined possible.

I thought that coming in as the low person on the totem pole [the implicit rules would be]: "Learn. Watch where you walk. And don't step on any toes." But it's not like that. That's exciting for me because to me, that's part of the job as well—if you have the time.

Ardra: Your involvement in the extra curricular activities, things that take you outside the classroom, is that part of your teacher role?

Karen: Some are. Some are political. When someone asks me to do something I'm the type that usually says, "Oh yeah I'll do it." I always take on too much but I'm

also in a position where I would like to do other things. Eventually, I'd like to coordinate our program so the more I learn about the different aspects—the budgeting process for programs and things like that—the more knowledge I'll have. So I'm enjoying that.

I think one of the things I'm enjoying is that our coordinator is very receptive to change. He wants to re-vamp the program, to keep it current. And he hasn't had a lot of feedback or encouragement from other colleagues as yet. Most of the other colleagues are close to retirement and the one I replaced actually was very resistant to change. I think [the coordinator] sees the potential for some new ideas because I'm new in the industry. And I didn't expect that.

I really thought that I would be the low person on the totem pole. "This is what we're doing. We'll help you out and show you some things but take a little bit at a time." Instead I'm getting, "Have you got any ideas? Can we do this? How do you want to change it?" There's more power there, more freedom to do things that I never thought I would be able to do. We're talking about re-vamping the whole year next year and they're going on my idea. I think, "Wow, this is exciting. It's very encouraging." (Interview, January, 1990)

Karen was clear in her initial conception of teaching as delivery of content knowledge. She was less certain about her identity as teacher. She experienced initial discomfort/confusion over having the label "teacher" attached to her—not certain that it fit. She was, however, euphoric over the opportunities for creative expression and accomplishment that she thought her new role would provide. Soon, Karen accepted the "teacher" label and began to develop her understandings about the role(s) associated with that label. She began to identify success and satisfaction in terms of her ability to facilitate students' learning. Later, she expanded the criteria to include her ability to effect program change.

Along with the expanding conceptions of teaching came increasing role complexity and a related need to develop new knowledge. Content knowledge was no longer sufficient to carry out the multiple and complex roles Karen was adopting. She also recognized the need for knowledge of: herself as teacher; the students as individuals; how to best facilitate their learning; curriculum (beyond content knowledge); and how to effect program change in her own class and department. Essentially, she was experiencing and demonstrating a need for personal, practical, pedagogical, **and** professional knowledge of the micro-political context.

The following passages further illustrate how the teachers changed their perceptions of their role to extend beyond the technical and pedagogical to the institutional. They began to see themselves as contributing members of a department, designing institutional strategies.

Ann: You know, personally I can do things creatively with my kids in the classroom but that's not all there is to it. It's wider than that. I feel as if we've got a stake, or I've got a stake, in looking at changing our early childhood education field. There's been a movement for probably about the last ten years to recognize the child as child. It's against that whole notion of "the hurried child"—the

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disappearance of childhood if you like. When I think of young four month old babies going into care, I think we need to address some of those aspects of how that affects that child long term. "What sort of program do we want that child to be in when they're with us eight or nine hours a day? And what should that program look like?"

The expectation for the child entering grade one is that the child knows colours, and reading and writing skills for readiness. We used to talk about that for grade one. So the Kindergarten then adjusts their program to meet what the grade one needs. If you look at Junior Kindergarten, we're talking about three year olds who are now being pushed into that situation for readiness. We're saying, "No, just a minute. The child at that age needs to develop in all areas. This is not just an intellectual approach."

And so here we've got almost a new movement which is child-centered. All our texts reflect it but some of our practice in the field doesn't. So we have some dissension among [the community college] people. We're trying to move from that traditional look at what the teacher knows best to what the child needs. And the reason we're looking at the child's needs is because of that potential institutionalization of children from the age of four months up.

It's scary! I think those are some of the issues that we need to deal with and we're not. There are a couple of us who are on the same wave length. We're not saying that this is something new. This is not new. It's not that we've suddenly thought this up and we're going to try and mix the pot here. Other community colleges have a child-centered approach in place. We now want the curriculum to fit the child rather than the child to fit the curriculum. And that's where the clash is, I think.

If you really believe in child development, how can you not acknowledge the development? In the private sector, when I'm talking about education, I would have far more response to our innovative ideas than I do in the teaching institution which I anticipated would be full of innovative ideas and creativity. If we don't have it here, where is it?

And then I hear people saying, "Well, you know, we can't tell the community college what to do." Somebody has to start somewhere. It's not my approach [to be directive]. I'm much more persuasive. But give me a chance to persuade. Give me a forum to persuade and I'll do it (laughs). (Interview, May, 1991)

As time went on, there was less and less talk about the technical aspects of teaching (other than as a term of reference for growth) and increasing attention to concerns about how to effect substantive change within and outside the classroom. Broadly stated, the teachers expanded their conceptions of teaching and themselves as teachers from an early image of teacher as classroom technician to one of teacher as agent of change.

Karen: The people in my department are very congenial. It's very small. There's only a coordinator and another full-time colleague and myself. They both were my teachers when I took the course there so it was a bit strange at first. But it's worked out very well. They're a good group and we get along very well. They were very good. They were very supportive. I just stood back and was quiet for awhile. And

now of course I never shut up (laughs). Now I try to take over (laughs).

Our coordinator is a very positive person, very enthusiastic. He's willing to take any ideas that I have and go with them. He wants the course to change but he just has no idea what to do. So that is good for me. I have to watch it too. I can be very political. But it's very enthusiastic for me because I've been able to do a lot of things and change a lot of things. A lot of people just sit back or sit on the fence but I'll go to it.

Maybe I'm having a lot more political freedom in our department than in some of the others as far as changing things, just because things haven't been changed for a long time. They want the change. They know they have to keep up but they've been there so long they don't know what to do. So, it's not just teaching, it's re-vamping the whole thing. In 10 years they're going to be retired and there will be other new teachers coming in. I want it to go in a way that I can see working there still in 15 years. So that's been really good for me.

Some of the things my coordinator said "we" would do, the two of us. I don't know what happened but he kind of took a step back and I was standing alone. (Interview, April, 1991)

To summarize the teachers' development of self-identity we once again turn to the teachers. Karen and Brian describe their development of "self as teacher" in this way:

Karen: I don't really know when it clicked or when it happened. It just seemed to assimilate. I remember that first interview the day before I went to teach the first day. I remember thinking, "I can't believe I'm a teacher." I'd pinch myself, "Gee, I'm working at a college. This is ridiculous." And then it's just kind of come about so that now it's almost like, "Oh yeah, no big deal."

[The transition to teaching is] not as scary as I thought it would be. It was a lot more stimulating than I thought it would be. You just start thinking like a teacher, talking like a teacher. Throughout the year I found I was constantly [collecting information related to teaching]. Anything I read I think, "Oh yeah, that's great. That's great I could use that. Or I could do that." [The same thing applies] if I hear about somebody using some other method. And you start automatically applying everything that comes in. You kind of put ideas about methods and things on that teaching shelf so that you can use them. And you just start thinking about making yourself a better teacher. It just kind of happens. You just kind of evolve and just start thinking that way. I never imagined it would be that easy to transform into a teacher. But it's something that just starts to come comfortably. (Interview, May, 1990)

Brian: I have a lot better idea of what a teacher does than I did at the beginning. At the beginning I thought, "How hard can it be?" I mean you just stand up and you talk, and you show them how it's done. How hard can that be? And now I know how hard it can be.

Ardra: It's not longer just standing up and talking?

Brian: It's just nuts. I mean there's a lot more involved in being a good teacher.

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[You need] to know your material and how to present the material. There are a lot of people who know their material inside out, but if they can't get it across to other people so that the people can walk away and understand it... And then [you need] the ability to know how to use a classroom to its best abilities, and what works best in presenting that material. And then, after the material is presented, how to evaluate it, how to evaluate the students, and their abilities to understand.

There is a lot more to teaching than just standing up in front of people and talking. At the beginning I didn't think there was. You also can't teach something unless you understand it.

Ardra: So the complex roles of the teacher are sort of presenting themselves to you as you...

Brian: And again, at the beginning, teaching was, "Oh, they're all the same. They're students. They want to learn architectural technology." They're not all the same. Some of them need more time. And there are other issues on hand for the student now that I need to take into consideration. A part-time job seems to be a big thing, a necessity these days in order to go to school.

In my first year I was saying to my students, "Well no, it's either school or work. You can't do both." I didn't mean it as an ultimatum. And now you talk to some of these people and literally the part-time job is what's putting food on their table and paying their rent, because [assistance funds] didn't come through or whatever. So I'm not as harsh about it. Now, instead of, "No, you can't have a part-time job", it's, "Okay, but just make sure you schedule your hours appropriately. Make sure you have the time to do the work." I'm more supportive of those [situations] rather than harsh and judgemental.

And now I think [teaching] is much more complex. The one and only time I walked into a classroom unprepared taught me that lesson. I was very busy and just didn't have the chance to fully prepare. I had an outline of what I wanted to do but I didn't have things down pat the way I should have. That taught me never again [to be unprepared]. It was really embarrassing and difficult. And I felt as if I really cheated the students, and that didn't sit well with me. So I never did that again.

Ardra: Since you came on full-time a couple of years ago almost, do you see that your role has changed very much?

Brian: I look at myself as a teacher and that's my job.

Ardra: You didn't in the beginning? (laughs)

Brian: No. No. But now I do. I guess my attitudes have changed. I wasn't quite sure that I was teacher. Yeah, I guess that's right, when I look back on it.

Ardra: You think of yourself as a teacher. Do you still think of yourself though as an architectural technologist?

Brian: Oh yes, but not as much. I still think of myself as an architectural technologist because that was my choice of profession. But what I'm doing now is instead of practising it, (and I do still practice it) I'm now a teacher. So, I'm a teacher of architectural technology. And I feel a lot more comfortable now than I

did two years ago. (Interview, May, 1991)

And so, as the teachers reflect on their transition to teaching, their metamorphosis seems complete. The initial discomfort with the idea of identifying themselves as teachers no longer exists. Brian's final comments reflect the sentiments of the entire group. With an acknowledgment of their "first choice of profession," they now talk about themselves, not in terms of their previous role in their respective fields, but as teachers. They seem to have achieved a level of comfort in the development of their professional identity as teachers that approximates that previously defined within the earlier professional/vocational context.

Constructing Professional Communities

Using a similar representational process we now turn to our second focus and, once again, rely on the teachers to illustrate the concept of "constructing professional communities." We remind the reader of our image of the ever-widening circle of development, and begin with the teachers' initial and somewhat narrowly defined view of "classroom as professional community." Returning to the discussions and interviews held at the beginning of the first year, once again we follow the teachers through their first two years. As our first passage indicates, the teachers' initial understandings of what teachers do and where roles are played out were bounded by the classroom walls. An analysis of field notes on the first two group sessions, held in the early part of the first term in the first year, reveals a focus on topics/concerns which relate intimately to the classroom: managing time; preparing lesson plans; interpreting curriculum guidelines and developing new curriculum; long-range planning; individualized instruction; lesson presentation; use of audio-visual equipment and aids.

At some point late in the first term, there was evidence of an initial qualitative shift in the nature and content of the group discussions. The following examples show how conversation began and continued to move beyond the classroom walls. Boundaries were extended; walls were pushed back; the circle widened to encompass a greater territory.

Karen: I think the answer, at least for our department, is to try to get more industry involved in community colleges whether it be sponsorship of private companies or just industries that are going to benefit from our graduates. I think it may take some marketing on our part as individuals in our divisions or in the college as a whole. But we need to try to say, "Look, we are putting these students out and we're giving you something. We need something back." And it can't just be the government. They can't be the only one funding right now.

We have to look at ourselves as public relations people and sales people, as well as teachers, if we want our departments to keep up. To keep up with the level that we need to teach [we need] to keep up with the industry. And industry is also going to have to give back what they get out. I think we've got to get that across to them that we can't just keep churning out students. If we can't keep up, those

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students we're churning out are becoming less and less qualified.

Industry can afford to keep up because they have profits to prove it. We have to say, "Well, you've got to give what we give. You have to help us produce these students who are up to date and excellent." That way you also generate more students coming into the system—if they can see an end, if they can see something that is a goal worth going after. But I think we have to actively start doing something. (Group Discussion, December, 1989)

Ann: There's a lot of money going in. I think that one of the problems is a question of where that money is going and what it's going for. I can see we may have a new building going up out there which is going to be very beneficial but it really depends on how the whole thing is operated. We asked if we could have our offices out there or if we would have close ties with that new building. "No, we'd have to stay up in our own building." In [another community college] the whole early childhood department is all part of that whole building. They have direct access to the resource rooms and things like that going on right there. The sad part is that we're building that beautiful building out there and here we are still over here. (Group Discussion, December, 1989)

As the year progressed and the teachers became more settled in their new professional milieu, we began to see increasing evidence of an interest in departmental activity.

Karen: In May and June I'm going to work on changing the evaluation. I can do whatever I want. I find [the current method] very awkward. I would prefer to do my own and have [the other instructor] go and do his own, and then take the average of the two because I happened to get to know the students earlier. He just found he didn't know all the faces. Now he does tend to let me do most of the marking but to me it's a waste of time. We have 30 students to go through and it's probably about 20 minutes per student to do this. It doesn't sit well with me. So it's been left that I can change it in May. (Group Discussion, March 1990)

The teachers' increasing involvement in activities outside the classroom was further evidenced in a group discussion that took place early in the second term of the first year. The topic of a pre-session conversation was of their involvement in extra-curricular activities. Karen talked about her key role in the production of a video related to community college activities to be shown on a local television station. Bill commented on some culinary competitions in which he had become involved in support of the students. Jim had taken on extra responsibilities related to the provision of inservice training on a recently implemented policy affecting work environment.

As time passed, the teachers continued to express a growing interest in life beyond the classroom walls. Another significant shift occurred during another discussion that took place early in the second term of year one where an interest was expressed in learning the micropolitics of the institution: how things work; how things get done; how to make changes. Again, we quote from our field notes:

An interesting sequence of events took place here. Linda spoke about the “politics of the institution.” She talked about the constraints, the road blocks to change, and the need to acquire early insight into the politics of an institution in order to bring about any change. Ann shared her expertise and knowledge about collegiality in the college and issues of power and control in relation to status in program design and development. Brian brought up the notion of the need for new people to conform. “Otherwise”, he said, “they’re not wanted.”

This is the first time there has been such an informed and lively discussion around the issue of institutional politics and the need to be aware of and learn institutional norms as part of the whole socialization process. It will be interesting to watch that develop. We are half-way through year one now. Before there wasn’t much interest beyond the walls of the classroom. Now we are starting to see the classroom walls being pushed back. (Field Notes, January, 1990)

The teachers continued to ask questions which took them farther afield from the classroom—questions about budget, how to make curricular changes, and how to strengthen links with industry and the community beyond the college. As time went on there was even less, indeed very little, talk situated in or confined to the classroom. A good illustration of this point is found in the first group session of the second year. The first part of this meeting was spent planning session topics for the year. The teachers generated a list of possible topics and then placed them in order of priority. Institutional micropolitics was ranked number one and classroom-specific issues came up last!

Karen made a request that really changed the whole nature of the discussion. She requested information or a workshop session on school-community relations, particularly on funding issues. I think this is a critical incident in her development and certainly in the development of the teachers, considering the response she received to that request. Here we see the teachers pushing back the classroom walls even further wanting to move out into the community and trying to establish, maintain, and encourage school-community links.

Karen commented, “Last year I was just worried about teaching. Now I’m interested in changing the program.” A very critical statement, I think. “How do we get things to change?” she asked. Karen talked about her growing interest in learning how the system works and how to get things done. “Perhaps,” she said, “someone from [the college] could explain how [the college] works.” There was a lively discussion and no more suggestions after this.

After a rank-ordering of the five topics suggested for workshop sessions, it came down to a decision between “micropolitics” and a workshop on group work for the first to be held. There was consensus, in the end, that micropolitics was definitely the topic of interest, especially over the long term. It was perceived to be quite essential. Particularly, there was interest in budgeting—how the budget works and how decisions are made. (Field Notes, September, 1990)

The boundaries of community continued to be extended; the circle ever-widened. In most of the last individual interviews and certainly in the final group

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discussion of the second year, the entire talk was located in the broader community college venue. Often the teachers returned to their previous experiences of occupational community and drew parallels between the previous and present contexts. And so, after a two year period of induction/socialization to a new professional venue, the teachers, for the most part, had developed a concept of community that has degrees of continuity with that defined within the previous vocational context. As with Karen:

Karen: It makes me feel slightly disappointed. I think, at any job when you start you think, “This is going to be it. This is going to be wonderful.” And, all of a sudden, reality sets in and you say, “You know, there are the same problems in every job. Whether you’re a carpenter, or whether you’re in the education field, or whether you’re in the television field, the same problems are there. Some people do the job well and you have to work with those people.”

I’m a little surprised in that I didn’t expect there to be a lack of interest [among the senior colleagues] in their own professional development. I just assumed that you would always want to be better, especially in the education field, because there are new minds coming in every year and it’s such a changing field. Because you’re teaching, that field is constantly growing but also because you’re being challenged every year from young minds and different people. You’re not around the same people. I would think that you would want to be constantly on the ball and that everybody would naturally be gung-ho. There are people who may not be as excited about [ongoing professional development]. I guess I’m surprised that there’s no push for it to continue.

When I got my first job after I graduated from college, I knew I wanted to be in television. I used to tell myself I wanted to be a producer because I like making decisions. I like organizing and I like working with a large group of people. I do like being the boss, if you’d like to put it that way, not for the title so much, but because when I have an idea I see working, I have to be the boss to see it followed through. And that’s what I used to think I wanted to do.

So I saw this job—after being in television and not necessarily being the producer—as an opportunity to make decisions that had some meaning, that had some influence on other people’s lives, that people could benefit from—not like with a television show where they would say, “Well, that was a good show but it’s gone.” But maybe someone would say, “That was a great teacher” or, “That was a great course I took.” (Interview, January, 1991)

Facilitating Teacher Development

As we followed the teachers through their transition period, it became apparent that the process of redefining what it means to be a teacher and their developing sense of new professional identity were contextually dependent on their developing notions of professional community. This leads us to suspect that in order for teachers to have opportunities to realize their individually-defined personal/professional potential, teaching and development need to be defined, interpreted, and facilitated within a broader institutional context. When, in the context of

professional development, the boundaries of a teacher's professional community are pushed back to encompass the entire workplace context and attention is paid to the micro-political and contextual realities of school life, it seems to us that then teachers have a better chance of becoming truly empowered. In other words, teacher development in its broadest sense depends on teachers having access to professional knowledge beyond just the personal, practical, and pedagogical.

It is in the broader institutional arenas that the teachers see both major frustrations and the possibilities for significant change. The frustration and anger about "the system" becomes a rising tide within the transcripts of the meetings. Take the following statement by Jim who describes his new job as a "dream come true."

Jim: I love my job, I really do, but constantly institutional politics intercede. People trying to build empires with hidden agendas and all the bullshit shouldn't be getting in the way between me and the student. It ticks me right off. I've never been good at politics. I don't want to be good at politics. I just want to do the damned job. But it gets to the point where it's almost impossible to be able to do it properly.

There are people who just do what they want to do and that's it. It keeps them happy. Sometimes it's bloody sad. In fact, to me, that's depressing because that spark of enthusiasm just gets smaller and smaller and smaller. And in the end it's going to be extinguished. What do you do? Do you fight the system until you just end up on the floor or do you roll along with it? (Discussion, May 1991)

In this quote, and indeed within the testimonies carried within this paper, we see the richness of pursuing detailed accounts of the life histories of teachers. The grounding of our data in these historical contexts, both personal and micropolitical, offers alternative insights into pedagogical and curricular rationales. At least as importantly, the eloquence of the teachers' voices exhort us to develop new modes of teacher education which give new respect to the personal and political realities of teachers' lives.

We recognize that in exposing the reader to a good deal of unedited transcripts of teacher's voice we have placed an extra task upon them. So much of our research normally comprises researcher's commentary—it, therefore, may appear almost a "dereliction of duty" to provide so much "raw data" and so little commentary. But research paradigms and our expectations of them are social constructs. Moreover, they are social constructs which have, unwittingly or not, silenced teachers' voices and teachers' lives. The process of rehabilitating the teachers' voices is likely to be painstaking and contested. It is not by chance that paradigms have silenced the teacher but without such rehabilitation we believe much of the research on teachers will continue as arid and decontextualized, irrelevant for the teachers it so systematically silences and disenfranchises. As we have written elsewhere.

The kind of theory we are searching for would not be the sole prerogative of the university scholar. Our educational study should be more collaborative, more broad-based, publicly available. But it should be possible too for us to make it

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interesting, critical, vital and useful. (Goodson & Walker, 1991, pp. 203-4)

This article marks our tentative search for such a mode of study and reportage in work that is currently underway. We recognise we are at the first stage of a long journey. Behind this journey, however, lies a clear value position that embraces the notion of the teacher as potentially the central change in restructuring schooling. To quote from Lawrence Stenhouse's memorial plaque, "It is teachers who, in the end, will change the world of the school by understanding it."

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