Reform and "Being True to Oneself": Pedagogy, Professional Practice, and the Promotional Process

By Ardra L. Cole & J. Gary Knowles

We began our respective careers as tenure track, university teacher educators at about the same time, in the late 1980s. We came to the professoriate with considerable teaching experience, both of us having been teachers in elementary and secondary schools. Ardra, after several years researching teachers' epistemologies of practice prior to graduation from a doctoral degree program, began university work in an after-initial-degree preservice teacher education program, and then moved on to a tenure-track position at a large graduate school of education. Gary, with almost eight years of university teaching (including six years of teacher education work) at the point of completing his doctorate, took up a tenure-track position and continued working within undergraduate and graduate teacher preparation programs at a large, state university with a strong research reputation.

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Our professional lives converged when, just prior to beginning work as tenure-track professors, we discovered the striking similarities in our perspec-

tives and work. (We were, for example, both involved in qualitative studies of beginning teaching.) Since the early 1990s we have worked closely together, although in very different contexts, collaborating on many teaching, researching, and writing projects. We have had very different experiences of beginning professing within our respective institutions. We are now no longer "beginning professors", and Gary has moved on, as it were, in both career and place.

We have published "reports" of some of our experiences as beginning and untenured professors, kinds of intimate glimpses into some of the "realities" and "fantasies" associated with academic life, perspectives that are not unlike the "shattered images" that we and others have talked about in the lives and experiences of those who become teachers (*e.g*., Cole & Knowles, 1993). In those articles we highlighted a number of pertinent issues, such as the parallels between beginning professing and beginning teaching, the powerful socialization forces of the academy, the struggles and dilemmas of teachers cum professors (Knowles & Cole, 1994),[1] and the dilemmas and pressures associated with meeting multiple and complex institutional demands (Knowles & Cole, 1995). This article is a continuation of our dialogical reflection on academic life. In a sense, it is a culmination of our earlier pre-tenure discussions (see, Knowles & Cole, 1994; 1995). Drawing on aspects of Gary's experience as a beginning professor in particular, we consider the prospects (?) of teacher education reform. When we conceptualized our contribution to this issue of *Teacher Education Quarterly* on beginning professors and teacher education reform, we did not intend to present elements of very personal experiences and perspectives as represented in this article. Circumstances related to Gary's tenure application guided us in a new direction, as we will soon make clear.

The mode and form of our earlier experiential reports—letters to each other—allowed us to maintain our separate identities in the text, important when we are sharing elements of personal-professional experiences. (We wish to collaborate but, equally important, we also want to maintain our separateness.) Here we use a similar device. The text that follows is both derived from and represented as an interview. Ardra interviewed, or perhaps more accurately, engaged with Gary in a guided conversation.

The conversation took place at the beginning of 1996, exactly one year after Gary was denied tenure and promotion. It occurred at a time when he was applying for new professorial positions, being interviewed, and waiting on tenterhooks for offers of employment. He had decided to leave his position at the end of the year in which tenure was denied rather than continue to work there another full academic year.

We have edited the transcribed text to ensure a reasonably consistent flow and focus. We have also eliminated much text, many repetitions, and evidence of Gary's ramblings into the bush at the side of our conversational path. In particular, we edited out those parts of the conversation that were too context-specific, too personal, and/or irrelevant to the focus of this issue. Although we had discussed the topic before, the audio-taped recording of our words induced a kind of finality to our "staged act" of conversation.

We begin our conversation about beginning professors and teacher education reform with a focus on Gary's (now terminated) experience at a large, state, research university. Through our dialogical reflection we also strive to make sense of his teacher education (reform?) work within the context of that particular institution. But, because our intentions in this article are much broader in scope and purpose than that, we step back to consider, in light of Gary's recent personal experience, the broader arena of teacher education and the prospects of its reform.

Beginnings and Endings Endured

Ardra: *In some ways it is odd to be asking you about your experiences as a "beginning" professor. You are now an established scholar and a very experienced teacher educator. Can you talk a little about how you align yourself with more "junior" and less experienced colleagues?*

Gary: In one sense, I am **still** a beginning professor—it's a matter of deferred status and role. Even though I may be well experienced, I'm still at the bottom of the ladder [in the professorial hierarchy]. In the academy you're a "beginner" until you get tenure.

A: *True!...Despite many years of professional experience, once you move into the academy, you essentially start over on a new playing field with a different set of rules; professional history, especially teaching, doesn't count for much.*

G: ...I'm defining "beginningness" as being related to status rather than as a lack of pertinent experience. Beginning professors don't have much status within the university community context, which doesn't necessarily mean that they are not respected or appreciated for the work they do or for the contributions they make to the institutional or wider communities. I'm probably also a beginner in terms of the ideals I have for myself as a professor, for my field—teacher education—and for the students that I work with. Despite a good number of years of having my idealism kind of shaved off or challenged, I think I'm still reasonably idealistic.

A: *The ruling against you in the tenure decision sent a bit of a shock through some elements of the teacher education community. I know from talking with numerous colleagues, it was totally unexpected. Some very well known scholars offered to write "letters of protest" to your institution but you opposed that idea. Without going into any detail (because that's not the purpose of this conversation) can you provide some explanation for the tenure decision?*

G: It's difficult to know how to talk about [the tenure decision].... On one level it's very embarrassing. It's very damning! On another level the decision may say more about the institution than about me. On yet another level I simply want to put the experience behind me and **not** feel the anger and disrespect I do.

A: *I know some of our colleagues saw the decision as a statement about the status and priority of teacher education as a legitimate "field" of scholarship.*

G: I think I agree with them. But I would also add that the legitimacy of other

than traditional forms of inquiry was also at question, since that pretty much defines my perspective.

A: *So are we talking about a conflict of paradigms here?*

G: Yes, I think the decision was an ideological one.

According to The [particular] University traditions regarding the tenure application process, I've not been given an explanation in writing; I have not received a formal statement from the tenure and promotion committee or any other representative of the school or the university [about the denial of my application]. I received a letter stating that, on such and such a date, my services were no longer required.... I have had some quite cordial conversations, though, with the dean and program chair, as well as with some sympathetic members of the school faculty. In some sense, then, because I have not received a formal response, I'm in the dark.

For the most part, it seems, the decision rested on an assessment of my scholarship. It was seen to be of insufficient quality and focus—a matter of my work's conceptualization and theoretical and methodological perspective. Clearly, not only is [my scholarly work] grounded in a tradition that is not strongly represented at the institution, but it also addresses issues that are **not** mainstream concerns [for example, my home education research]. The committee, supposedly, argued that the decision rested on the practice-theory relationship as articulated in my scholarship. Apparently, I got the order wrong!... Also, given that a good part of my scholarship was directly related to my responsibilities as a teacher [educator], and some of it was "self-study," it's my guess that those of the committee who were very traditional researchers had difficulty with the very practical orientation of much of my work. Perhaps the fact that I was the first generalist hired by the institution—the first teacher educator not defined by a particular curriculum subject area—put me in a different place, and inferred a different status. Perhaps they really didn't know how a generalist could or should be defined. I simply don't know! I'm mystified. And, as one faculty member said to me in response to my inquiries about the tenure decision process: "The tenure process only becomes a mystery to those who don't receive [tenure]."

A: *But what about the external assessments of your work?*

G: Interestingly, I understand that [those assessments] were pretty much discounted because the referees I nominated—top scholars in my areas of research—were seen as not being affiliated with **peer** institutions.

A: *You've talked mainly about scholarship as the primary basis for the decision. Were there any other considerations? For example, teaching?*

G: I was told that my teaching had no bearing on the decision but, privately, other perspectives were expressed to me; some faculty members wondered about the extent to which my teaching—which is not traditional in form, substance, or in the practical theories espoused—**was** a factor in the decision. Interestingly, [as I understand it] the supportive reports about my teaching by current and former students and others were discounted. Thus, in the "final assessment," the pivotal and

only questions about my work (and tenure file) were supposedly these: "What is appropriate scholarship for a professor of education [at The University]? What are the theoretical underpinnings of this work, and how do they fit in with traditional or mainstream research approaches? What kind of scholarship is likely to have a significant (narrowly defined) influence on the field?" ("Narrowly defined" are my words, not theirs!) And, "What should [such research] look like?"...I don't think (or at least no one countered this view) that any serious attention was given to the unique nature of much new teacher education scholarship, especially that which explores topics and methodologies on the margins.

A: *You described both your scholarship and your teaching as nontraditional. Can you say more about what you mean by nontraditional teaching? Some examples maybe?*

G: My pedagogy goes "against the grain" of more traditional forms and practices often associated with university teaching and teacher education. The threads that hold my various practices together are notions of experiential learning and reflective inquiry; or inquiry based on reflective examinations of experience. For me, experience, whether it be past, present (or even future), is the starting point for inquiry and learning. I am committed to facilitating learners' growth so that they become self-directed, independent, and inquiring. I encourage learners to make the connections between theory and practice, first, by honoring the place of practice in theory generation, second, by drawing on theory to explain and, third, by encouraging learners to develop theories of their own through the vehicles of their **own** inquiries into their **own** and **others'** professional practices and experiences.

A: *No offense intended, but what you are describing doesn't sound terribly outlandish, certainly not radical! One would expect, in a highly reputed school of education, some fairly progressive pedagogues and research agenda. Right? What you're describing is not really all that different from what we see touted in the current literature as being ideal or something to work towards in teacher education. Pick up any recent journal or publication in teacher education and you'll see a role for the kind of work you describe. And as far as particular styles of pedagogy that one might call profeminist, the literature is rife with advocacies for those kinds of approaches. You were not doing anything so terribly alternative.*

G: You're right! That's the point! My pedagogy is **not** radical. It is, simply, inclusive in the broadest sense, and profeminist. I seek to establish and support respectful non-hierarchical relationships with those students participating in my courses. (I really believe that I learn as much as the students from teaching courses.... And, I regard preservice teachers as teacher educators themselves, believing that there is much that they can teach each other about the processes of teaching and learning, and the cultures of schools and students.) I try to establish and foster communities of learners (I don't mean to sound trite here!) whose members, meaningfully and earnestly, support one another. I do not set examinations or quizzes, but have used portfolio kinds of assessment processes for many years—as I did, in fact, when a classroom teacher. I expect learners to write a lot—my courses

are writing-intensive—and I expect work to be revised throughout the course of a semester or year, depending on the length of the class. I try to model appropriate practice. Actually, a great deal of my pedagogy originates with my earlier experiences as a learner and the approaches I used as a secondary school teacher in "alternative" courses and contexts—greatly refined and extended, of course. My early [secondary school] work in outdoor and environmental education heavily informs my teacher education practices.

A: *You mentioned trying to promote preservice teachers to be inquiring new professionals. I agree with you that there probably are many others who would espouse to do the same; although, there's probably one significant difference. Not only were you fostering it in them, you were engaging in that same practice yourself. You were modeling the kind of teacher that you were also trying to facilitate the development of. My view is that,* ***that*** *in itself, was probably a politically incorrect thing for you to be doing.*

G: I agree. Some of my research consists of very personal examinations of my own developing practice. And, I don't always come up smelling like roses. I was consistently trying to model processes that I was encouraging people to be thinking about and using. Maybe that was part of the problem!

A great deal of my energy over the last three years was spent trying to develop an internally-consistent and holistic graduate teacher education program, and my own research, in concert with the work of others, was important for informing that. It is essentially a program which centers on a pedagogy of experience, personal history, and critical inquiry. You could say that I've developed a personal history pedagogy. Now that I'm not working in the program at that university, and that there are new faculty working in it, I'm sure it will change very quickly. (It was originally built on the cohesiveness of perspectives held by a small group of "powerless" faculty and adjuncts.)

A: *Would it be correct to say that you have been actively engaged in working towards reforming teacher education?*

G: Sure! I still, vividly so, remember my work in the school classroom and with kids, and I am committed to actively making a difference in teacher education, in the preparation of teachers. My idealism is a delicate mix of both heartfelt and research-informed perspectives on the work of teachers and the learning to teach process—not to mention visions of how schools could be. I tend to be guided by my intuition and my heart in much that I do. I think a parallel to being a reform-minded teacher educator is to that of creating a fine painting, to rely on the principles of form, composition, color, perspective, and scale and, as you draw on the delicate, intuitive mix of energy and time, you engage your fine-tuned practical skills in the work. Then, if the subject of the painting is socially relevant in some way, the work can influence the lives of viewers. In a sense, that's how I think about the place of intuition and passion in my career and work as a teacher and teacher educator.

One of the things that is pretty unique about my experience as a teacher

educator—now I'm speaking of the years before my doctoral degree as well—is that I have spent only a very short time working in traditional programs of teacher preparation (which also mirrors my experience as a classroom teacher). My own teacher preparation was extremely traditional and, looking back, I'm very critical of it. But I broke out of that [teacher-centered, traditional] mold very quickly. As a result of my scholarship and classroom experiences I've come to hold the view that, to change schools, we have to substantially change the ways teachers are prepared. (In saying that, I'm not putting the blame entirely on schools of education or teacher preparation programs. And, I am definitely not blaming teacher educators *per se*.)

When I was involved in teacher education at [another university], for example, there were many intellectual and structural elements of the program that I appreciated, and could work with, and understand. But there were other things that **never** made sense to me. This was similarly so when I first went to the university in question. Programmatically there were [elements] I just couldn't accept. But within the boundaries of my discrete coursework responsibilities (like most teachers) I put my slant, my interpretation, on the curriculum and I taught it in ways that were distinctly different from others before me. I recast the curricula in an elementary program course, for example, in a way that would resonate with **who I was** as a teacher (and learner).

I've striven to establish a real resonance between myself as a teacher and myself as a teacher educator (not unlike what I advocate for preservice teachers when I ask them to inquire into themselves as teachers. So, is that politically incorrect?) ...and so, I think, because I was in many ways also a nontraditional learner I've gone against the grain both in my learning and my teaching. When I began teaching I tried to engage in the sort of practices that made sense to **me** as well as to my students. But I found very quickly that my practices were alternative to those around me. It was mainly my emphasis on the experiential—on learning contexts beyond the classroom—that made me different. And those same kinds of notions followed me to teacher education.

At first I tried to be very much like all the other teacher educators and teach in [traditional] ways, ways that we still see in many teacher education programs. And, little of that made sense to me. I very quickly dropped more "formal" practices and adopted more informal, personal, inclusive approaches. So I have, in one sense, a history of simply being myself and, well, going against the grain.

That isn't to say that I was just using experience or intuition as a basis for accepting or rejecting [approaches or structural elements]; I was being critically reflective about my work. Initially I began doing things because they seemed to have more personal meaning or relevance. As I became more familiar with some of the new literature in teacher education and began "serious researching," I began to see that ideas I had about teacher education were, in fact, also being discussed by others. And, as I gained more personal authority in what I was doing, I began to see that my ideas could have a greater influence.

We need to to try out drastically new and different approaches—not like firing a shotgun into space—but through reasoned, research-informed, resourceful, and personally meaningful ways. I am deeply opposed to uniform standards and curricula for the preparation of teachers but, rather, wish that programs could be developed with mindful consideration of broad, research-informed perspectives, and have guidelines which allow for the local, contextualized refinement of particular unifying ideologies and philosophies about teaching and teacher preparation. After all, the potency of teacher education programs rests with faculty and **their** strengths, not with a curriculum, or a program, or a set or guidelines. Somewhere we have to provide opportunities and space for the brilliance of small, creative groups of faculty to shine through.

So, I would hope that my scholarship evidences **my** movement towards the reformation of teacher education. I don't mean reformation on a global scale. What I mean is that, for example, in my own university backyard as it were, I worked, with others in our team, to develop a teacher education program that was unique. We succeeded. And like any good program it was continuously being refined. I think that the cohort graduate teacher preparation program that we articulated at the university best exemplifies my intentions and my work with preservice teachers.

A: *It seems like you have endeavored throughout your career in the academy to be "true to yourself."*

G: I've struggled with this notion a great deal. I strive **everyday**, although not always consciously, to do things that resonate, deep down, with who I am, and what I believe in. I strive for a consistency in my life as far as my professional practice is concerned. So far in my career as a university teacher educator, I've mainly succeeded, except for the time when I made a brief foray into professional development school work. (I got involved with a project which was fundamentally flawed in the manner in which we—university and school people—expected to facilitate change. There was something seriously inauthentic about our work and it was never satisfying to me.)

Being true to myself means that I can look in the mirror each day and say that I haven't "sold out" in order to obtain some level of professional security and intellectual freedom. (I really did want tenure, though! But is there freedom?) I'm not saying that I haven't had a great deal of difficulty figuring out other related things about working in the professoriate: the delicate boundary between the personal and the professional; the level of my investment in scholarly activities; the boundaries between fully investing myself in the work of teaching and drowning with the responsibilities of working with eager, capable students, for example; and, whether or not to maintain a commitment to teaching as the heart of my career.

I have not yet managed to achieve the right kind of balance between my personal and professional lives. Being a fully committed, enthusiastic, "against the grain" teacher educator is a damned hard thing to be! It's enervating. It's never ending work. There is no finite goal to reach.

A: *Why is "being true to yourself" so important to you and yet so elusive?*

G: That question gets at the heart of what it means [for me] to work in the academy. Let me explain by relating some circumstances at The University. When I went to that university, the School of Education was trying to redefine itself. Supposedly there were going to be some wonderful changes taking place in the school and in the [academic] programs. Over the last seven years, starting in 1989, nearly 20 assistant professors were hired (I think the exact figure may have been 18 or 19, some of whom do other than traditional, mainstream work). Of those people: several left voluntarily before the tenure and promotion application process; one was denied the right to continue after the third year review; two were given (as I understand) probationary periods after the third year review; one was tenured; and I was denied tenure [although I never had a formal and formative mid-term review as those hired after me]. The remainder will be eligible for tenure and promotion in the next three years or so. That's a great number of very nervous, tentative, people who, for the most part (so several have told me), are intent on "doing whatever it takes to get tenure." But they are worried. I worry, too, that despite their intentions they may not be able to be true to themselves, that they will substantially modify their interests and their work, or at least the appearance of it, to suit those in power, those who will make judgments about their status. Of course, from the implicit message in [the results of] my case, those whose area of work is squarely located in teacher education and whose perspectives are nontraditional have considerable cause for concern. Those who are most interested in programmatic and systemic reform can't afford to invest their time or energy in that work—the risks are **too** great. So, what does that say about the possibilities for sustained, informed reform measures in teacher education and beyond?

A: *It seems to me that it's almost impossible for things to really change in teacher education, especially if institutions strive to maintain the same kind of ideals in terms of scholarship and research funding, and do not invest in program development.*

G: It may be that the problem is not so much with the emphasis on research but with the **kind** of research valued, and the delicate relational balance between researching and teaching.

A: *It has been particularly interesting talking with you this way because you present a bit of a paradox. On paper, in the three domains upon which we in the academy are judged, you score pretty high. You're an incredibly productive scholar. You were very involved in your local university community and in the broader research community. You are a committed teacher. And, you are committed to teacher education reform. Yet, you were rejected by the academy. The literature on teacher education is just peppered with proposals and calls and suggestions and recommendations and analyses and so on associated with doing things differently. Yet we know that* ***not a lot*** *has changed in the last (what?) 50 years. We hear it said that the time is right now for things to be done differently, that there's a new*

generation of teacher education faculty who are ready and willing to lead teacher education institutions into the future. But from both our experiences of researching and observing, and certainly from your very direct experience, it doesn't really seem like there's a whole lot of hope. Can you comment on that?

G: Hope. Hmmmm...!

I have great difficulties with large scale change efforts. I think we need to change in small ways and in ways that are responsive to the issues and problems of particular communities. We need to place more focus on the individual, and we need to respect and value the perspectives and experiences that people bring to institutional contexts. We need to focus on and develop different kinds of relationships, whether those relationships are between individuals and institutions, or within institutions. At the same time, we need to address our concerns and issues to the larger communities. Maybe as professionals we need to engage in a lot more writing and publication for the mass media about what we do and about the problems and issues of schools, and the prospects for deep-seated changes. Somehow we have to help the community at large understand the gravity of the social condition of schools and of students and learners, the tenuous position of teachers, and that "back-to-basics" and the like are **not** the (only) responses.

We need to come to better understandings about the power structures within communities, schools, and universities. There are all kinds of pressures to maintain the status quo and those pressures are incredibly strong. I don't think we as [teacher] educators have understood the strength of those forces. We need to become more politically aware and active. One of the greatest obstacles is the governing structure of institutions. Realistically, though, I think that probably I am going to have the most influence on those few individuals I work directly with.

A: *You suggested that people have to become more knowledgeable about the power structures, and that the governing structures of institutions are in large part responsible for maintaining the status quo. How does a new person with aspirations to do things differently become more knowledgeable? How does one challenge the status quo? And what are the risks associated with that?*

G: You're talking to someone who challenged the status quo and came off second best, so you're probably not asking the right person. One could argue that I failed to see all the pitfalls and have **not** been successful at all in opposing the status quo. On the other hand, maybe I have made a difference. Maybe by the quiet and not so quiet challenges I made, I've already made a difference. Unquestionably many junior, more idealistic teacher educators are challenging the status quo by their silent, unpronounced actions. And, by and large, those people are without real decision-making power. It may be that the very tenure system is the problem within university contexts—but you might expect me to say that—although it's only a reflection of the governing structure.

I took at face value the expressed aspirations of a few people at the institution; to change, and to be progressive, and so on. Perhaps I was naive and didn't under-

stand the strength of the power holders within the school. I didn't understand who held the power. Maybe that naiveté helps to explain where I am right now. On the other hand I've always been rather apolitical in the sense that I've always tried to do what I believed I needed to do rather than act for political expediency. Maybe that was my downfall. But, of course, if I'd been like that I could have not have been true to myself.

I've become more cynical about the role of universities in promoting reforms in teaching and teacher education. Fundamentally, I believe that universities are largely conserving institutions which, for the most part, resist reforms of their own structures and processes as they preach and promote change in elementary and secondary schools, or in the field more generally. Those who move against the grain—those who engage in "non-conformist practices"—are at risk, especially those like me who tend to be less acknowledging of the power holders. Reformation of the governance structures within schools of education, and of the ways [schools of education] practice and relate to the field will not happen until there is more equality between faculty members.

I'm not terribly hopeful at this point—I'm in a dark place right now as you can imagine (and know! I am being cautious about what I say and how I say it. Give me another six months and I will probably have a much clearer, hopefully brighter, perspective!)

New Beginnings and Enduring Issues

From the overcast shadows and bleakness that comes from being in a dark place, we look for illumination through reflection and understanding. And with that understanding, we move forward. Looking back on our conversation we see several issues that bear comment with respect to the prospects and possibilities of teacher education reform, particularly in schools and faculties of education where the reward structure includes research, teaching, and professional service. We draw on some of them as a way of framing a brief concluding discussion to this article. We comment on: the values conflicts within schools of education, and between them and broader university communities; the politics of epistemology; and the reward structures in schools of education and the inherent dilemmas associated with the dualities of commitment. Each of these issues merits considerably more space than we devote here; we offer only starting points to stimulate subsequent conversation. We conclude with a brief commentary on the prospects for teacher education reform.

Values Conflicts

It is well known and documented that schools of education have been experiencing an identity conflict ever since they became members, however unwelcome, of university communities. Pulled between commitment and allegiance to the professional community and identification with and acceptance by the academic com-

munity, schools of education have been caught in an institutional tug-of-war. The professional community has lost considerable ground as the stronger forces of prestige and status have pulled schools of education closer to the university. Like wayward sailors, schools of education have been seduced by the perceived pleasures of the siren-like universities. But with the pleasures also have come confusion and uncertainty about identity, roles, rules, and conditions of the relationship.

One painful discovery has been that "There is an inverse relationship between professional prestige and the intensity of involvement with the formal education of teachers" (Lanier & Little, 1986, p. 530). The pain in this discovery lies in the values conflict it represents—a conflict apparent both within schools of education between those faculty members who align themselves with the profession and those who see themselves as theoreticians and academicians (Hazlett, 1989; Roemer & Martinello, 1982), and between schools of education as professional schools and the academy as an elite bastion of intellectual discipline (narrowly defined). Also, within schools of education and specifically related to the reform agenda, is the conflict represented by those who want change and those who do not.

The values conflicts that abound within universities and within schools and faculties of education smolder, burn, and consume the very substance of institutional missions, professional relations, and professional careers.

Politics of Epistemology

What counts as knowledge? What counts as research? What counts as scholarship? These questions, to which the academy has definitive answers, are often met with uncertainty in schools of education. Schön (1987), in his critique of the technical rationality paradigm that characterizes the intellectual pursuits of the academy, makes a metaphorical distinction between the "high ground" of theory and the "swamp" of practice that lies beyond its canons. Citing Veblen (1918/1962) in an earlier work, Schön (1983) describes the relationship between the universities ("the higher schools") and the professional schools ("the lower schools") as one of "separation and exchange."

> Quite simply, the professions are to give their practical problems to the university, and the university, the unique source of research, is to give back to the profession the new scientific knowledge which it will be their business to apply and test. Under no conditions are the technical men [sic] of the lower schools to be allowed into the university. (p. 36)

His analogy and explanation identify both the hierarchical relationship between schools of education and the university, and the political basis for epistemologically-based disputes.

One of the explanations given for the lack of acceptance of schools of education by the academy is the practical orientation of many of its faculty members (see *e.g.*, Lanier & Little, 1986; Raths, Katz, & McAninch, 1989). The key to acceptance by

the academy is the adoption of its values, priorities, and orientations with respect to knowledge. The further one's work is removed from the field (or the swamp) and located on the high ground, the more highly regarded and valued it is. To declare oneself as having a practically oriented research agenda, especially one that is also methodologically "swampy" (*i.e.*, qualitative in perspective), can be political suicide for someone with no security in a research-intensive institution.

Universities tend to base their status and reputations on the construction of academic knowledge which is judged by standards of abstraction and obscurity. According to Myers (1995), abstraction and obscurity are built-in safety features that help to conserve academic reputations. To use Schön's analogy again, the higher the ground, the safer. Practical knowledge—knowledge that has a direct association with practice—on the other hand, is subject to scrutiny by those outside the academic community. Knowledge thus defined is brought down from the high ground to the swamp—not a comfortable place either for academics or academic institutions.

Faculty members in schools of education—those whose perspectives and agenda reside in the swamp of practice, and especially those who engage in self-study—place the institution at risk (see, also, Myers, 1995). Not only do they lay bare for examination knowledge in its applied form, they also have at the center of their agenda the reconstruction and rearticulation of what knowledge is. It is not in the best interests of the academy (and those who align themselves with the academy) to support such an agenda.

Reward Structures

Directly related to both of the previous discussions is the issue of the reward structures within schools of education. What is rewarded? Plain and simple: publications; the more the better, of a particular perspective, style, or genre, and in prestigious refereed journals. As Clifford and Guthrie (1988) observe:

> Education faculty quickly come to understand which research and publication efforts "count" and which do not.... The result is that education faculty veer away from professionally demanding activities and toward those understood and hence rewarded in academic departments. (p. 337)

For untenured faculty, in particular, the weight of the pressure to publish and carry out the kind of work rewarded by the university, often at the expense of other aspirations, is akin to the burden of Atlas (see, also, Ducharme, 1993; Knowles & Cole, 1994; Mager & Myers, 1983). Beginning teacher educators with high ideals, enthusiasm, and commitment to change make considerable time and energy commitments to activities other than writing for publication. As one beginning teacher educator commented:

> Time to write?! We [she and the other beginning professors in her institution] are so busy running the place—sitting on committees and doing all the "shit work" that no one else wants to do—and handling incredibly heavy teaching loads, as well as

> fighting to make some changes, that finding time to write is like looking for a needle in a haystack. (Anonymous personal communication to Ardra Cole, February, 1996)

Program reform is time and energy consuming, and activities associated with such efforts are not valued according to the reward structure of the university. As Burch (1989) notes, "Academic reputations are rarely made as a result of good teaching or professional service" (p. 88). Beginning professors, whose security within the institution depends on being rewarded for certain contributions, are at great risk when they make commitments outside the realm of what is deemed meritorious. Young and Bartel (1996), in a case study analysis of **one** attempt at programmatic reform in teacher education, identify the reward system in higher education as one of the key tensions working against thoughtful change, especially for junior faculty.

Unless and until the reward structures in schools of education are realigned to more appropriately reflect the dual mandate of such schools, beginning teacher educators, especially those committed to challenging the status quo, are as endangered as lambs at the sacrificial alter.

Prospects for Reform in Teacher Education: Is There Hope?

The notion of beginning teacher educators as change agents, which is espoused in many reform prescriptions, seems somewhat hollow to us. Under current institutional conditions, recruiting or encouraging those least powerful and most vulnerable individuals as instruments of change seems to hold more promise for preserving than changing the status quo, and for destroying rather than promoting their careers.

The individual and institutional forces to maintain the status quo in teacher education are powerful. Those who want change seem powerless to effect it either because of their low status within schools of education and the concomitant risks associated with their involvement, or because of resistance within the broader university community and the lack of power of schools of education as institutions to overcome such resistance. The following assessment captures the situation:

> We ironically find that at the heart of the national reports on education which have been issued in recent years, teacher education is fingered most frequently as the primary cause of the so-called crisis of contemporary public education. Strange, isn't it, that while teacher educators do not possess the power to carry out their charge with effectiveness, they have apparently succeeded in bringing down the roof of public education on everyone's head. One almost wishes it were true—that we in teacher education did have such power. (Jones, 1986, p.4)

How much more do we need to know about reform implementation before substantial and systemic reform can actually happen? Numerous extensive analyses exist of calls, proposals, and strategies for educational reform (see *e.g.*, Blackwell, 1996; Bush, 1987; Clark, 1993; Cornbleth, 1986; Cuban, 1990; Fullan with Stiegelbauer, 1991; Holmes, 1995; Kettlewell, 1996; Portman, 1993; Sarason,

1990). For the most part, however, it seems that only lip service is paid to the idea of improving schools for students and teachers, and improving the ways in which teachers are prepared. It is not as if reformers have to blindly forge ahead with no knowledge of potential obstacles and barriers; yet, we sense that, as the Holmes Group (1995) suggests, there is little collective will to change the system. The following example illustrates Cornbleth's (1986) notion of the legitimating ritual in which schools of education engage in order to assuage public concern and create an illusion of change while preserving the status quo.

In the 1990 survey conducted as part of the Research About Teacher Education project (RATE V), deans and chairs in 65 schools of education in the United States of America responded to, among other things, questionnaire items about reform which were chosen from proposals by the Holmes Group (1986), Carnegie Forum (1986), and the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (1985). The reform strategy most agreed upon as the most important by deans across all levels of institutions was the implementation of rigorous admission standards. Strategies involving changes such as extending preparation programs or organizing students into cohort groups were considered least important, even by those deans in schools of education that had made a formal commitment to the Holmes agenda.

Responses to questions about the actual implementation of reform strategies revealed similar results. That is, most activity had taken place with respect to the implementation of rigorous admissions standards (over 90 percent of deans reported having such standards implemented) and least attention had been paid to extending preparation programs and organizing students into cohort groups. What is particularly interesting about this information is that the reform most implemented is one that, in fact, serves to preserve the status quo of higher education institutions. By raising academic standards for admission, schools of education are giving priority to prospective teachers who have been highly academically successful and who, by virtue of their academic success, are likely to be easily socialized to the norms of the academy. They are less likely to challenge traditional attitudes and practices in schools and more likely to resist efforts by teacher educators to engage in alternative forms of teaching and learning. And, these prospective teachers are likely to bear little resemblance, in terms of academic, social, experiential, and ethnic background, to many of the students they will teach. Thus, what appears on the surface as a strategy for reforming teacher education could very well be one intended to preserve it.

Notes

1. See the final article (Knowles & Cole, pp. 169-180) for a revisitation of this earlier work in light of the collection of articles presented in this issue of *Teacher Education Quarterly*.

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Editor's Comment:

Ardra L. Cole's interview of J. Gary Knowles and their related analysis reveals much of significance about the context in which beginning professors of teacher education must operate. It points to the problems of achieving appropriate balance between the teaching, service, and research expectations of the university and one's own standards for professional activity. It examines critically the manner in which institutions of higher education too often fail to communicate expectations and recognize faculty contributions that reflect personal, heartfelt commitments to how education should be rather than how it already is.

It happens that the major research university that rejected Gary for tenure is my alma mater*; I hold three degrees from The University and I regularly support its School of Education as a loyal alumnus. While I am not familiar with the specific evaluation that found Gary wanting, I know the context well. During the last two decades that School of Education has fought for its very life against a university administration that, in pursuit of "smaller is better," was seeking programs that might be eliminated. A valient campaign by education faculty and alumni helped save the School and its teacher education programs, but significant damage was done to both the School's national reputation and faculty morale. A major rebuilding effort followed with new support from the administration and new leadership at the School; a combination of retirements and the hiring of promising new faculty, including Gary, suggested a brighter future. The new goal was to foster scholarship that would be recognized nationwide and worldwide.*

Again the institutional context is critical. The University in question has a large and highly-respected department of psychology, and for several decades there has been a combined program in education and psychology that has influenced the nature and direction of scholarship in the School of Education. Not surprisingly,

this influence has heightened during these recent years of concern over the School's survival. The emphasis during the rebuilding period has been on traditional research, publication in journals recognized by quantitative scholars, and presentations at the American Educational Research Association and similar venues. Although it depends on how you keep score, many feel that the game has been won. The School's reputation has soared, based on such elite criteria as how many publications, presentations, and citations faculty achieve in the correct journals and on the correct programs.

But at what cost? When I was a graduate student in social foundations of education at the School, my field was one of the strongest among the faculty, balanced nicely with educational psychology, administration, and other concentrations. Today there are a few individual faculty in other fields, but no concentrations of scholarship and influence to counterbalance the dominance of the quantitative paradigm of the psychologists. Thus, it is easy to understand why Gary was a victim of such imbalance. His teaching, service, and scholarship—which in my view are of both high quality and high quantity—is qualitative in orientation, foundational in nature, and self-proclaimed as "against the grain." He simply speaks a different language from his former colleagues.

As Ardra and Gary illustrate in this article, and their collaborators reinforce in the other articles in this issue, tensions exist at many levels for beginning faculty in teacher education. Schools and colleges of education traditionally exist as second-class citizens on university campuses, and all education faculty must fight to justify themselves in a research-oriented climate despite the fact that they are in a field where teaching and service should have at least equal standing. Within those schools and colleges of education, the teacher education faculty reside in a similar second-class position—closer to the teaching and service functions related to the public schools, and thus more suspect in the research-oriented climate of the larger university. Add to these realities the recent history of my alma mater*, and it is clear that the deck was stacked against Gary several times over.*

To me this is a singular tragedy for all concerned. Gary must search for a new venue in which to continue his productive career. His efforts at teacher education reform have been lost at my alma mater*. The paradigmatic imbalance of the School has been heightened. Allow me a rough metaphor. Ours is a pluralistic society, one in which multicultural and multilingual understandings are increasingly necessary and significant. The importance of such pluralism in educational programs and in the preparation of educational personnel is increasingly stressed. Yet it would appear that the faculty at my* alma mater *can speak but one language. Those of us who care about that university and that School of Education, and in a larger sense all of professional education, have yet another aspect of educational reform that we must place on our agenda.*

—Alan H. Jones, Editor and Publisher,
Teacher Education Quarterly