

Beyond the Call: Preserving Reflection in the Preparation of “Highly Qualified” Teachers

By Funmi A. Amobi

Introduction

Under the terms of NCLB, to be highly qualified, teachers must: hold at least a bachelor's degree from a four-year institution; hold full state certification; and demonstrate competence in their subject area. (U.S. Department of Education, 2003, p. 4)

Excellent teachers do not emerge full blown at graduation. . . . Instead, teachers are always in the process of ‘becoming.’ Given the dynamics of their work, they need to continuously rediscover who they are and what they stand for . . . through deep reflection about their craft. (Nieto, 2003, p. 395-396)

Taken together, the two assertions above reflect the dilemma in teacher education today. Many teacher education programs are working at a feverish pitch to ensure that their graduates are considered ‘highly qualified’ in light of the No Child Left Behind legislation, which reduces teacher competency to proof of subject matter knowledge as demonstrated by passing a state test and completing requisite number of courses in the content area. There is nothing wrong in this requirement by itself. The concern is with the further consequences to which it might portend in teacher education programming. Every one agrees that teachers must know what they teach and develop the competency to teach it. However, as illustrated by the second statement, there is more to high-quality

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teaching than subject-matter knowledge and possession of “best practices”. In the zeal to answer the call of the mandate to prepare highly-qualified teachers as stipulated, teacher education programs in fact, teacher educators may find themselves hard pressed to leave behind a quintessential element that breathes life to high-quality teaching: the engagement of preservice teachers in continual reflection on the interplay of self, subject and students in the fabric of teaching.

Teaching is hard work and reflection on teaching is also hard work. When the focus is on subject-matter knowledge, competencies, and tests, there may be an ill-advised tendency to trade one hard work for another. Teacher educators may focus on the tools to survive in the classroom and meet the requirements for the label “highly-qualified teacher” without simultaneously instilling the tools for self-renewing growth and reflective thinking. This author recommends that teacher educators not back down in their efforts to make novice teachers reflective as well as effective. We must continue to define up the meaning of highly qualified, instead of embracing and working within the parameters of a reductionist rendition of it. We should continue to move neophytes beyond mere competence in practice to excellence in the profession. Our immediate charge is to prepare them to teach; our enduring mission is to empower them to personalize and own the craft of teaching. The NCLB call should not delineate our mission rather, it should be subsumed in it.

The Mission of Teacher Education: *Preparing Highly Qualified Teachers or Promoting High Quality Teaching?*

When Goodlad (1990) proclaimed teacher education “a neglected enterprise” (p. 188), the picture portrayed was that of heroic teacher education programs striving mightily to help students attain the goal of becoming teachers against the odds of being treated as the poor cousin in funding priorities in academe. The picture has grown dimmer since then. Nowadays, remarks that depict teacher education, indeed the school of education, as “the least prestigious unit on campus” are rife (Lehman, 2003, p. 36). Associated with these remarks are headline-grabbing research findings such as Steiner and Rozen’s (Keller, 2003) that criticize education schools “for their low standards and tight control on entry into teaching” (p. 8). Conclusions drawn from this finding and others fuel the debate of whether teacher education programs matter in the preparation of effective teachers. The U.S. Secretary of Education Annual Report on Teacher Quality reported that: “there is little evidence that education course work leads to improved student achievement” (U.S. Department of Education, 2002, p. 19). What has been left out in the second-guessing of the capability of the teacher education enterprise to produce highly-qualified teachers for the nation’s schools is the attention to the artistry and practice of teaching. When teacher educators acquiesce to the pressure of making teachers to order, rather than ensuring the

development of the sustainable, ever maturing and self-renewing growth that high-quality teaching entails, they miss the major point of their mission.

Shifting the Focus to Teaching

Hiebert, Gallimore and Stigler (2003) articulated the need to promote high-quality teaching:

To achieve small and continuing improvement in the average classroom requires a major shift in the educators' thinking-from *teachers to teaching*. Rather than focusing only on evaluating the quality of teachers, the education community must begin examining the quality of teaching. (p. 56)

To do this, they suggested, teachers open their classroom doors to allow their peers to use their lessons as data for examining and discussing the complexity of teaching. Eisner's (2002) vision of the kind of schools we need included references to making teaching a professionally public process where teachers would have access to other teachers' classrooms. For example, videotaped teaching episodes could enhance teachers' ability to "take the practice of teaching apart" as a means for understanding the complexity of the teaching process (p. 579). The emphasis in Eisner's vision as it pertains to those who teach is not just on their qualifications, but on the work of teaching. Nieto asserted that reforms in education that "focus on recruiting 'highly qualified teachers' and on developing 'best practices' as antidotes to ... student underachievement" will not solve the problem in the profession (p. 396). Sustained discourse with an inquiry group of excellent teachers on why they remained in the profession led Nieto to conclude that teaching was more than specific techniques and strategies. In a similar study that was based on interviews with 12 outstanding teachers, Williams (2003) attributed the enduring renewal of the teachers to "sparks that leap between the creative art of teaching and heart-to-heart connections with others" (p. 74).

The ideas of the foregoing proponents of a paradigm shift to emphasis on highly-qualified teaching subsumed two interrelated points of view: (a) the continuing and unending nature of the process of learning to teach well, and (b) the quintessential need for reflection as the lighthouse for enlightening the path to ever-maturing and self-renewing growth in teaching. These viewpoints depict teaching as a complex and ever-culminating craft. As Ornstein (1995) put it, "Good teaching is not easily defined, even with all its scientific procedures and quantifiable data..." (p. 14). Going beyond the call would demand that teacher education programs better serve novice teachers and their future students by infusing in them what Freire (1998) described as constant and open curiosity about teaching that imbues teachers with the mindset and capability to relearn and rethink "something as it is being taught" (p. 17). This, proclaimed Freire, is real teacher empowerment, not over-compliance with and dependence on prepackaged teaching tools.

The conclusion from the preceding is this: teacher educators must go beyond

the call of training teachers to meet specified induction requirements. This is not another either/or argument: Should teacher education focus more on the content knowledge and pedagogical skills or the reflective skills of neophytes? The answer to a higher call in teacher education demands that we prepare novices to implement “best practices” in an intellectual atmosphere that is infused with and nurtured by reflective thought on teaching.

In the Eye of the Beholder:

Viewpoints about Reflection in Teacher Education

Teacher education programs and teacher educators have always proclaimed reflection as the centerpiece of their enterprise. The pioneering ideas of Dewey (1933/1998), Schön (1987) and others have become the wellspring that provides intellectual and practical energy to the paradigm of reflection espoused in teacher education programming. However, the popularity of the term has increased variability in its meaning, interpretation and application (Sparks-Langer; Fendler, 2003). While there is an agreement on the need for reflection in teaching, what reflection looks like in action is “in the eye of the beholder” (Sparks-Langer, p. 147). It seems as if proponents of reflective practice in teacher education have used the pioneering ideas of Dewey and Schon as launching pads for giving their interpretations and practices of the concept a life of its own. For the same reason, Rodgers (2002) contended that by “becoming everything to everybody” reflection has lost its meaning. (p. 843). Therefore, she called for clarity in the meaning of teacher reflection in order that “it might be taught, learned, assessed, discussed, and researched, and evolve in both meaning and usefulness” (p. 844).

An example of the diversity of interpretation of reflection is conveyed in the dichotomy symbolized by types and differentiated stages of reflection. The main idea of the type or approach orientation to teacher reflection is that reflective action in teacher education is a multifaceted, kaleidoscopic phenomenon in which the various aspects reinforce each other. Valli (1997) described five types of teacher reflection: technical, in- and on-action, deliberative, personalistic, and critical reflection. After pointing out the limitations of each approach, Valli concluded that “the various approaches should be used in combination with each other. Each balances the others’ deficits” (p. 81). Although, She did, however, suggest that on some educational issues, one approach might be more suitable than another.

In contrast, the differentiated-stage concept of reflection suggests a hierarchical ordering of various modes of reflection with focus on the superiority of one practice of reflection over another. Van Manen (1977) described three progressions of reflectivity, ranging from low, technical rationality to high, critical reflection. Using Van Manen’s taxonomy, Pultorak (1993) and Collier (1999) analyzed three categories of novice teachers’ reflective thought. Smyth (1989) presented a hierarchy of reflection that depicted description as a low level of reflectivity, the primitive

level in the progression to the informing and confronting stages that lead to the desirable reconstructing level of reflection.

The two types of reflection in teacher education represent two points of view: (1) reflection consists of various mutually reinforcing parts, and (2) there are primitive and superior modes of reflective thinking. The proponents of the second viewpoint differentiate between technical reflection, which pertains to description of a teaching event, and critical (or social reconstructionist) reflection, which contextualizes teaching in the larger social, political and social issues.

Given these varied and seemingly opposing interpretations of reflection in teacher education, the questions then become: (a) What should be the rationale for a renewed commitment to preserving reflection in teacher education? (b) What should be a unifying definition of reflection to guide and operationalize the renewed commitment? and (c) How could some of the existing practices of reflection in teacher education be purposefully enhanced to empower novice teachers to teach reflectively?

Conceptual Framework for a Unifying Purpose and Practice of Reflection

Two ideas triggered the intellectual impetus for a renewed commitment to reflection and a shift in focus from preparing highly-qualified teachers to enabling the development of high-quality, self-renewing teaching. The first idea was Rodgers' (2002) characterization of Dewey's concept of reflection as a meaning-making process. Korthagen and Kessels' (1999) conception of realistic teacher education provided the second impetus.

According to Rodgers' interpretation of Dewey's notion of reflective thinking, meaning-making, which is the primary function of reflection, begins with experience. The two elements that make an experience educative are interaction and continuity. Interaction with another person or event brings about change, a sense of disequilibrium that causes one to make sense of the experience. Continuity is closely linked with interaction: it entails the accumulation of meanings from past experiences that are brought to bear on the meaning-making of a new experience. The sources of information for meaning-making of experiences are not limited to the lessons gleaned from past experience; they include one's knowledge about the world and the knowledge of more knowledgeable others. Teaching is a meaning-making experience; therefore, teacher reflection requires the capability:

to formulate the "relationships and continuities" among the elements of an experience, between that experience and other experiences, between that experience and the knowledge that one carries, and between that knowledge and the knowledge produced by thinkers other than oneself. (Rodgers, 2002, p. 848)

This is why Rodgers used the term "thinking to learn" to explicate the process of teacher reflection. A reflective teacher has the ability to be present in the classroom and to perceive the impact of his or her interactions on the students' learning

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experience. In other words, the teacher sequences teaching actions to draw out meanings or facts of classroom life. From this, he or she creates a theory to guide practice. The theory that the teacher creates at any time is informed by meanings and theories formulated in the past, and it informs future theories. Rodgers mentioned that at anytime when a theory does not provide solution to a situation or experience, that theory is either revised or done away with, “and a new theory is born” (p.849).

Rodgers’ representation of meaning-making and theory formation as the primary functions of teacher reflection was advanced and illuminated by Korthagen and Kessels’ (1999) model of realistic teacher education. They contended that in the reality of classroom life, where teachers are often expected to take quick and concrete actions on complex situations, their ensuing actions are not always guided by *episteme*, “knowledge that is based on research and . . . characterized as theory with a big ‘T’ . In such instances, teachers sometimes resort to *phronesis*, knowledge that is more “perceptual than conceptual—“theory with a small ‘t’ (p. 7) . Realistic teacher education, as opposed to the traditional ‘application-of-theory’ model entails an integrative framework that connects *episteme*—created procedural knowledge of teaching—with *phronesis*—the situation-specific knowledge of teaching created or discovered by the student teacher. Korthagen and Kessels used the term *Gestalts* to describe the unity of feelings, values, needs, meanings and behavioral predispositions that goes on inside the teacher. The quick and concrete actions that teachers take in some teaching situations are rooted in Gestalts.

Through facilitating novice teachers’ reflection on the factors that guide their actions in concrete teaching situations, teacher educators can help them become cognizant about the elements that comprise the Gestalts of these situations. Continuing analysis of Gestalts and the examination of the relationships between component elements can lead to development of schema, a body of perceptual knowledge that is connected to specific situations, in other words, *phronesis*. Further reflection on schema-level knowledge can procure a logical ordering of elements and relations, the development of definitions and propositions within the schema leading to the theory level. According to Korthagen and Kessel (1999), theory-level knowledge shows characteristics of *episteme*. This is meant to say that through reflection, knowledge on the schema or theory level can become crystallized and evident to the teacher to the point that it is applied intuitively. As Korthagen and Kessel put it, “It is as if the whole schema and theory has been reduced to one Gestalt” (p. 10). Thus they used the term, *level reduction*, to depict this stage in the process.

That preservice teachers have preconceptions about learning and teaching that conflict with the theories taught in teacher education is widely-acknowledged in teacher education literature. Rodgers (2002) and Korthagen and Kessels (1999) have provided a conceptual framework that operationalizes reflection as a means not only of uncovering these preconceptions, but also of analyzing and reducing them to workable localized theories of teaching. More important is the notion that *phronesis*, the personal meaning and theory-building that teachers make about their

teaching actions as they impact student learning, can and should coexist with episteme. Therefore, a meaning-making, theory-building realistic approach offers a useful rationale for balanced teacher education programming in an educational climate that is suffused with the conception of teacher knowledge as a linear and quantifiable entity, whereas knowledge about teaching is more than what is on the script. If teacher educators dare to embrace phronesis as an important knowledge base for teacher education, much of this unscripted knowledge of teaching can become attainable. To do this, we need to consider a unifying definition of reflection to guide practice.

Unifying Definition of Reflection

Rodgers (2002) and Korthagen and Kessels' (1999) perspectives on teacher reflection evoked a rallying definition that is a function of two interrelated conceptions of reflection. According to Dewey (1933/1998), the two operatives of reflection are *sequence* and *con-sequence*, which means that reflective thought is a chain of logical ordering of an idea or event in which the units of thought are cumulatively linked together. Each phase in the chain predicts the next phase. Korthagen and Wubbels (1995) defined reflection as "a mental process of structuring or restructuring an experience, a problem or existing knowledge or insights" (p. 55). Dewey's and Korthagen and Wubbels' conceptions of teacher reflection subsume framing (*sequencing*) a teaching action or experience to uncover the Gestalts and meanings of the situation, and reframing the consequences of the action to develop schema and theories of engagement for other teaching situations. This rendition of reflection positions the student teacher not just as a consumer but also as a co-constructor of the knowledge of and about teaching. In light of the preceding rationale for a renewed commitment to preserving reflection in the education of novice teachers and given a unifying definition to guide the commitment, the question then becomes: How could teacher educators enhance their existing practices of facilitating novice teachers' reflection on teaching?

Strengthening Existing Practices of Reflection

Two of the most widely used practices of eliciting reflection from preservice teachers are writing assignments and reflective analysis of teaching actions in on-campus or natural classroom settings. These two practices fit into Cruickshank and Metcalf's (1990) delineation of the two common purposes of reflective teaching in teacher education as engaging teachers to become thoughtful about the educational context and focusing teachers' thoughts on teaching. The two purposes are interrelated: thoughtfulness about the educational context helps preservice teachers bring to bear the ideas of more knowledgeable others on their thoughts on teaching. With regard to the purposes, the questions are: (a) how can teacher educators renew existing reflective- thinking practice to elicit preservice teachers'

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thoughtfulness on the educational context? and (b) how can teacher educators renew existing reflective practices to help preservice teachers develop the skills of uncovering the Gestalts or meanings of their teaching actions, and ‘con-sequencing’ these Gestalts into self-evident theories of teaching? In other words, how should we refashion existing practices to bridge the gap between epistemic and phronesis knowledge of teaching?

Writing Assignments

Although acknowledged as popular practices for engaging preservice teachers in reflection on their teaching actions, journaling and autobiographical narratives have been criticized for inducing emotion-laden, ritualistic confessionals from students (Brookfield, 1995; Fendler, 2003). While Fendler wondered, “What does a teacher have no right to know about a student” (p. 22), Brookfield depicted the counterproductive use of journals and autobiographies as follows:

Students who sense that their teacher is a strong advocate of experiential methods may pick up the implicit message that good students reveal dramatic private episodes in their lives. . . . Students who don’t have anything painful. . . or exciting to confess may start to think that their journal falls short. Not being able to produce revelations of sufficient intensity, they may decide to invent some (p. 13)

As illustrated below, renewing the existing practice of using writing as a medium for eliciting and upgrading student reflection will require: (a) linking journal and narrative assignments to specific learning contexts and content, and providing provocative questions or guidelines to focus novice teachers’ reflection on specified context and content; (b) presenting opportunities and deliberate teaching strategies to help preservice teachers write reflectively about the educational context; (c) providing opportunities for preservice teachers to illustrate teaching narratives with graphic representations, and facilitating opportunities for novice teachers to share and exchange experiential knowledge gained through the reflective process; and (d) providing relevant prompts to elicit preservice teachers’ meaning-making of their teaching actions.

Linking writing assignments with content and context. Trotman and Kerr (2001) reported an innovative practice designed to help secondary-education preservice teachers integrate knowledge acquired through personal history and experience with knowledge acquired from the sociological and psychological studies of adolescence. In this instance, the epistemic knowledge derived from the study of adolescence provided the context for the production of perceptual knowledge (phronesis). In addition, by asking students to focus autobiographies on a course reading, concept or a point made in lectures, Trotman and Kerr created a linkage between students’ reflective writing and the content of the course. Moreover, to move preservice teachers toward the goal of perspective transformation, Trotman and Kerr provided three levels of journal writing to streamline their

students' reflective output: description of a focusing idea, exploration of the connection between the focusing idea and the preservice teacher's life history, and speculation about the implication of their new knowledge and awareness on their work as teachers.

***Presenting Deliberate Opportunities and Teaching Strategies
To Promote Reflective Writing***

Spalding and Wilson (2002) reported that initially reflection was a "mysterious concept" to their students in a graduate level secondary teacher education program. To demystify reflection and give students ownership of the use of reflection as a tool for personal and professional development as prospective teachers, the teacher educators identified specific strategies for eliciting reflective writing from the students in the two cohorts that they taught. The strategies encompassed three elements: modeling, direct instruction, and feedback. First, Spalding and Wilson used a literary model in the form of an essay ("In case you ever want to go home again," by Barbara Kingsolver, 1995) to illustrate the difference between narrating an event and reflecting on it. They engaged students in identifying passages from the essay that portrayed characteristics of narrative and those that were reflective. This initial activity was aimed at stimulating "students' thinking about what is or not reflection" (p. 1399). Then, Spalding and Wilson provided explicit instruction on their chosen framework of reflection: Valli's (1997) description of five types of reflection, namely, technical, in- and on-action, deliberative, personalistic, and critical. Omitting the most descriptive technical reflection, the teacher educators encouraged students to feature examples of all the other different types of reflection in their weekly reflections over the course of the semester. Feedback to students' reflections consisted of positive comments, questions posed to provoke elaboration and further reflection, and the teacher educators' expressions of personal connection to the content of students' journal entries. Beyond these agreed-upon methods, the teacher educators' feedback was idiosyncratic. One of them labeled journal passages with the first letter of the type of reflection depicted in the passages, for example D for deliberative reflection. The same instructor also required students to self-analyze their journal entries before submitting them, so that she could assess the resonance or dissonance in her and students' interpretations of the types of reflection. The other teacher educator encouraged students to use other forms of creative writing, such as poetry or satire, as vehicles for communicating their reflection.

Spalding and Wilson (2002) analyzed the reflective writings of four of the students and reported that they showed growth in reflection over the course of the semester. They attributed this outcome to modeling the difference between narrative and reflection and the direct teaching of Valli's typology. A quote from an interview with one of the case -study participants underscored this point:

I used to think of reflection as just writing down what you did, but now I know that's

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different. Now I know that you think on what you did... you evaluate that... and then you try to think of ways to change that, try to think of ways you can better that. (p. 1404)

Moreover, Spalding and Wilson found that all four case-study students acknowledged that instructor feedback positively reinforced their ability to become more reflective. An illustrative comment from a student was:

It really got me because I am a student teacher and you are a very experienced teacher and yet in a lot of your comments you wrote: "I relate to what you are writing. I faced the same thing".... I felt like not only was I... reflecting to you, but you were reflecting back to me. And when you would do that it made me feel better because I figure if an experienced person can have these doubts... it's okay for me to have them, too. (p. 1415)

Spalding and Wilson's conclusion was obvious: teacher educators must deliberately teach reflection if they want students to reflect, not just simply assign reflective writing assignments.

Combination of Written Narratives and Graphic Representations

Orland (2000) used line drawing as a tool for evoking teachers' personal perspectives on their professional development and teaching. The participants, 30 veteran and 25 student teachers, were first asked to draw a line or lines that depicted "lived and felt experiences" about teaching, followed by a brief descriptive explanation of the significance of the graphic representations. Orland concluded that the activity provided an opportunity for participants to reflect on their teaching and to interpret their teaching experiences in a holistic manner. Moreover, Orland reported that participants characterized the reflective thinking activity as promoting creativity, deep introspection, and as helping them to see teaching as a continuum and to express their thoughts in a "simple, non-verbal and very personalised [sic] way" (p. 203).

The participants in Orland's study shared their graphic representations and annotations with their peers. The sharing sessions promoted collaborative reflection through explaining graphic representations to peers and responding to their peers' representations. The culminating effect of drawing lines to frame and reconstruct personal perspectives of teaching experiences and engaging in collaborative reflection with peers about these experiences was that the activity remained vivid in the minds of participants several months later. Further, Orland reported that not only did the collaborative discussion of lines promote introspection, it also provoked interest and more active response in a few participants who found the activity daunting initially.

Reflection on the Sequence and Consequence of Teaching Actions

While Orland's study encompassed preservice and inservice teachers' reflections on their teaching experiences, the focus of reflection on teaching actions is on one lesson incident. Author (2005) contended that on-campus peer-teaching

exercises, also known as microteaching, should be reconfigured to accommodate simultaneously teaching preservice teachers to perform effective teaching and to reflect on their emergent teaching actions. At present, such exercises are operationalized to assess the performance of specified best practices of teaching first and foremost, with the consideration of reflection on teaching in a distant second place. A reconfiguration of peer-teaching activities to promote reflection would consist of eliciting preservice teachers' reflectivity on teaching actions through the use of reflective prompts such as, "What did you intend to do in this lesson? What did you do? What would you do differently if you were to teach the lesson again?" The major findings that emanated from Author's study of the reflectivity patterns that characterized preservice teachers' microteaching reflections underscored the need for continuing analysis of the reflective outputs that these queries produce. In that study, out of a participant pool of 31 secondary-education preservice teachers, only 11 participants attained the desired affirmative and/or self-critique kinds of *confronting* reflectivity needed to procure productive restructuring of teaching actions. Providing deliberate and guided opportunities for preservice teachers to reflect on the sequence and consequences of their emergent teaching actions in this way is a powerful means of helping them uncover their phronesis of teaching.

Several conclusions emerge from the foregoing. First, the flaw in the use of writing assignments as a vehicle for eliciting and promoting teacher reflection is not inherent in the approach itself, but it is a function of how it is used or misused. Second, when used correctly as illustrated by the examples above, writing assignments offer valuable benefits for reflection because they function as permanent records for preserving thoughts and experiences; they aid in the externalization of internal dialogue; and they provide access to students' thinking and learning. Third, reflective writing assignments are not all same thing, meaning that there are multidimensional ways of reflection as illustrated by Spalding and Wilson's (2002) use of Valli's (1997) typology as a framework for helping students reflect in different ways. Also, there are different creative kinds of reflection for example Orland's (2000) use of line drawing, writing poetry, using metaphors or satire and so on. The use of these nonrational media of communicating reflection will provide preservice teachers with opportunities to develop more elaborate Gestalts for teaching while remaining in their own comfort zones. But, whatever methods or approaches that teacher educators choose to employ to elicit neophytes' reflections, the crucial matter is that the ability to reflect should not be assumed: it must be taught. Journaling for the purpose of uncovering one's Gestalts and meaning-making for teaching is not in the same genre as generic journal-keeping.

Implications

Once again, we, teacher educators have been challenged to justify the impact of our enterprise for preparing teachers to fit certain specifications. The natural

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response is to reassess our work in terms of the stated mandate and continue to do more of the same—more English courses, more mathematics, more reading, more pedagogy, and so on. Emphasis on more may proffer our teacher education graduates the tools to teach for a day, but will it give them the self-renewing tools to continuously grow in their teaching for a professional lifetime? The power of self-renewing growth resides in a teacher's ability to think deeply about teaching in ways that produce new insights for improved action. The capability to do productive, deep introspection on teaching must be deliberately taught. Teacher educators need to rethink their approaches for inculcating reflective practice in novice teachers and develop sound strategies for tracking the performance of reflective teaching. As Spalding and Wilson (2002) rightly emphasized, our students will not become reflective just because we extol the value of reflection to them and ask them to do reflective writing assignments.

It is critical that we deliberately teach them the skills of making meanings of their experiences in educational contexts and while teaching simultaneously, as we teach them the competencies for effective teaching. Even more effective than direct teaching is the way we model our own reflectivity in front of novice teachers during class discourses and as we provide feedback on student work. In other words, getting preservice teachers to uncover their Gestalts for the purpose of developing usable, localized theories of the educational contexts and of teaching must be modeled. When we make the paradigm shift to this perspective of teacher education, it should become clear that while the NCLB mandate should be a given in any teacher education program, the tough part is imbuing novice teachers with the professional reflective capability that would span their teaching career lifelong.

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