Images Revisited:
Examining Preservice Teachers' Ideas about Teaching

By Marilyn Maxson & Robin Sindelar

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Over the past few years, researchers have begun to explore how teachers conceptualize the process of teaching (Kagan, 1992; Weinstein, 1989; Zeichner, Tabachnick, & Densmore, 1987). This research examines the "implicit theories" teachers bring into the classroom. Much of the research assumes that "a teacher's cognitive and other behaviors are guided by and make sense in relation to a personally held system of beliefs, values, and principles" that guide the act of teaching (Clark & Peterson, 1986, p. 287). By examining patterns in teachers' ideas about what constitutes teaching, implicit assumptions about teaching can be made explicit.

The purpose of this study was to identify the images, ideas, and knowledge that entry-level students bring with them as they begin their work in an elementary teacher education program. In addition, the study sought to determine how and if those

images changed as a result of coursework designed to challenge and clarify those images. Questions used to guide this study include: How did course content change the way students viewed their roles as teachers? What did students view as necessary to be taught/learned by their prospective pupils? How do students' ideas about teaching change as they are asked to reconsider them in light of new learning?

Research articles on teacher education emphasize the need to focus on the beliefs that beginning teacher education students bring with them to teacher preparation programs. Researchers and theorists argue that an understanding of the belief systems, cognition, and mental processes of students offers teacher educators insights into the ways that students internalize and practice what they learn (Calderhead & Robson, 1991; Brookhart & Freeman, 1992; Fenstermacher, 1979; Pajares, 1992).

In her review of the learning-to-teach research, Dona M. Kagan (1992) found that preservice teachers, without a strong image of self as a teacher, encountered more difficulties in practica experiences and were more likely to discard knowledge encountered in their teacher education programs than those with strong images. Kagan (1992) suggests that for growth to occur in preservice teachers, "initial images must be clearly defined and only after novices resolve their images of self as teacher can they begin to turn their focus outwards and concentrate on what students are learning" (p. 147). The implication that the establishment of a strong image of self as teacher may be a developmental necessity in a student's acquisition of teaching skills adds another dimension to the call for more attention to teacher beliefs' research. Other studies by Andrea M. Guillaume and Gwen L. Rudney (1993), Sandra Hollingsworth (1989), and Dan C. Lortie (1975) suggest that unexplored entering beliefs may be responsible for the perpetuation of antiquated and ineffectual teaching practices. But, while research in the area of teacher beliefs has focused on student teachers or in-service teachers, the research on the beliefs of entering education students is scarce (Pajares, 1992).

The task confronting those who seek to understand preservice teachers is how to gain access to preservice teacher beliefs and perspectives. Knowledge of their beliefs and perspectives provides both students and teacher educators information with which to interact. The students may use the information to make sense of program offerings. The teacher educator may simultaneously attempt to mold the students' images into the theoretical shape desired by a specific teacher education program. In either event, this can happen only if the students' beliefs about teaching can be accessed. This paper presents an attempt to access students' entering ideas and beliefs about teaching within a teacher education course designed to introduce entering teacher candidates to the principles of reflective teaching.

Images of Teaching

Over the last few years, a number of studies have appeared discussing teacher

beliefs about their work. Each of the researchers has coined a term to describe the phenomenon. Essentially, however, the terms appear to describe the same thing. Elizabeth Bondy (1989) attributes this to individual researchers' theoretical orientations. She argues that those who feel akin to cognitive psychology will select terms like schemata, while those whose orientations come from symbolic interactionism use terms like perspective. Hence, terms like personal knowledge, perspective, schemata, teacher understanding, and image for Bondy (1989) and others (Carter, 1992) carry the same meaning.

The term image, as it was conceived for this study, stems from a constructivist orientation, and represents ideas or notions we carry around in our minds about how things ought to look and operate. These ideas or notions guide our practices and actions. Often they go unarticulated, yet they serve as implicit theories which guide our thoughts, actions and behavior. To use Robert V. Bullough, Jr. and David K. Stokes' term (1994) an image is a "mental model." Unfortunately, as Bullough and Stokes (1994) remind us, the term image as a concept is neither clean nor clear cut. A person can have elaborate or vague images about anything from the concrete to the abstract. Nor does the image necessarily remain stationary. An individual may opt to alter or change it at anytime.

Background to the Study

PROTEACH is the five-year elementary education program at the University of Florida. This program emphasizes the philosophy of reflective teaching and a belief that knowledge is socially constructed by teachers and students. [See Ross, Johnson, and Smith (1992) for a more detailed explanation of program themes and philosophy.]

A systematic study of the impact of the program on its students has been a central feature in the on-going development of the elementary PROTEACH program. This on-going process of evaluation has enabled PROTEACH faculty to expand their knowledge about what content and experiences should be included, and in what sequence this content and these experiences should be offered. These formative studies also have permitted faculty to identify problems and make revisions within courses and within the program. As Dorene D. Ross, Margaret Johnson, and William Smith (1992) note, this has allowed the faculty to provide students with a continuous model of reflective practice.

One concern that grew out of studies conducted by PROTEACH faculty was the difficulty of developing and maintaining reflection within students (Bondy, 1989; Kilgore, Ross, & Zbilowski, 1990; Ross, 1987; Ross, Ashton, & Mentonelli, 1989; Weade, 1987). Further research by Bondy and Stephen Davis, (1991) and Ross, Johnson, and Smith, (1992) suggested that the perspectives of entering education students strongly influenced the manner in which they experienced the program. This "in-house' research, and the research of others in the field of teacher

education (Zeichner, Tabachnick, & Densmore, 1987; Clandinin, 1986; Connelly & Clandinin, 1988) concerning preservice teachers' perspectives, led to a view that entering students "needed to surface and begin to confront their implicit beliefs about teaching early and continuously" (Ross & Bondy, 1993, p.9).

Increasingly, the issue of preservice teachers' implicit perspectives or beliefs has become an important part of the content of the core courses in the PROTEACH program (*e.g.*, Research in Elementary Education, Practices in Childhood Education, Seminar in Education, Pre-Internship, and Internship). In the first of the core courses, Research in Elementary Education, students do assignments designed to surface and examine their entering beliefs about teaching. The methods used to gain access to those beliefs, within the context of Research in Elementary Education, provide the focus for this study.

Method and Data

Data utilized in this study involved two written exercises that posed open-ended questions designed to encourage self awareness of students' perspectives and their implicit beliefs about teaching. The first paper, entitled Images of Teaching, was completed during the Fall, 1992, semester by students enrolled in two sections of Research in Elementary Education.[1] The writing assignment asked students to imagine they had finished their teacher education program, had been teaching for several years, and had become their image of an ideal teacher. The first part of the paper required them to draw a picture of themselves and their students. The remainder of the paper asked them to describe what they were doing and what their students were doing, in as much detail as possible. The assignment was handed out on the first day of the university class. Students completed the paper at home and returned it the next class period.

The second written exercise, an Image Revisited paper, was assigned thirteen weeks later in this same course. The students were asked to look back at their original image of teaching and examine the image in light of their learning over the semester. Students were to focus on the congruence and/or inconsistencies between their original image and their current beliefs about teaching and learning, including their aims for the education of their pupils.

Twelve students participated in the study, six each from two concurrent sections of Research in Elementary Education which averaged 25 students in each section. The students, nine females and three males were chosen according to the following criteria: (a) They had taken no previous education courses; (b) their original Images of Teaching were representative of a continuum of entering images from the two sections of the course; (c) complete data sets were available for these students at the end of the course; and (d) their observations regarding their original images, as revealed in their "Images Revisited," paper were clearly articulated.

We organized data for this study within a case-study format (Stake, 1980;

Stenhouse, 1980). We used the case-study method because it produces detailed descriptions and uses participants' perspectives for data analysis and validation. It also produces "naturalistic generalizations" (Stake, 1980), surfacing some key variables and hypotheses, that other studies of preservice teacher thinking can further validate (Smith, 1979). Because case-study research pays close attention to details, it "can identify causal features and causal linkages that may be overlooked or misinterpreted on the basis of correlational analysis of survey data or predetermined observational category systems" (Fetterman, 1983, 21).

We subjected the entering Images of Teaching assignment to a content analysis along the lines described by Michael S. Ball and Gregory W.H. Smith (1992). We found that we could classify entering images into four basic categories: (a) a clear image; (b) a conflicted image; (c) an emergent image; or (d) a submerged image. The clarity of an image was, in part, determined by the amount of detail each student provided in response to the requests for an illustrated and written account of him or herself as a teacher in an elementary education classroom. Artistic and compositional skills among the students varied, but did not influence the categorization process. For example, one of the clearest of the original images represented in this study was depicted with Xs denoting the teacher and the students. While a student who is comfortable with writing might be expected to provide more information, the nature of the assignment was such that it distinguished among students who had clear images of teaching and those who did not, regardless of writing ability.

Near the end of the semester instructors returned the original images of teaching assignment so students could look back and determine how and if their images had changed as a result of their experiences over the semester. Based on content studied over the semester, students analyzed their image according to three philosophic approaches to teaching suggested by Gary D. Fenstermacher and Jonas F. Soltis (1986)—the executive, therapist, or liberationist. These approaches depict the teacher as bringing about specified learnings, helping the student reach self-actualization, or freeing the student's mind, respectively. We analyzed these papers, known as Images Revisited, for themes and patterns as described by Barney G. Glasser and Anselm L. Strauss (1967), James B. Spradley (1980), Yvonna S. Lincoln and Egon G. Guba (1985), and Strauss (1987). We paid particular attention to words, phrases, and descriptions that revealed students' beliefs about what constitutes the nature of teaching and learning.

Results

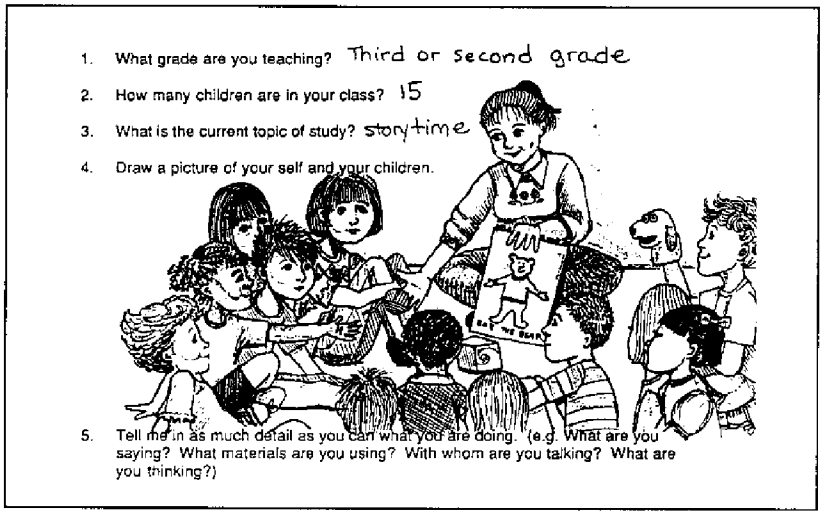
We organized and presented data for this study in two ways: first, as case records, and second, by themes and patterns. The four case records presented illustrate the general categories under which entering images could be classified, and described how these images changed over the course of a semester. The four cases contain elements shared by the group as a whole. Names used for the cases are pseudonyms.

Clear Image

Entering images classified as clear, in the initial Images of Teaching papers, made the researchers feel like they were in a real classroom, with a real teacher, and real children. Illustrations were congruent with their written description; that is, both the picture and the illustration supported each other. Written descriptions also indicated what subjects' teaching priorities were, identified aims and goals for students, and included some means of addressing them. Using James Calderhead and Maurice Robson's (1991) words, an image was visible; it called to mind a visual representation. Lynn's case illustrates a clear image.

Lynn. In her Images of Teaching paper, Lynn created a detailed drawing of her classroom that showed a teacher sitting cross-legged in a group of culturally-diverse children (Figure 1). The environment seemed relaxed and comfortable with some children leaning back, propped up by their arms, while others sat with their arms hugging their knees. The teacher held a picture of a bear while passing a ball of yarn to one of the children (see Figure 1).

Figure 1
Lynn's drawing of herself and her students
which was part of her first Images of Teaching paper.



Lynn described the current topic of study as story time . She saw herself amid a class of 15 second or third graders. Lynn went into a great deal of detail to explain what she as the teacher was doing, and how she thought of her students:

> I have an idea for a storytelling time where the kids will participate in creating the story. I will begin with a "magic" ball of string. The string is many colors of random lengths and colors. A child volunteers to speak, adding to the story, unwinding the string as he or she goes. When his/her color ends so does his/her turn to speak. All the children vote to determine the subject of the story, [and I] draw a picture of it to their specifications. I will make suggestions to move the story along but leave the decisions up to the children. Puppets could be used, or show and tell items, to animate their ideas. After several such story telling sessions, we could discuss what we liked best, and make a final story which I could print for each child on my MacIntosh, complete with graphics and scanned-in images of the children themselves. In this way the kids participate in a creative story process and have the results of their experience to show and be proud of.

In Lynn's description we see that story time represents a creative endeavor where teacher and students work together to create a story. You can almost image Lynn thinking of a real classroom and seeing herself as a real teacher. Describing what students were doing and saying in her classroom, the reality is nearly palpable when she wrote: "Hopefully their minds are running amok with ideas and they are excited and they feel powerful."

In her Images Revisited paper, Lynn accurately summarized her original image of teaching as "an image of a relaxed, comfortable environment where students are actively participating in learning." Lynn stated that she was imagining a whole language environment before she knew what the term whole language meant. Lynn calls her image a liberationist approach with some aspects of the therapist. She accurately analyzed her entering image. She saw the methods she had portrayed as producing "a student with an enthusiasm and joy in learning, and the abilities to continue the learning process outside of the classroom environment." Lynn admitted liking her image, as well as using that image as a means to evaluate the course material.

> During this semester I have been exposed to many different attitudes, ideas and beliefs about teaching. Although I have become more informed, my image of teaching has remained stable. The information I have received has caused that image to broaden and become more detailed. My original image is a skeleton upon which I can hang further knowledge and research to form a complete creation.

Lynn did not see her image change over the semester. Rather, she evaluated the course in terms of what it could add to her image of teaching. In fact, in evaluating the course readings and experiences Lynn indicates that she will maintain her image until she is given a powerful enough reason to change. As she explained it:

> I do not see myself as a highly structured, skills-oriented teacher. However, I cannot ignore the fact that this works to increase student's scores on standardized tests. I do not want to defend my image if my image of teaching will not produce the best results for the child...if I become aware that...[my teaching style] is not achieving all of my goals or goals set by others I will change or modify my image.

Lynn entered the course with an image we classified as clear—the illustration and its attendant written description made us feel as if we were in a tangible classroom. Lynn initially presented clear teaching priorities, goals for her students, and a means of addressing those goals. Thinking about her image of teaching Lynn reveals that she not only liked her original image, but was using that image as a screen through which to filter new learning and knowledge. Lynn's views about teaching and children remained consistent throughout the course. She sees herself as the one responsible for making choices about her future students' learning experiences. She indicates that she bases her decisions about teaching on what will "produce the best results for the child." At this early stage in her teaching career, Lynn's words indicate that she has clear ideas about teaching and that she bases teaching decisions on thoughtful deliberation of students' needs and interests.

Conflicted Image

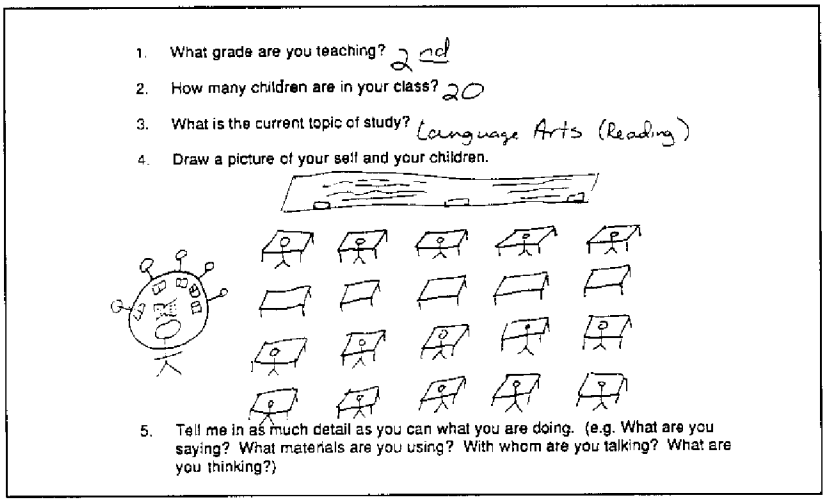
Sometimes students described images of teaching that contained conflicting elements. These images left the readers feeling as if they were looking at an image through a kaleidoscope—all the pieces were there, sharp and clear, but jumbled. The most common contradiction occurred where students presented an illustration and description that portrayed in minute detail a traditional, highly structured, teacher-centered classroom, while simultaneously professing that their primary goal for pupils was social interaction. In images of this type, which we identified as conflicted, students apparently do not understand that the teaching methodology they described cannot produce the outcome they intend for students. Simply stated, there is a mismatch between the means and the end. Bullough and Stokes (1994), refer to this conflict, when it occurs in a student teacher's consciousness, as "double-mindedness." They warn that this conflict "impedes consistency of action within the classroom, increases vulnerability, and presents the beginning teacher with a complex set of coping problems" (p.201). Jason's image of teaching at the beginning of the semester presents an example of just such double-mindedness.

Jason. Jason drew a picture of himself as a teacher of 20 second graders (Figure 2). Depicting a reading lesson, he drew 20 desks in four rows with five pupils in each row. None of the desks were touching. In the front of the room was a long chalk board with three erasers arranged equidistant from each other on the chalk tray. The teacher sat with five children at a round table on the left side of the room. The five desks in the second row were empty, waiting for the reading group to return after their lesson.

Jason's written description reinforces the orderly quality that the picture shows. He writes first of the reading lesson that he is teaching at the round table:

> We have just finished practicing a pre-determined set of words to read and are reading out of the textbook. Now, my students and I are reading a book selected by the kids. I have instructed them to read aloud, in turns; and they are enjoying

Figure 2
Jason's drawing of himself and his students
which was part of his first Images of Teaching paper.



it. I am thinking of how much the class likes reading "fun books" in their reading groups.

Jason then addresses the activities of the other fifteen pupils who are at their desks:

> The kids who are not in the reading group are working on "art projects", using any props they need.... They are not speaking now (because "quiet" is needed for the reading group). Of course, all of their daily ditto worksheets must be completed before "art time" starts. Some of the kids haven't finished.

Jason presents an image of a very traditional teacher. He emphasizes teacher control, rules, quiet, and daily worksheets. Jason appears to have a clear view of what he wants to accomplish as a teacher. Yet, as he continues to discuss his thoughts about teaching and learning his aims collide with the didactic picture that he describes:

> I feel very strongly that school should be made fun and exciting for younger students in order to keep their interest. I want to gain the respect of my students through friendship, thus eliminating much horseplay, daydreaming, etc., so that school time can be spent learning, creating, and having fun doing it.

Jason, at this initial point in his teaching career, did not realize that he was viewing his classroom only through the eyes of the teacher. Apparently, he did not

understand that few second graders would construe the emphasis on quiet and order as a fun and exciting way to learn. Typical of many conflicted images of teaching Jason sees the traditional, authoritarian, teacher-centered classroom as accomplishing affective, pupil-centered goals.

When Jason revisited his original image he found he no longer wanted to maintain the image with which he entered the PROTEACH program. After examining his Images of Teaching paper, Jason realized that his goals and his methods for achieving those goals did not match. One of our most articulate and thoughtful students, Jason traced the emergence of his original image through his elementary and high school years. Jason admitted that teacher traits like kindness and making children feel good about themselves were important to him because of the "emotional trauma brought about by things like divorce and fistfights on the playground" that he endured growing up. He entered the PROTEACH program feeling that "schools should facilitate good feelings in children."

Jason began the Research course believing that the primary teaching method educators should use was to teach skills through modeling. On the other hand, he also believed that educators needed to make "students feel better about themselves as learners and as human beings." Readings over the course of the semester convinced him that he needed to give further thought to his beliefs about how children should be taught. Jason realized that he wanted to maintain his goal of helping children feel good about themselves, but that the methods he depicted in his original images paper would not allow children to reach that aim. Jason saw the silent seatwork as isolating children from each other and ultimately hindering them "from seeing other people's points of view."

Jason wrote that he found the course content and readings stimulating. The course allowed him to examine his beliefs about teaching and children. Jason chose to discard the original teaching methods he described and replace them with ones that considered the subject matter as interrelated. Jason saw literacy as being more than knowing how to read. It involved all subject areas. Jason also chose to expand his goals for students. While he continued to want students to feel good about themselves and others, Jason also wanted students to be able to apply "abstract and theoretical knowledge constructed in school" to real-life problems. Jason ended up seeing teaching as a dynamic process "with teachers and students initiating positive changes in each other."

In evaluating his original image of teaching paper Jason recognized the incongruity between his aims and methodology and moved to change his methodology while expanding his aims. Jason also understood that his new image of teaching was an active reconstruction of his previous beliefs with a thoughtful analysis of what he believed was important for students to learn. As he put it:

> I entered the Proteach program with my background in school as the only backdrop available as a source of ideas for describing my images. Consequently, many of my

> general ideals about teaching were transformed into misguided plans, such as two-hour silent reading time blocks. A I moved through the semester, however, I learned through reading and class discussion about more appropriate facets of teaching. I gained a vocabulary and working knowledge that helped organize my thought into a much more mature belief system about education. It is evident that my current image of teaching was constructed through building on my background, as shown by the fact that my biases and feelings about school, youth, and what is worth learning have not been altered while some of the approaches that I previously espoused have been abandoned in favor of ideas heard about in school that I deemed congruent to my mindset.

Jason's conflicted image was recognized for what it was, by Jason himself, when he looked back at it. He was able to see that the approach to teaching and learning that he thought he believed in was not going to achieve the aims that he desired for his pupils. His current image is now more congruent, having established a clear relationship between means and ends. Jason's thoughts about teaching have evolved from his acknowledged attention to self into more extensive thinking about the educational, social, and moral implications of teaching and their impact on his future pupils.

Emergent Image

Some students' image papers gave the feeling that they had not completely formed or developed their ideas on teaching. We classified these types of images as emergent. Emergent images lacked a feeling of reality. Unlike the clear image paper you did not feel you were in a real classroom with real students. Papers classified as emergent did not provide sufficient details. Emergent images contained all the parts: an illustration, information about the teacher's role and the student's role, but the picture of classroom life was not entirely clear, coherent, and well formed. Marge's case provides an example of an emergent image.

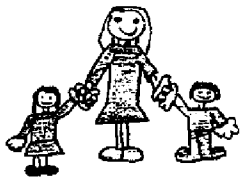
Marge. Marge's image paper indicated that she saw herself teaching kindergarten in a medium size town. Her classroom, because of the town's size, she writes, had only 25 students. Her lesson was on good manners. Marge's picture, however, simply depicted a woman holding the hand of a boy and a girl (See Figure 3). While Marge took the time to color the illustration, the illustration suggested nothing about life in her classroom. The illustration could as easily have depicted a mother and her children, or a baby-sitter and her charges. The picture showed no background to indicate where it was taking place.

Marge's written explanation of what the teacher was doing gives more details about her lesson. She wrote:

> By standing in a circle I am trying to get the whole group interested and involved. I am asking the children to give me examples of what they think good manners are. I then ask them in what situations they would use these manners in. After this

Figure 3
Marge's drawing of herself and her students
which was part of her first Images of Teaching paper.

1. What grade are you teaching? I am teaching kindergarden in a medium size town.
2. How many children are in your class? Due to the size of the town I only have 25 students.
3. What is the current topic of study? We are talking about good manners.
4. Draw a picture of your self and your children.



5. Tell me in as much detail as you can what you are doing. (e.g. What are you saying? What materials are you using? With whom are you talking? What are you thinking?)

brainstorming is finished we would play for awhile and then everyone would go back to their seats. I would then ask the class what good manners did we learn earlier and write what they said on the board and also ask when these manners apply, write those on the board and continue on by further prompting them with other suggestions.

Discussing what the children were doing and thinking, Marge repeated some of the information she gave about the teacher, but added more information about how the students act.

> The children are in a circle with me. They are brainstorming on good manners. The children speak when they are called on and sometimes out of turn. As they give me their answer to good manners I nod my head and we then discuss when this manner applies.

Marge's image indicates what she is teaching, and how the children are behaving, yet, the image has a hazy, almost semi-focused quality. Marge brainstorms with the students, then they play, and then they go back to their seats and review what they learned earlier. She has not presented enough information to indicate how she sees the teacher and students operating in the classroom. Her lesson is not entirely clear. She does not clarify what she means by good manners. Nor does she suggest specific manners she might teach, or possible answers the students might give. The overall picture left by Marge's portrayal of her classroom

is that of out-of-focus binoculars—something might be there if you could sharpen the image.

When Marge revisited her original image she was unable to accurately evaluate her original image. Like other students we had, she seemed to see in her image something other than was actually there. As with these other students, Marge appeared to adopt the language used in the course to describe her image. It was difficult to tell whether she evaluated her image through "rose-colored glasses", or whether she did not entirely understand the material presented and truly felt her image portrayed the concepts as they were described. Marge described her original image of teaching as:

> a liberator who had a somewhat structured classroom. I wanted the children to be able to construct their knowledge but in a somewhat orderly way, I can't stand chaos. I see myself as trying to draw answers out of my children and guiding them in the direction of learning. I feel that overall my classroom was one of guided learning with the main rule being to respect yourself and others.

Marge's original image of a kindergarten lesson on manners suggested more structure than she indicates in her evaluation. Like a number of students in this study, Marge did not want to be an executive teacher, or someone who selected the best methods to present a body of knowledge. Marge equated the executive teacher methodology with teaching as telling. Yet Marge's evaluation of her lesson indicates that she has some specific ideas about what she wants children to get out of the lesson, an idea that more closely matches the executive type of teacher (Fenstermacher & Soltis, 1986).

Marge's original image also implied an overriding concern with her students' sense of well being when she wrote in her original image paper that she wanted to be the kind of teacher that "completely interacts" with her children, knowing about their home life and parents. This idea fits more naturally with the teacher as therapist philosophy (Fenstermacher & Soltis, 1986). Unlike Jason who saw his original image as combining those two approaches, Marge does not see that her image contains either idea.

Marge's original image was vague enough that she was able to read into it whatever she wanted. She saw her aims as providing her pupils with "the tools to succeed in school and life." Marge wanted her pupils to learn respect for themselves and others, develop an appreciation for the arts, and learn the social skills necessary to function in everyday life. To accomplish those goals Marge believed that:

> Teachers may need to help motivate children when they are having a bad week or if they're not proud of themselves for some reason. I believe that there is a small role for telling when you are teaching...Most learning that is going on should be constructed by the students themselves with the teacher along as a guide. I believe that the children should always be active, little seatwork, and the teacher should always be available to the students. The teacher should guide the children in the

right direction but allow them to find the answers whenever possible.

Marge's original image was categorized as emergent due to its underdeveloped quality. Marge's reflections on her own image reveal rather vague, general aims for her students and for herself as a teacher. Marge offers little to tell us how she as a teacher would accomplish her aims. She uses the language of the program to describe what she wants to do with children, but not in a way that allows us any understanding of how she sees teaching taking place. Most of what she says is what she would not do. Despite Marge's assurances that her image is more focused, much of it still seems to be developing. Because Marge does not see that issues of teacher control and teacher telling are still central to her image of teaching we wonder if she has simply interpreted course content to fit her original image.

Submerged Image

Some student image papers provided little semblance of an initial image of self as teacher. In these image papers the illustration lacks sufficient details to provide a picture of the kind of classroom that this future teacher imagined. In addition, the written description does not help to clarify the image of teaching. It fails to provide information either from the perspective of the teacher or the perspective of the pupil. There is little indication from these papers that these students have begun to think about themselves as teachers. Because of the sketchiness of the drawing and explanation no clear image in picture or written form emerges. We called these images submerged because they lacked form and substance. Ella is one student whose image of herself as teacher seems to be in this embryonic stage.

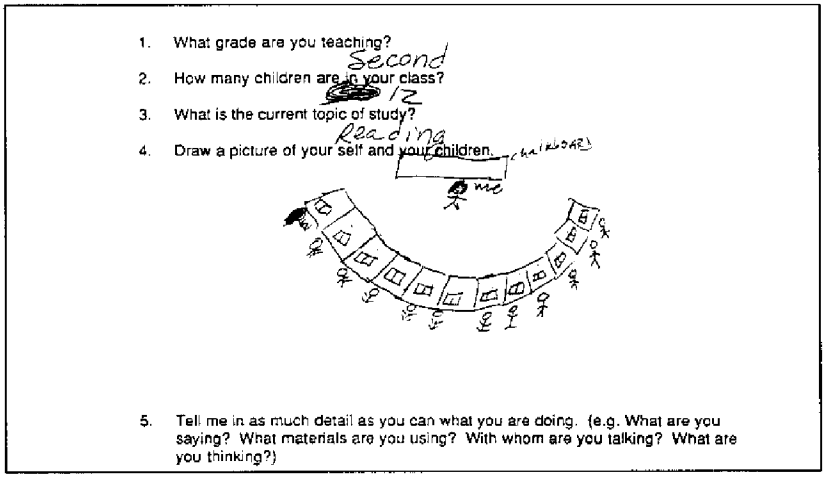
Ella. Ella's drawing of her second grade classroom contains twelve desks arranged in a horseshoe shape (See Figure 4). She takes some liberties with the configuration of these desks, drawing squares, and placing them so that the sides touch in a U-shape. Labeling herself "me," she placed herself in front of, but at some distance from, her students. Behind her is a chalkboard. A reading lesson is going on. An open book lies on each of the twelve desks.

Any ambiguities that exist in the picture, like the desks touching one another, might have been mitigated by a comprehensive answer demonstrating Ella's thoughts about what the teacher and the pupils in this reading lesson were doing. However, Ella, in response to a question that asks for details about the children's activities, including specific questions such as, "What are they thinking?" is unable to offer any thoughts concerning the perspectives of her twelve pupils. She offers only a brief glimpse at her own "teacher" thoughts.

> We're reading from a book, maybe Dr. Seuss or something like it. The children are taking turns reading. I'm listening for anyone that might be having trouble reading.

Nor does Ella provide a comprehensive answer in describing aims for her pupils. She simply writes:

Figure 4
Ella's drawing of herself and her students
which was part of her first Images of Teaching paper.



I want the kids to get excited about learning, I want them to...like me, but most importantly I want them to learn.

Despite Ella's aims for her students she has not offered a description of the kind of classroom dynamics which would achieve her aims. Ella's image offers the reader little information about how she would operate as a teacher. She gives almost no details about what she and the students are doing in her classroom. Even her description of what students might be reading lacks clear definition, as if she cannot decide what students are doing. The tentativeness of the first response, and her inability to describe her pupils point of view, leave readers feeling as if Ella either is unable to visualize, or cannot put into words, her ideas about teaching. For her vision to emerge, she must develop a clearer idea of what teachers and students do in classrooms.

Ella entered the teacher education program with only a very vague idea about the type of teacher she wanted to become. Whether or not she realized that her image lacked clarity and specificity, her Images Revisited paper indicated that she was still trying to formulate a picture of herself as a teacher. When Ella examined her original image of teaching, it was immediately apparent that her self-understanding had not increased during the semester. She looked back at her image of twelve students seated at desks and engaged in round-robin reading while she stands in front of the chalkboard and comes to a surprising conclusion, not supported by any written explanation.

> By the way I described my classroom, I would have to say that I definitely fell into the role of the therapist. I wanted to make all my students be in touch with their emotions and develop their own selves.

Ella discussed the changes that took place in her beliefs over the semester. Some of those changes involved her insights into the world of school. Interestingly, she counted all three of them as "attitudes toward teaching [that] have changed immeasurably."

> First of all, I no longer see myself sitting with a small group of students. I now realize that there are not a lot of public schools around that only have twelve students in them. Second of all, I do not see myself teaching reading. Although I am sure I will teach reading for part of the day, it is no longer my specialization. I now tend to see myself teaching in [sic] the students how to use computers, which is now my specialization. Lastly, I see myself more a liberator, not a therapist.

Within two pages of her Image Revisited paper, Ella assigned two different labels to her image of teaching. She tried on all of Fenstermacher and Soltis' (1986) approaches discussed over the semester to see how well they fit her. Rather than filtering course material through her own image of teaching, Ella took the reverse tactic of sifting out her teaching beliefs through the filters of course readings, discussions, and videos. Ella, like several others we encountered, found the liberationist teaching approach so attractive that she tried to squeeze her foot into a methodological shoe that does not fit. Rather than change her methods she elects to change her educational aims for her students. (Aims, it should be pointed out, she did not write down in her original image paper. She seems to be inventing an original image in order to refute it.) She moves from a belief, stated in her Revisited paper as her original aims, that "kids should learn how to read and write and manipulate math problems" to the new aims of creating students who are "well-rounded people," and "independent people," and able "to learn from their own and society's past."

The language that Ella uses in speaking about children, not to mention the globalness of these aims, heightens her paper's lack of reality. It is difficult to picture Ella in a classroom with children. Because Ella gives no indication of how she will accomplish these new aims, it further reinforce the impression that Ella does not have an image of herself and her students in mind. Perhaps, because she cannot seem to evoke an image of herself in a classroom, she is unable to write about it in a believable way.

Although Ella cannot produce an image of herself as a teacher, she manages to successfully convey a picture of the qualities that she admires in a teacher. While she has tried to disassociate herself from the therapeutic approach to teaching (Fenstermacher & Soltis, 1986), it is therapeutic qualities that she mentions when she describes the high school teacher who inspired her to become a teacher.

> I can honestly say that I never remember her ever telling a student that their

> interpretation of a novel or poem was wrong. As a class, she encouraged us to share our view of the story...when I remember how good I always felt about myself after her class, I know that I want to try to be as good of a teacher as she is.

At the end of the semester Ella was still searching for an image of teaching. Her paper analyzing her image seemed disjointed and unsettled, as if she was struggling to identify her thoughts and feelings about teaching. Ella's experiences throughout the semester apparently did not help her clarify her image of teaching. Her aims for teaching remained superficial, and her entire image was vague and unfocused.

Clarifying the Image

Of the twelve image papers comprising this study, half of the images were classified under the conflicted and emergent categories. Of the remaining six image papers, five were classified as clear and one as submerged. One wonders, with the amount of time students sit in classrooms, why there are not more images that could be classified as clear. It may have to do with where one's attention is placed. As others have suggested (Zeichner & Gore, 1990), a student's focus probably is not on what the teacher is doing, but on what needs to get done as a student. Interestingly, three of the four cases presented here indicated that they thought they would learn specific methods for becoming a better teacher in the Research class. Jason's answer is typical:

> I hope to pick-up on various techniques of teaching put forth by others, along with hearing the ideas of my peers, so that I can begin to shape myself mentally into my idea of a teacher.

Answers like Jason's indicate that students may be entering teaching with the assumption that education classes will give them a prescription for how to be a good teacher. Research results by Calderhead and Robson (1992), for example, indicate that a good many entering preservice teachers may see learning about good teaching as more an acquisition of a specific set of skills, than a thoughtful analysis of what characteristics and talents they might be bringing to the teaching profession.

Certainly, we wonder if Marge and Ella, neither of whom seemed able to clarify their image of teaching, may have thought that learning to teach involved learning a prescribed set of behaviors which required them to bring nothing into the experience. Confronted with a multiplicity of ideas through course readings and discussions they experienced confusion rather than clarity. Marge and Ella were not isolated cases. Of those images we classified as emergent (3) or submerged (1), none of the students seemed to clarify their image of teaching over the semester. Rather their images remained vague and undeveloped. Why some students do not seem to clarify their image of teaching and what it would take to help them clarity to their ideas, is beyond the scope of this study.

Discussion

We began this study with the belief, based upon Kagan's work (1992), that a strong image of teaching was necessary in order for students to experience success in teaching. We wondered what images of teaching our students brought with them as they entered a teacher education program, and we wondered how those images changed as we exposed students to methods and content. We found that students entered the program with a wide range of images. We also found a range of differences in the ways students applied the course material in analyzing their images. In revisiting their images some students evidenced very thoughtful and reasoned analysis of their images. Others, took the coursework and readings in but appeared to use them only superficially or to misuse them.

Our findings resembled those of Bullough and Stokes' (1994) who classified students' metaphor response assignments along a continuum from "never got it," to "got it, and used it." Like Bullough and Stokes we found a number of students who used the image assignments to thoughtfully work through their ideas about teaching. But, we also found a group of students who "never got it" or who "went along, but didn't work up a sweat." Both of these student groups seemed little touched by the course material or the assignments. Their images of teaching remained less focused and less coherent. Some of these students used the "language of the program" to analyze their images. As Regina Weade (1987) noted, this blocked our access to what they believed. When students used words like "help the child to construct knowledge," and did not explain what they meant by the term construct knowledge, we knew little about how they saw and understood that term. They provided us with a procedural display of their knowledge, but gave us no real information about their thoughts and understandings.

The fact that outmoded educational practices persist (Pajares, 1992) may have more to do with the students' inclination to use language which pleases the professors than thoughtfully working through the educational ideas and practices they encounter. Our research suggests that students learn early to mouth program concepts, but do not always make the connections to their own beliefs and understandings. If, as Joseph D. Novak (1991; 1993) suggests, learning is not meaningful unless it is assimilated into a learner's existing cognitive structure, then students may be saying what we want to hear in our courses, but forgetting or misusing the information by the time they begin teaching in their own classrooms.

Part of the problem, as we see it, may have to do with introducing students to a wide range of ideas and knowledge without taking enough time to fully develop understandings and help students integrate them into their existing knowledge. We found, for example, that for some students, the descriptors of teachers as therapists, executives and liberators (Fenstermacher & Soltis', 1986), which they read about early in the course, served as "blocks." Having used the terms, they felt they did not

have to explain what they meant. Many students found the idea of liberator (one who frees the student's mind) quite appealing, and like Ella, wanted to reject the other beliefs out of hand. Most did not begin to think about why they found the philosophy so appealing or how they would have to structure lessons and classrooms to meet that philosophy. This finding suggests to us that we may need to spend more class time on understanding how our students process and utilize the ideas we offer if we hope to influence educational practice. As our research indicates, merely introducing students to significant educational ideas does not ensure that all students will make appropriate connections.

Our expectation about the strength of entering images, influenced by Bullough (1991), Calderhead and Robson (1991), and Kagan (1992), was that the majority of our beginning students would bring strong, clear images of themselves as future teachers; images developed during their long "apprenticeship of observation" (Lortie, 1975) in the public schools. Our representative twelve cases did not support this expectation. Only five of our twelve students entered with clear images that contained aims for their future pupils, and provided teaching methodologies that could achieve those aims. The rest of our students were less clear about the process of teaching and being a teacher. This suggests to us that more research needs to be done to determine how clear entering images are for the majority of teacher education students.

Our use of the term clear image differs from other studies that use the same term because we see clear as containing evidence of understanding the pupils' perspectives. The study by Susan Florio-Ruane and Timothy J. Lensmire described in Kagan's (1992) article, for example, began with six preservice teachers all of whom were identified as having "clear personal beliefs/images about teachers" even though Kagan noted that "the novices had only vague ideas about the nature of pupils" (Kagan, 1992, p. 141). In our study these novices' images would have been classified as conflicted or emergent.

Our data seem to suggest that there may be minimally two basic types of students entering teacher preparation programs—a group who have clearly surfaced an image of themselves as a teacher, and a group who come into teaching without a focused image that can be clearly communicated. The first group of students have begun to formulate ideas about what teaching involves and why they want to do it. They can articulate aims for their would be students and at its best suggest appropriate educational practices to achieve those aims.

The second group of students enter teaching having given little thought to what or why they want to teach. This group might be characterized by "I want to teach, but I cannot state specific ideas about what I want students to learn and do in my classroom." This group of students for us is the most worrisome. They do not seem to see themselves as key players in the educational process. At its worse, we think students in this group could become teachers who might say "Well, I taught my students what you told me to, but they didn't learn;" or, "I taught those concepts

because I was told to." In either case, the teacher relinquishes any responsibility for what students learn or what she/he teaches. As we see it, until students actually understand the relationship between what they do in classrooms and their beliefs about what children need and ought to learn (educational aims), it will be difficult for them to participate effectively in the teaching process.

In this study we attempted to describe some of the pre-understandings our students brought with them as they entered a teacher education program. We still lack considerable information about how students' beliefs about teaching develop and change over time. We know little about what factors influence students to adopt new ideas and methods. Assignments such as the Images of Teaching which encourage students to access their beliefs about teaching can provide teacher educators with an entrée to open a dialogue with students about the relationship of their ideas to program concepts and goals. It is our belief that such assignments provide a bridge between the students' beliefs and understandings and us. Such a bridge, we believe, may offer the potential to bring about changes in educational practice, by recognizing student ideas as legitimate and worthy of attention and note.

Note

1. Dorene Ross and Elizabeth Bondy developed the Images of Teaching questionnaire at the University of Florida for use in the Research in Elementary Education course.

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